
LUNCH BUNCH

Cloud Elementary School

Wichita, Kansas

In order for children to improve their reading, they must read regularly. The Lunch Bunch program at Cloud Elementary ensures that each student in grades 1-5 reads with an adult for twenty minutes every day. Parent, community, and older student volunteers spend their lunchtime reading with children whose families are not able to read with them at home.

Each of the 800 students at Cloud Elementary has a weekly reading form that goes home daily. When students come to school with their reading forms unsigned, the teacher signs them up for Lunch Bunch. After the students have eaten lunch, they go to Lunch Bunch where they read one-on-one with an adult, or in small groups when the number of volunteers is limited. The volunteer then signs the weekly reading form and returns the form to the classroom teacher. For the most part, children enjoy attending Lunch Bunch; it is seen as an opportunity, not a punishment.

Approximately twenty-five to thirty children attend Lunch Bunch Tuesday through Friday. The schedule rotates by grade level with rotations occurring every twenty-five minutes. Each day, four to ten adult volunteers read with students, and a staff person assists when volunteers are not available. Also, fifth-grade students volunteer to read with the first-grade students and fill in for adult volunteers. In fact, two fifth-grade boys volunteered about two times per week.

School staff members contact parents when their children regularly attend Lunch Bunch mainly to inform parents that their children are having someone read to them on a daily basis. Some parents may not have been aware that twenty minutes of daily reading was part of each child's homework, and after a parent-teacher conference, the child comes to school each day with their reading homework completed. However, in some cases, either the parent does not have the English skills to read with the child or the home does not have the structure for regular reading. Lunch Bunch is designed specifically for those children so that, no matter what, reading is a supported priority.

Being able to provide a variety of reading materials has proved challenging for Lunch Bunch. About \$2000-\$3000, from grants, Title I and general funds, and fundraisers, has been spent on

books and other reading materials. The school continues to seek sources to build its lending library so that it can share an array of books with students.

Because of Lunch Bunch, all students at Cloud Elementary receive support from their school, parents, community, and fellow students to read twenty minutes every day. They learn the values and pleasures of reading, they improve their reading skills and comprehension, and they develop lifelong habits as readers.

Carla B. Smith, Principal

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