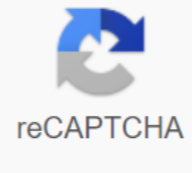




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Greenbush elementary school ri

Home of the Randall RacoonsNominated by Tina SugarStudents celebrate the birthday of their favorite director. John Wallace inspires his students every day to be the best they can be during their morning announcements. (Credit: Tina Sugar) Our primary school is a place everyone loves to be. We are a 3-5 grade school with great students, wonderful teachers, and the most amazing principal, John Wallace. Our children come to school willing to learn and show us their talent and hard work every day. My school not only has wonderful families and dedicated teachers, we also have our amazing principal, John Wallace. Every morning, Mr. Wallace comes to talk to our racy bears. He shares with us his words of wisdom and every day our students listen to him with gratitude. He tells them to believe in their dreams and the dreams of others. It helps them heal when our world is hurting and celebrates with them when they have done well or worked hard to meet a goal. Our morning ads include the lunch menu and a promise for our country, but it's more than that because Mr. Wallace talks to each of our classrooms as if he's talking directly to each student. Mr. Wallace teaches them how to be good people, take care of one another, and how to make not only him proud, but also proud parents and teachers of who they are and what they do. Our students adore Mr. Wallace and his kindness, humour and ability to see life through our children's eyes while teaching them about respect, responsibility and love. His legendary sign is, The decisions he makes today, shape his world tomorrow. Thanks Bears Washing Machines! The Kindness Mural and What It Represents Looking for an Excellent Private School in Philadelphia? Let us help. We have curated a list of the best schools in the Philly area for review, including Montessori schools, nursery schools and private schools that serve all ages of children. Use this list to discover and select the best preschool, high school or high school in Philadelphia for your family. 70 Results per page Highlighted Holy Child Academy Preschool, Middle School, Elementary Holy Child Academy (HCA) is an independent Catholic school for children of all faiths in Nursery through Grade 8. Founded in 1927, HCA strives to educate diverse students on race, culture and religious beliefs. The goal is for each child to develop their God-given talents and skills for the improvement of ... Featured Listing Holy Child School in Rosemont Preschool, Middle School, Elementary Holy Child School in Rosemont is the best option for families who believe a child's early years of education play a larger-than-life role to help achieve a life of happiness, contribution and success. We are a co-educational, independent, Catholic that welcomes children of all religions, from early childhood to eighth grade... Listat destact Abington Friends School Preschool, Middle School, High School/Post Grad. Grad. At Abington Friends School, we encourage the growth of students in change makers informed with a bold vision that lead real lives of success. The dynamic academic program is reinforced by the daily infusion of Quaker values. AFS students flourish within a carefully designed curriculum for dynamic and immersive learning. Our families join a... Aim Academy Middle School, High School/Post Grad. AIM Elementary is a research-based college preparatory school where students in 1st-12th grade with language-based learning differences thrive in a rigorous and enriching environment guided by experienced and creative teachers. AIM offers dynamic distance learning as an option for students and our teachers have access to the latest research, technological resources and experts in their field and offer multiple sensory... Featured list Waldron Mercy Academy Preschool, Middle School, Elementary students from three to grade 8 experience the joy of learning at Waldron Mercy Academy, a diverse, Catholic, co-ed school sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy. Our innovative service learning curriculum creates independent and complete students who are willing to make a difference in their communities in high school and beyond. Featured Listing The Philadelphia School Preschool, Middle School, Elementary The Philadelphia School (TPS) is a progressive independent day school that educates children for a future that is impossible to know, but not impossible to shape. Our approach to learning and teaching has deep thinking, innovation and agency as its guiding values. We encourage children to explore and push the limits of the possibility of fulfilling ... Moorestown Friends School Preschool, Middle School, High School/ Post Grad, Elementary At Moorestown Friends, we measure greatness by many metrics. MFS students build solid academic foundations, outperform traditional benchmarks, collectively earn South Jersey's highest SAT scores, and move on to success in a diverse and impressive mix of colleges and universities. What we believe deeply shapes how we teach and learn. Because we value... Featured Listing The Shipley School Middle School, High School/Post Grad, Elementary The Shipley School, in Pre-K through the preparatory school of grade 12 co-educational college in Bryn Mawr, inspires and prepares students to make a powerful and positive impact on the world. Our goal of maximizing student potential begins with a focus on well-being and providing a wide range of opportunities for young people to discover... Featured Listing Gladwyne Montessori Gladwyne Montessori is an independent Montessori school on Philadelphia's main line. From our students