**Let’s Get REAL: An Overview of Reading and Writing Initiatives at ZHS**

* **“Reading Empowers All Learners”**
  + Better readers are more successful academically, personally, and professionally.
  + Best-selling author Anna Quindlen credits reading as the thing that “let her spirit soar. Books are the plane, and the train, and the road. They are the destination, and the journey. They are home.”
* **SSR (aka REAL time)**
  + “Sustained, Silent Reading”
  + 15 minutes of daily, uninterrupted reading
  + Emphasizes student choice in reading material
  + In the AR classroom, students should be reading an AR book.
  + Weekly schedule: Monday, math; Tuesday, English; Wednesday, science; Thursday, social studies; Friday, electives
* **What is AR?**
  + Stands for “Accelerated Reader,” a national reading program that assesses a student’s progress toward individual growth targets
  + STAR test determines a student’s reading level and sets growth goals that challenge a student to improve his reading level, quantity of information read, and comprehension
  + AR software also allows the teacher discretion to assess vocabulary acquisition and literary skills
  + Worth up to 15% of the cumulative English grade each six weeks (2nd-5th six weeks)
  + The student has complete control over the novels he chooses to read, but obviously he should choose books that will move him closer to his personal reading goals.
  + Grade is determined by three components: book level, quiz accuracy, and points accumulated
* **How can I monitor my child’s progress in AR?**
* Renaissance Home Connect—your online gateway to your student’s AR performance
* <http://www.zacharyhigh.org/>, Quick Links, AR Parent Home Connect
* Available by August 11th
* Login information: (same as student’s computer login)
* First.Last(year graduating) up to 20 characters

*Example—John.White2018* OR

**My student’s login info.**

Login: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Password: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Christopher.Reeve201*

* Password: initials(last 4 digits of SSN)

*Example—jw1234*

* Email setup! YES!
* **How can I help to insure my child’s success in AR?**
  + Explore! Help your child to find books that appeal to his interests
  + Encourage reading at home (don’t rely on 15 minutes)
  + Provide quiet time/area specifically for reading
  + Check progress often
  + Communicate with your child’s English teacher , the school librarian ([christina.knight@zacharyschools.org](mailto:christina.knight@zacharyschools.org)), or the English department chairperson ([charlotte.blanchard@zacharyschools.org](mailto:charlotte.blanchard@zacharyschools.org))
* **Literacy Strategies**
* <http://www.zacharyhigh.org/>, Quick Links, Literacy Support Toolbox
* Literacy Strategies Descriptions
* Literacy Strategies Video Links
* **Writing across the Curriculum**
  + <http://www.zacharyhigh.org/>, Quick Links, Literacy Support Toolbox
* 6+1 Writing Traits Rubric
* All writing assessed based upon these criteria, either in part or as a whole
* **Common Core effects on the English classroom:**
* more attention to high-quality, complex, age-appropriate, authentic texts;
* students are required to fully connect with a variety of texts, respond in a variety of ways, and extend their learning and research as a result of active reading;
* Ultimately, we want to create independent readers who can manage any cold-read tasks they encounter, whether on standardized tests or in the real world.
* Classroom instruction (guided reading practice) is only one piece of the big picture.
* **Standardized Testing (ACT's EPAS® Educational Planning and Assessment System)** (<http://www.act.org/epas/>) **EPAS** focuses on a number of key transition points that young people face:
* **8th/9th grade**—Preparing for high school studies (**EXPLORE** test)
* **10th grade**—Planning and preparing for college and the workplace (**PLAN** test)
* **11th/12th grade**—Being ready for life after high school (**ACT**)

*Preparing for the ACT begins long before the spring of your child’s junior year, and the ACT score is a critical factor in your child’s post-secondary future.*