SUMMER READING PURPOSE STATEMENT:
Literacy involves reading, writing, speaking, listening and thinking. As we prepare our students for the skills needed to be successful in the 21st Century, it is important that we provide opportunities for our students to engage in the activities that will help to build this literacy skill set. It is also our goal to establish a summer reading program that encourages our students to discover the joy of reading, increasing the likelihood that they will become life-long readers.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SUMMER READING REQUIREMENTS
Each student will be required to read 2 books this summer. One book should be selected from the grade level list. Each selection is conducive to making connections with the curriculum and provides depth and understanding for a variety of class discussions throughout the year. In addition, each student should select one book of their choice to read and share with the class in the fall. By asking students to engage in reading a text of their choice, we believe that we can help to develop a habit of reading for our students.

ASSIGNMENT SPECIFICS:
1. Review the book summaries for each title.
2. Select at least one title from your 2012-13 grade level list.
3. Write your answers to the guiding questions and bring the answers to 7th grade in the fall.
4. Select one title of choice to read that is of an appropriate topic and reading level.
5. Have parents sign permission form approving the title and completion of the independent choice book. Return the form in the fall.
6. Be prepared to write about and discuss your summer reading in the fall.

ASSESSMENT: Assessment guidelines will be shared the first week of school and will be no more than 10% of student’s first quarter grade.

We understand that many students join our district over the summer so all organized response to the summer reading will take place after the second week of school. This time frame is important in order to recognize all students for their efforts over the summer.

Grade 7 Books

- Elephant Run by Roland Smith
- Nobody’s Princess by Esther Friesner
- Bulu: African Wonder Dog by Dick Houston
- When Zachary Beaver Came to Town by Kimberly Willis Holt

Please consider donating the following books from previous years:
- Flush
- Jeremy Fink
- So B. It
- Travel Team

Any books may be given to your current Language Arts teacher before the end of the school year.
**Elephant Run by Roland Smith**

**Summary (Adapted from back cover)**
At the height of the London blitz in 1941, bombs are being dropped from the night sky, blanketing the city of London. When fourteen-year-old Nick Freestone’s home is demolished, his mother decides the situation in England has grown too unstable. Nick will be safer, his mother hopes, living with his father in Burma on the family’s teak plantation. Nick arrives at the plantation eager to learn about the timber elephants raised and trained there, and to spend time with his father. But before he can settle in, trouble erupts in the remote Burmese village. Japanese soldiers invade, and Nick’s father is taken prisoner. Nick is stranded, forced to work as a servant for the new rulers. As life in the village grows more dangerous for Nick and his young friend Mya, they plan a daring escape through the jungles of Burma, determined to rescue their families. But to succeed, they will have not only the threat of enemy soldiers, but also the dangers of their journey through the wilderness.

**Guiding Questions:**
1. If you were in a situation like Nick, how would you react to the Japanese soldiers invading the plantation and taking your father prisoner? What would be your reaction to working as a servant for the new rulers and the things they expected you to do? Explain.
2. How would you describe Nick’s relationship with Mya? How does their relationship change throughout the book?
3. What would be the hardest part for you if you were living through this situation? What were Nick’s days like as a captive of the Japanese?
4. What major role did the elephants play in the story?

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**Nobody’s Princess by Esther Friesner**

**Summary (Adapted from Amazon.com and Columbus Metropolitan Library)**
In Nobody’s Princess, author Esther Friesner deftly weaves together history and myth as she takes a new look at the girl who will become Helen of Troy. Determined to fend for herself in a world where only men have real freedom, headstrong Helen, who will be called queen of Sparta and Helen of Troy one day, learns to fight, hunt, and ride horses while disguised as a boy, and goes on an adventure throughout the Mediterranean world. The resulting story offers up adventure, humor, and a fresh and engaging heroine you cannot help but root for.

