

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT CHRONICLE

For SBCUSD Families and the SBCUSD Community

How well can your child read?

There's more to reading than sounding out the words and explaining what it's about

By **RANDY OLSON**

Your child is learning to read, but what do you do when they finally can? For most parents, the answer is simple: Have them read!

That's a great answer. There are many benefits to exposing your child to a wide variety of books and teaching your child to love books and reading. But focusing only on *what* and *how much* your child reads can actually limit their growth and make it more difficult for them to be successful in middle school and high school.

We've all heard the phrases "Learning to read" and "Reading to learn." They're frequently used to mark the dividing line between



readers and non-readers, but using them as a measure of reading ability can create a false assurance that as far as reading instruction and growth are concerned, your child has reached the end of the line and all they need to do

to continue to grow is to read more.

The problem is that it's not the end of the line and many children spend years in a kind of reading limbo where they're "reading to learn," but they're

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What's the formula for success? More work than you think

By **RANDY OLSON**

Many students think that if they just do everything their teachers ask and try their hardest that that will be enough for them to reach their *highest* college, career and scholarship goals. Unfortunately, for most students, school alone won't be enough.

At first, this seems rather shocking

because most people connect student performance to teacher and school quality and think that if students don't get to the very highest levels, then there must be something wrong with the school or the teachers--or both.

Schools and teachers, however, are only part of the equation for student success, not to mention equity.

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FAMILY ENGAGEMENT TEAM PROFILE

Victor Hernandez: CRW II

CRWs, or Community Relations Workers, are at the heart of what family engagement is. They support school sites with family engagement, they run and facilitate workshops and they connect families to the resources and support they need.

Victor Hernandez is the newest member of the Family Engagement team, but he brings a lot of passion and skill to the job.

Where did you grow up?

San Bernardino

Where do you live now?

Still here in San Bernardino

Who's in your house? My mom, my sister, my 10-month-old nephew and our dog, Sage.

Any kids? Grandkids? Great-grandkids? No kids for me yet, but hopefully in the near future. For now, I'm enjoying my time as an uncle.



How long have you been working in the district? 2 years

What did you do before becoming a CRW II? I was an EA III over at Anderson and I ran my escape room business.

How long have you been a CRW II? Since June 2021

Briefly describe your job. I currently work with all of the high schools on family engagement.

Best thing about your job? I like working with high schools and not being constricted to helping just the families at one specific school. I have the ability to reach out and expand the area of who I can support.

If you weren't a CRW II, what's a career you'd like to try? Carpentry

A talent you're proud of? My ability to cook and make good-for-you things taste great!

A talent you wish you had? Playing the piano better. My rhythm is awful.

Best thing you've ever eaten in San Bernardino? The I.E. Burrito at Super Burrito off Waterman.

Words to live by? Just because you get older doesn't mean you have to stop imagining.

Community Advisory Committee

CAC President offers support to the families of special needs students

By LALI ABOYTES

The journey a parent is going through with their child who has a disability doesn't need to be taken alone.

For some, like myself, entering the world of special education can be scary--and different. From the worry that your child might be different from others, to the discovery of a disability, to the assessments, and the ongoing challenges, the Special Education Department and the CAC officers are always available and willing to speak with the community and offer resources.

CAC offers families a positive and respectful setting in which they



can share their experiences, voice concerns, offer suggestions, and, most importantly, grow together.

We want nothing more than to see all of the SBCUSD special education community feel understood and supported. It is worthwhile to join

our parent group. Our members have a lot of information that is helpful. We share what is in our heads and in our hearts. We offer support and encouragement as you experience your amazing child's struggles and successes.

Being involved is one way you can assure that your student receives a quality education by learning what resources are available and hearing from the professionals who are servicing our children. Understanding your child's rights and the many services available will empower you to be your child's biggest advocate. Be assured that you are not alone and we are here to help.

For more information about CAC, visit their page on the district website or call (909) 880-6800.

Parent leadership opportunities

Building your capacity to be involved and assist other parents isn't far away

In the November 2021 issue, we covered the site and district parent advisories, which are great ways to be involved and build capacity as a parent-leader. But there are other opportunities as well.

Kings on Campus

Equity & Targeted Student Achievement's Lawrence Hardy, their new family engagement specialist, is running a pilot program at selected schools to involve more dads and male family members. Called "Kings on Campus," the program seeks to involve men in the SBCUSD community in fun and interactive ways.

San Bernardino Fatherhood

Another way for men to be involved, San Bernardino Fatherhood, founded by retired social worker Ryan Berryman, has a variety of activities and events throughout the year. International Men's Day in November is a fixture on the Family Engagement calendar, as well as the Daddy and Daughter Dance, coming up March 19. In addition, the group has established community libraries at



The district is working on involving more fathers and male family members in students' education.

barbershops throughout the community.

