IMPLEMENTING ACCELERATED READER PROGRAM AT ST. MARK SCHOOL

December 9, 2015

Dear Parents,

Over the course of the past few weeks (prior to Thanksgiving) I have offered three parent information sessions focused on STAR testing and on STAR *Accelerated Reader* program, which we are implementing here at St. Mark School. Thanks to all of the parents who attended as we really value these opportunities to partner with you in the interests of your child and her/his growth over time! The sessions were well attended and there was plenty of time for questions/anwers.

Accelerated Reader is not a new program. In fact, it was in place at St. Mark School some years ago. The goal of the program is to provide a system and incentives to support student growth over time, specifically in reading. Providing a system for students to select books that are within the zone of proximal development for each student is part of this system. Labeling each book in the school and classroom libraries facilitates student browsing and library volunteer/teacher input and suggestions about what books a student should target for reading.

Accelerated Reader enhances the reading program by providing an efficient tool for teachers, students and parents to use in support of student reading. By using the STAR testing data to determine the "zone of proximal development" or ZPD for each student, teachers, parents and students can use that information to identify books in their zone. This will allow students to read books that will help them grow as readers, challenge them, but within the proper range.

Your child will be given their AR level or ATOS number/range by their homeroom teacher (in middle school it will be provided by the language arts teachers). They will be directed to target books within their range and will be instructed as to what color-coded stickers corresponds to that range. In most cases students can select books from more than one color range. If you are at the public library, book store or at home you can identify the AR system on line at **www.arbookfind.com**. By entering the basic information about a book you will be given the relevant information about the reading level of that book. For example, if you look up the book Harriet the Spy, you will find that the book level is 4.5 and the # of points (based on length and complexity) is 8. This search engine, and ones like it, are also designed to guide you in many different types of searches including finding books by interest area/level, AR level and books within a grade level and AR level. It sounds more complicated than it is. Go to the website and have fun playing with searches with your children.

To measure reading comprehension and reading mastery students will be given short AR quizzes after the completion of each book that they read. These quizzes will be given only for books that students have just read. These will be administered at school in almost all cases. Based on the outcome of the quiz, teachers will guide students regarding next steps as a way to further monitor their growth and progress over time. Different systems and methods will be used within each grade to track student progress and to monitor expectations of students that are appropriate for that grade. When a student has shown mastery, with the teachers' guidance they will move on to the next level (or color(s)). Note: students can take quizzes after a book has been read to them; however, teachers will monitor how many books can be included in this category.

Once again, we are focused on student growth over time and supporting each student as they grow and develop as readers knowing that their long years.

This program will be rolled out gradually as we complete the labeling process in the library. We have an extensive collection of books at St. Mark and this program is designed to help students' access books appropriate for them over time. Our amazing parent volunteers have already spent hours in the library with Miss Hickey labeling the books and the project will continue into the New Year. We are grateful for their enthusiasm and the time that they have devoted to this project! We will need more volunteers to assist in completing the process. This is a great way to learn about Accelerated Reader first hand!

Additional parent information sessions will be offered in January and we will inform you of those dates as soon as possible.

Thank you so much for your careful attention to this program. Attached are three items:
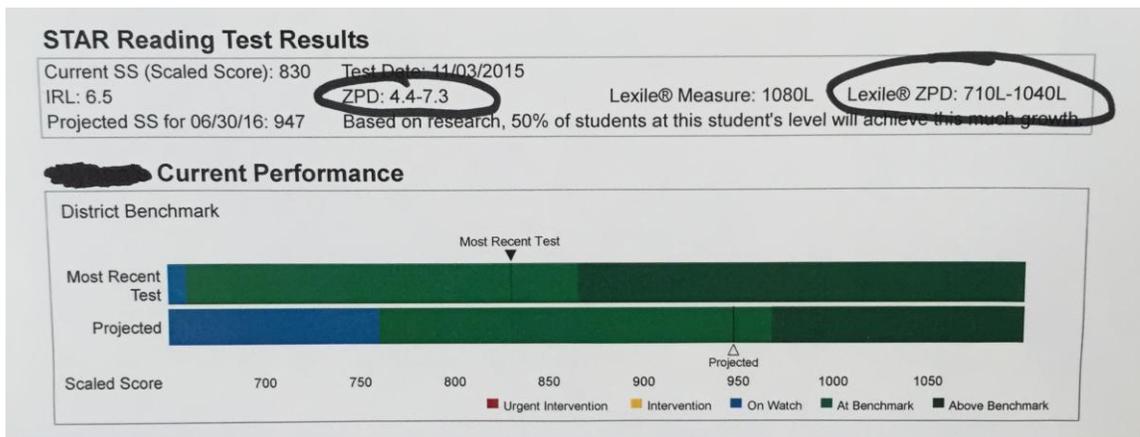
1. A picture that demonstrates the color-coded system that is being used – see below. This chart is posted in the library and will be in all classrooms.

Accelerated Reader Color Codes

Range	Color
1.0 - 1.4	yellow
1.5 - 1.9	royal blue
2.0 - 2.4	orange
2.5 - 2.9	light purple
3.0 - 3.4	red
3.5 - 3.9	dark green
4.0 - 4.4	bright pink
4.5 - 4.9	light blue
5.0 - 5.4	light pink
5.5 - 5.9	dark blue
6.0 - 6.9	bright purple
7.0 - 7.9	bronze
8.0 - 8.9	silver
9.0 - 13	gold

2. An article from the New York Times highlighting notable books for kids from 2015 (some good book ideas across grades/age levels).
    http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/06/books/review/notable-childrens-books-of-2015.html?smprod=nytcore-ipad&smid=nytcore-ipad-share&_r=0

3. A sample of a STAR testing report that includes lexile range and AR level or ZPD (zone of proximal development -the number that appears as a decimal.) This is the number (s) that lines up with the color-coded number system being used to categorize the library collection and that you can access via the website (www.arbookfind.com)

STAR Reading Test Results

Current SS (Scaled Score): 830   Test Date: 11/03/2015
IRL: 6.5   ZPD: 4.4-7.3   Lexile® Measure: 1080L   Lexile® ZPD: 710L-1040L
Projected SS for 06/30/16: 947   Based on research, 50% of students at this student's level will achieve this much growth

Current Performance

District Benchmark

	Most Recent Test
Most Recent Test	
Projected	

| | Projected |
| Scaled Score | 700 | 750 | 800 | 850 | 900 | 950 | 1000 | 1050 |

■ Urgent Intervention   ■ Intervention   ■ On Watch   ■ At Benchmark   ■ Above Benchmark

Sincerely,

Mary Ann McQueen