

Reading Takes You Places

*Isaac Stevens Middle School
Pasco, Washington*

Fiddle playing, s'mores, and a fireless campfire brought a new spark to Isaac Stevens Middle School's recurring Family Reading Night. The literacy committee decided to give the night a new theme and plan interactive activities to fire up participants and attract new families. They decided on "Reading Takes You Places."

Before Reading Takes You Places, the school gave disposable cameras to the language arts teachers, who rotated them among their students. The teachers invited the children to take pictures of their families reading at home together. These pictures were used in hallway displays to promote the event, and some were enlarged for use as decorations during the reading night.

The night of the event, guests were greeted with a passport that listed all the activities being offered. Each activity took place in its own room:

- The Multicultural Room included parent presentations of poetry, fables, songs, tongue twisters, and even some good old fiddle playing.
- In the Camping Room, volunteers treated students to s'mores and campfire stories under the celestial sky, which was re-created in the classroom along with an imitation campfire.
- Students could hear a story or read to a younger sibling in the Children's Story Room.
- In the cafeteria, families played board games created by students and related to books

they had recently read. The games demonstrated the students' understanding of the book's plot, theme, and characters.

- An open microphone in the cafeteria allowed students to recite poetry or perform readings. The free-flowing event let students and family members move from station to station at their leisure. As families left, each student received a book to take home.

Reading Takes You Places addressed the goal of improving student knowledge and skill in reading by encouraging the love of reading at home and school. The committee felt it was important to make this event interactive, fun, and family oriented to send the message that reading is a positive activity the whole family can share.

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