Family Leadership Institute

The Family Leadership Institute, commonly known as FLI, builds the capacity of families to create a more positive and supportive environment at home so that children

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What's the formula for success? (cont.)

A huge, but frequently neglected, part of the equation is time.

There's only so much students, teachers and administrators can accomplish in the 180 or so days we call school. For some students, that 180 days--if they use it well--will be enough for them to reach their *highest* goals. For many students, however, there's simply not enough time in the school year.

We shouldn't be shocked. Everyone expects Olympic athletes to put in way more time than the average person competing at a lower level. But when it comes to education, we expect Olympic-level achievement in what amounts to basically half a year.

Virtually everyone at the highest-performing schools and districts not only believes that school alone likely won't be enough, they *know*. They *know* that all the work teachers

assign is a starting point. It's part of the culture. For any school or district hoping to reach similar levels, they need to know and believe it, too.

Fortunately, it doesn't need to be school all day, every day, 24/7/365. Based on research done on the highest-performing schools and districts, it's a little extra time--over a long period of time--that makes the difference. It's that little bit of extra work that students do *above and beyond what their teachers require* that has an impact.

For the highest-performing high-school students, they did enough extra work in kindergarten and first grade and second grade to get to the level they wanted and it's their families who made sure they did the extra work. And then they did enough extra work each year to stay at that level.

That's why we're recommending that *all* students complete an extra 100

hours each year as it aligns with their *highest* college, career and scholarship goals. That may seem like a lot, but spread out--one hour a week during the school year, 10 hours each during Spring and Winter breaks, and 40 hours over the summer--it's really not. It's what top students and their families *know* they need to do.

Getting to the top of anything is a collaborative effort. Almost every successful Olympic athlete has an army of people behind them (friends, family, coaches, trainers) who are part of the effort, just like every successful student needs an army of people.

And anyone who's *really* successful knows that taking weeks and months off every year isn't really an option, not if you're going for the gold, silver or bronze, whether that's going to a particular college, entering a particular career or going to the Olympics.

There's more to reading (cont.)

not really growing as readers. At least in the ways they should be growing.

When “reading to learn” is the end of the line, children don't move much beyond trying to understand what an author is trying to say and rarely think about how authors use language or its impact on their readers. So, children often go years without practicing this second kind of reading and it's no surprise that when they need it—usually for an Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exam in their junior or senior year—they don't have it. And by then, there's often not enough time to learn it and the highest exam scores are largely out

of reach. (Which can impact college admissions.)

And then there's the impact on your child's writing. Students who understand how authors use language—and why they make the choices they do—often begin using what they learn to become better writers. They practice the techniques they pick up from their reading until they've mastered them and those techniques can become tools they can use when they need them.

So, continue to have your child read—and read a wide variety of things—but also make sure that once your child knows how to read that

they from time to time focus not only on *what* the author is trying to communicate, but on *how* the author is communicating, *why* they are choosing the words and language they are using and its impact on the reader.

If you need help, ask your child's teacher how your child can develop these advanced reading (and writing) skills. They can give you questions to ask your child at home that your child will continue to develop once they have “learned to read.”

Randy Olson is a former district honors and Advanced Placement English teacher.

Parent leadership opportunities (cont.)

can thrive academic, socially and emotionally. They also help families to better understand the educational system and their role in it so they can become advocates not only for their own children, but all children.

Family Engagement Network

The San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools offers trainings and workshops for parents and families through their Education Support Services Department. The Family Engagement Network meetings and the yearly Parent Summit are hugely popular, but they have a variety of opportunities for parents and family members to connect with one another across districts and to build their leadership capacity. Many well-known parent and family leaders in the area got their start at SBCSS events and trainings.

National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement

This organization is for parents and family members who are ready to develop their understanding of



Ryan Berryman is the founder of San Bernardino Fatherhood, a non-profit that promotes the value of fathers and male caregivers.

family engagement beyond the basics. Though a national organization, their meetings and trainings are often virtual so participants can attend wherever they are. Plus, what they have to share can often be applied to schools or districts anywhere. It's a great way to establish connections outside of California and to see what's working in other states and in other districts.

Upcoming Family Engagement Workshops

The Family Engagement department offers a variety of workshops to help families keep track of their children's attendance and grades, offer support to one another, learn how to use technology, maintain their physical and emotional health, and learn how to keep their children safe.

At this time, all of the workshops and meetings are held virtually. Here's a list of current and upcoming workshops.

AERIES

African American Support Group

Computer Classes

Family Support Groups

Parent Health

Real Colors

Sheriff's Department Classes

For more information, see the [Family Engagement Calendar](#).