**Guiding Questions:**
1. Helen is a strong, independent and challenging woman who is eager to learn about the world. She is determined to make a way in the world for herself, no matter what others think she must do. Discuss how Helen shows such strength and determination.
2. Helen’s role model is Atalanta, the huntress. How does Atalanta help shape Helen’s life choices? Explain.
**Bulu: African Wonder Dog by Dick Houston**

**Summary (Booklist)**

In the Nyanja language, bulu means “wild dog,” and that’s what Steve and Anna Tolan named the beloved little Jack Russell mix they adopted. Disregarding warnings about the dangers of raising a dog in the bush, the Tolans moved from England to rural Zambia to fulfill their lifelong dream of setting up an animal rescue and conservation center. What they never imagined were the incredible bonds Bulu would create, and the roller-coaster adventure of his life in the wild. He nursed and protected other animals in their care and had amazing radar to sense when dangerous predators were close. On various occasions his wanderlust led him directly into confrontations with attacking lions and a spitting cobra, in which he barely escaped with his life. Bulu’s energy, high spirits, and loyalty to his masters make the book read like a praise song to dogs. Houston’s account is an animal-lover’s delight, complete with the action-adventure of surviving the bush, fighting poachers, and spreading a message of conservation.

**Guiding Questions:**

1. Bulu is curious and becomes “a problem” on walks in the bush. Eventually, the Tolans come to appreciate Bulu’s curious nature and realize he is being protective. Give at least 3 supports.

2. The Tolans create the Chipembele Wildlife Education Center to teach children how to conserve Luanguwa’s fragile resources and wild animals. They also want to teach how communities use or abuse a natural resource - water, trees, soil, wildlife. In your opinion, how do we impact our environment? Do you think we can make a difference in preserving the world? Why or why not?

3. Steve Tolan states, "Maybe a bit strange, but, by golly, Bulu, we're a family." He also comments, "Families aren't so much about blood. They're about heart." After reading about Bulu, do you agree or disagree? Support your response.

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**When Zachary Beaver Came to Town by Kimberly Willis Holt**

**Summary (Excerpt From Amazon.com Review)**

Summer in the tiny Texas town of Antler is traditionally a time for enjoying Wylie Womack’s Bahama Mama snow cones and racking up the pins at Kelly’s Bowl-a-rama, but this year it’s not going well for Toby Wilson. His 13-year-old heart has been broken twice: once by his mother, who left him and his father to become a country singer in Nashville, and then again by his crush Scarlett Stalling, the town beauty who barely acknowledges Toby’s existence. But when Zachary Beaver, “The World’s Fattest Boy,” comes to Antler as part of a traveling sideshow, Toby begins to realize that there might just be people who have it worse than him. By reaching out to Zachary in small ways—such as helping him realize his lifelong dream of being baptized—Toby is better able to put his own problems into perspective. At the baptism, Toby finally feels at peace: “Zachary smiles and I wonder if he’s feeling different. Because standing here waist deep in Gossimer’s Lake... I'm feeling different—light and good and maybe even holy.” By summer’s end, Toby’s friendship with Zachary has provided him with the emotional stamina to begin dealing with his mother’s decision and to gracefully accept the fact that Scarlett will forever be just beyond his reach.

**Guiding Questions:**

1. How is Toby’s family different from Cal’s family? How are Toby’s parents different from each other?

2. Why does Toby think that standing up for Zachary Beaver is different from fighting for himself?

3. What has Toby learned from the summer he met Zachary Beaver?

4. What elements do you feel are important in a friend?
Independent Summer Reading
Parent/Guardian Permission Form

All Dublin Middle School Language Arts students are required to read a book of their choice over the summer as a part of our summer reading program. This book may be fiction or nonfiction, classic or contemporary, serious or funny.

We would like students to consider books that will be appropriate for a school setting and sufficiently challenging in terms of reading level. Students will have an opportunity to share this summer read with other students in the class during the first week of school.

All students are expected to bring this permission form to their English teachers on the first day of school.

Please print.

Student’s Name: _________________________________________

Title of Book:____________________________________________

Author: ________________________________________________

I have reviewed my student’s Independent Choice Book and have determined that it is appropriate for my child’s middle school Language Arts classroom and this assignment. I can verify that my child has completed the reading of this book.

_________________________                            __________
Signature of Student                          Date

_________________________                            __________
Signature of parent or guardian                  Date