

EMERGE:

A collaboration between the Marshalltown Public Library and Lenihan Intermediate School 6th grade students and teachers enabling students to make regular visits to use the public library during the school day.

The major goals and principles of **EMERGE** are as follows:

Education

Students will be exposed to research and library skills, including concepts like genres, the Dewey Decimal system, and information searching techniques. In addition, books to support students in various curricular areas are made available and book-talked as teachers request, or one-on-one with individual students.

Public library visits also offer additional access to materials where demand exceeds supply at the school media centers and other venues, for example: Battle of the Books titles, Children's Choice Awards books, and alternative formats, like Spanish-language and audio books.

Public library staff and school media staff work together to mutually reinforce important information literacy concepts, as well as each pursuing independent goals unique to their own missions. Public library visits demonstrate a shared priority of information literacy skills, increased access to materials, and improved reading skills. These visits serve as a complement to a quality school media center.

Mentoring

With students at the crossroads between being a child and young adult library user, this is an ideal time for teachers and library staff to work together to cultivate an attitude of responsibility. Students are reminded by teachers and library staff about renewing books, and being accountable for lost or late items. Students are encouraged to communicate when there are problems, and make arrangements to solve them. Students learn about the library's multi-step overdue collections process, which is a great lesson in personal fiscal responsibility. Students are rewarded for making incremental payments (of any amount) toward a balance owed by being allowed to check out one item per class visit, as long as progress continues, towards the goal of having a clear record by the end of the school year.

Empowerment

Students will be empowered with the skills necessary to connect with the information they need or want, and act as their own information/reading advocates. While the mentoring component (above) focuses on the *responsibilities* of the student, the empowerment element highlights their accompanying *rights*.

Following the principles of *DEAR* (Drop Everything and Read), also known as *SSR* (Silent Sustained Reading), which has been shown to have a major impact on student reading skill levels and therefore school achievement, students have free choice about which materials interest them, regardless of relevance to curriculum, reading level, etc.

Reader's Advisory

Students benefit from the expertise and resources of library staff (as well as teachers/school media specialists) both from presentations to the class group, book displays, as well as one-on-one interactions. Students are also encouraged to request titles and subject areas for the library to add to the collection, through our request process.

Goodwill

The goal of increasing the mutual goodwill between library staff and students has had countless positive results, from increased accountability for library materials to student participation in volunteerism, etc. Students are encouraged to take ownership of "their public library" by understanding that public library staff works hard to maintain an atmosphere that is safe and welcoming to everyone. Many students extend this attitude into their entire families, bringing younger siblings and/or parents on board as regular library users.

Equal Access

The public library serves every person, regardless of age, socioeconomic status, education and/or ability level, native language, ethnicity, etc. These field trips during the school day help to provide access to public library services and collections equally, including students who may otherwise face barriers including lack of transportation, lack of knowledge of the library, or lack of parental involvement. In addition, working with students to clear excessive balances from their library card records, is very important in restoring access to materials in some cases.

It is our hope and intention is that each 6th grade student will

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*from this school year with the skills, knowledge, and
motivation to continue to use the public library
throughout his or her lifetime.*