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## Georgia Library Spotlight - Cobb County School District and Cobb County Public Library Collaboration

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# GLA SPOTLIGHT

## Cobb County School District and Cobb County Public Library Collaborate on Summer Reading Programs

Knowing the power in partnerships between school systems and public libraries, as well as the impact of summer reading programs on avoiding the “summer slide,” Janell McClure, Library Media Education Supervisor for the Cobb County School District (CCSD), contacted Patty Latch, manager of the Youth and Media Department at the Cobb County Main Branch, Switzer Library, and Jonathan McKeown, Associate Director for Central & Outreach Services, and proposed a collaborative effort. Patty and Jonathan enthusiastically agreed, and in May 2013, for the first time *ever*, the two entities created complementary summer reading programs.

The two groups chose to adopt the same program “theme” in an effort to maintain a consistent message among school and library patrons. The schools then shared the suggested reading list with the public library staff so they could cross-reference their branch collections and ensure availability. Meanwhile, a team of CCSD media specialists created a summer reading program that asked students to choose from a list of “response-to-reading” activities,

some of which involved the public library. For example, one option read, “Going on a trip? Visit your public library for fiction and nonfiction books about the location you are visiting or the communities on the way. Read the book and create a travel brochure that includes details from the book that describe your destination, daily expenses you incurred while away, and miles traveled round trip.” Others included checking out audiobooks or

participating in local branch events.

Each spring, children’s literature representatives from the public library visited CCSD elementary schools to talk about the summer reading

programs offered at each branch. The public library staff continued that practice; only this year, librarians promoted the CCSD program *in conjunction with* the public library events. In return, the school district promoted the public library summer program through the local schools as well as on the websites for the school district and the Library Media Education department. School media specialists informed students that all books read for one program would receive credit for the other program, while the public library gave reading logs to the elementary children with the understanding that students could turn the same log in to their school and receive equal credit. Finally, Patty, Jonathan, and Janell created a one-minute video, which appeared at the beginning of the CCSD summer reading promotional video, describing their collaborative efforts.



These efforts improved participation in the public library program overall. One public librarian stated, "...there has been a greater interest in both the school and library summer reading programs." Another commented that her branch had received the summer reading program requests faster than in past years and attributed this to the collaborative efforts of these two organizations. The proof, though, was in the numbers. This summer saw a 24 percent

increase in the number of CCSD students who participated in the public library program! With this obvious impact, the two groups are brainstorming additional collaborative opportunities.

More information about Cobb County School Media programs can be found at <http://www.cobbk12.org/centraloffice/librarymedia/>.