

A Reading Bill of Rights

Enfield Public Schools
Enfield, Connecticut

Welcoming students into a Community of Readers and Thinkers forms the underpinnings of all that we as educators do. We know that for children to thrive now and in the future, we must ensure that all students have opportunities to become fully literate thinkers.

For this purpose, we choose to adapt “The Reading Bill of Rights: A Child’s Right to Read” (Scholastic, 2010).

WE BELIEVE that literacy—the ability to read, write and understand—is the birthright of every child in the world as well as the pathway to succeed in school and to realize a complete life. Young people need to read *nonfiction* for *information* to understand their world, and *literature* for *imagination* to understand themselves.

WE BELIEVE that every child has the right to a highly qualified teacher who will help them learn to read and love to read. Children need teachers who provide intentional, focused instruction to give young people the skills to read and interpret information or understand great stories they will encounter throughout life.

WE BELIEVE every child has a right to a “textual lineage”—a reading and writing autobiography which shows that who you are is in part developed through the stories and information you’ve experienced. This textual lineage will enable all young people to have a reading and writing identity which helps them understand who they are and how they can make their lives better. In short, “You Are What You Read.”

WE BELIEVE that reading widely and reading fluently will give children the reading stamina to deal with more challenging texts they will meet in college, at work and in everyday life. And every child should be able to choose and own the books they want to read, for that choice builds literacy confidence—the ability to read, write, and speak about what they know, what they feel, and who they are.

WE BELIEVE every child should have access to books, magazines, newspapers, computers, e-readers, and text on phones. Whatever way you read, you will need to figure out what the facts are or what the story tells you. No matter how and where you get access to ideas, you will need the skills of reading to understand yourself and your world.

WE BELIEVE that literature and drama, storytelling and our own oral traditions, whether on printed pages, screens, on stage or film, help young people experience the great stories of emotion and action, leading to a deeper understanding of the world around them.

WE BELIEVE that the massive amounts of digital information and images now transmitted daily make it even more important for a young person to know how to analyze, interpret and understand information, to separate fact from opinion, and to have deep respect for logical thinking.

WE BELIEVE that in the 21st century, the ability to read is necessary not only to succeed but to survive—for the ability to understand information and the power of stories is the key to a life of purpose and meaning. As family, community, and educators gather together to foster a love of reading, our children will truly become lifetime readers, thinkers, and learners.