Dear Parents and Guardians,

I wanted to send home a letter about the at-home reading that students should be doing for 20 minutes every Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. (Ideally, I would love for them to read at least 20 minutes every day, but these are the days that are required.)

Research shows when children are reading independently, they should be reading books they understand and can read fairly easily. Reading books that are too difficult can lead to frustration, inability to understand the story, and then reading is no longer enjoyable. We want children to enjoy reading, which means it is important they are reading books they are interested in and are “good fit” books. Research also shows that children are motivated to read when they can choose their own books.

However, learning to choose a “good fit” book can be a challenge for students at the beginning of third grade!

Every year many parents ask, “How can I help my child choose books that he or she can read?” There is a very simple way to help your child choose good fit books. It is called I-PICK. I-PICK is an acronym that stands for: I choose books to read, Purpose, Interest, Comprehend, and Know the words. This is the method we use in class, so the students should be familiar with it. Here are some easy steps that you and your child can follow in order to choose good fit books:

1. Have your child choose a book. This is the first I in I-PICK which means, “I choose books to read”.

2. Ask your child, “What is your purpose for choosing this book?” You may also want to ask, “is it for fun or to learn something?” This is the P in I-PICK, which means purpose.

3. Ask your child, “Is this a book you are interested in?” This is the second I, which means interest.

4. Have your child read a page of the book. After your child reads the page ask your child, “Who did you read about and what did they do?” This is the C in I-PICK, which stands for Comprehend. If it is a good fit book your child should be able to answer your question.

5. Have your child read another page (or use the same page) and ask, “Did you know the words?” This is the K in I-PICK, which stands for know the words. Your child should know all or almost all of the words in order for it to be a good fit book.

The last two steps are the ones that tend to be challenging for students, and they often need support with these.

Going through the steps of choosing a good fit book should only take a couple minutes. It has been my experience that many children can easily choose good fit books once they have mastered the process of I-PICK. Other children may need more guidance from mom or dad as they choose good fit books. This is an ongoing process that we will continue to learn and practice at school.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for supporting your child’s education at home!

Sincerely,

Mr. Salsich