

To be good readers, children need to read more at home. As the staff and parents at Pineview Elementary School, we write to ask your support in helping us promote home reading.

We recognize and appreciate your previous contributions to our school (or to education in our community). We especially appreciate the books you donated to our classroom libraries. We hope you will be interested in helping us with a new program to increase our students' literacy skills.

We have 574 children at Pineview, and 300 of them are in kindergarten, first, and second grade. Our school is located in a rural area where there is high unemployment, so more than 75% of our students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. That means that many families do not have money to buy children's books.

Parent support for our school is high. We have more than 100 parent volunteers in our school each week. Children take home books from our school and classroom libraries, and family members frequently tell us how much their children like to read at home.

Most children in our school read very well, but some still need much more reading experience. For example, last year 28% of children who entered second grade did not meet national standards in reading. We want to change that with more teaching and more reading at school and at home.

Research shows that home reading is related to higher achievement. From their first day of kindergarten, we want Pineview students to develop the habit of reading every night at home. To achieve this goal, they must have books they can read, and we need to provide such books, as well as strong support and encouragement. The KEEP BOOKS program is a promising solution to this problem.

We would like to send a little book home every week with each of our children in kindergarten, first grade, and the beginning of second grade. These little books are very inexpensive (as little as 25 cents each), but they are designed by reading experts to support beginning readers. We will begin with books that develop phonemic awareness through rhymes. The books get harder and help children learn a core of simple words. A series of books develops phonics principles. Some books are designed to help children read the language of mathematics.

KEEP BOOKS help children know how to collect and care for books. Teachers follow a structured plan to introduce the books to children and show them how to keep the books in a special box. The children write their names on the books. Then, they get to take the books home and *keep* them. Research shows that children read these books again and again—to family members, friends, pets, *and their little brothers and sisters*.

We want to ensure that every child receives 100 books in the primary grades—36 in kindergarten, 36 in grade one, and 28 in grade two. The cost to sponsor one child is only \$25. This inexpensive educational solution to the reading achievement problem will make a big difference to children in our school.

We are prepared to put this plan into action. Teachers have studied the program and are prepared to manage it and provide the instruction for it. In fact, one of our teachers bought KEEP BOOKS last year with her personal funds and had excellent results. Our PTA is already sponsoring 30 children. A local office supply store is supplying boxes. Staff and parents have volunteered time to organize the books.

We will be collecting information about the results of our program. We will count the books children read, ask parents their opinions via a survey, and examine reading scores to determine the difference that this program makes.

We are very excited about this project. With full sponsorship, it will affect 300 children. At only \$25 per child, a total of \$7,500, we can insure that children have their own books and read at home every day. We hope that [your company's; your foundation's] priorities include this contribution toward increasing children's reading ability.

Sincerely,

Principal, Primary Teachers