have excelled in high schools in the area and went on to succeed in the best schools and universities around the country. A Gladwyne Montessori education combines the time-tested and visionary ideas of Dr. Maria Montessori with the constantly evolving world of advanced technology. ... Listing Tattall Preschool, Middle School, High School/Post Grad, Elementary For more than 90 years, The Tattall School has been rooted in a commitment to research, character, warmth and creativity. A tattall education enhances the voice of students and embraces a vision of a more loving and just world. PK3 students through Grade 12 experience a transformative education on a magnificent 100-acre campus. We prioritize... In first grades, U.S. schools value reading-understanding skills over knowledge. The results are devastating, especially for poor children. Natalie Wexler August 2019 Number Justyna StasiK first seen, the classroom she was visiting at a high-poverty school in Washington, D.C., looked like a model of industriousness. The teacher sat at a desk in the corner, hoses over the students' work, while the first students quietly filed out a spreadsheet intended to develop their reading skills. As I looked around, I noticed a little girl drawing on a piece of paper. Ten minutes later, she had sketched a number of human figures, and was busy painting them yellow. I kneeled next to him and asked him: What are you drawing? Clowns, he replied confidently. Why are you drawing clowns? Because he says right here, 'Draw clowns,' he explained. Running on the left side of the worksheet was a list of reading comprehension skills: finding the main idea, making inferences, making predictions. The girl pointed to the phrase drawing conclusions. He was supposed to be making inferences and drawing conclusions about a dense article describing Brazil, which was lying face down on his desk. But she didn't know the text was there until I delivered it. Further to the point, she had never heard of Brazil and was unable to read the word. The assignment of this girl was only an example, albeit serious, of a standard pedagogical approach. American primary education has been shaped by a theory that goes like this: reading –a term that used to mean not only matching letters with sounds, but also understanding- can be taught in a completely disconnected way from content. Use simple texts to teach children to find the main idea, make inferences, draw conclusions, and so on, and eventually they will be able to apply these skills to understand the meaning of anything put before them. In the meantime, what children are reading doesn't really matter – it's better for them to acquire skills that will allow them to discover the knowledge for themselves later than for them to be given information directly, or so the thinking goes. That is, they have to spend their time learning to read before reading to learn. Science can wait, history, which is considered abstract because young minds to understand, you have to wait. Reading time is, on the other hand, filled with a variety of short books and passages not connected to each other, except for the comprehension skills they are meant to teach. Until 1977, primary school teachers spent more than twice as much time reading and combined social studies. But since 2001, when federal legislation No Child Left Behind made standardized reading and math scores yardstick to measure progress, the time spent on both subjects has only grown. In turn, the amount of time spent on social studies and science has fallen, especially in schools where test scores are low. And yet, despite the enormous spending of time and resources on reading, American children have not become better readers. Over the past 20 years, only about a third of students have scored at or above the competent level on national tests. For low- and minority-income children, the picture is especially gloomy: their average test scores are well below those of their wealthier, largely white peers, a phenomenon commonly known as the achievement gap. As this gap has grown, the United States' position in the international literacy rankings, already mediocre, has fallen. It looks like we're declining as other systems improve, said a federal official who oversees the administration of these tests at Education Week. All of this raises a disturbing question: What if the medication we've been prescribing is only making things worse, especially for poor children? What if the best way to boost reading comprehension is not to punch children into discrete skills, but to teach them, as soon as possible, the things we have marginalized, including history, science and other content that could build the knowledge and vocabulary they need to understand both the written texts and the world around them? In the late 1980s, two Wisconsin researchers, Donna Recht and Lauren Leslie, designed an ingenious experiment to try to determine the extent to which a child's reading comprehension depends on their prior knowledge of a subject. To that end, they built a miniature baseball field and recruited it with wooden baseball players. They then brought in 64 seventh and eighth grade students who had been tested both for their reading ability and for their knowledge of baseball. Recht and Leslie chose baseball because they thought many kids who weren't great readers, however, knew a good deal about the game. Each student was asked to first read a description of a fictional baseball post and then move the wooden figures to re-enact it. (For example: Churniak swings and hits a slow bounce ball towards the short stop. Haley comes in, camps, and throws in the first, but too late. Churniak is first with a single, Johnson stayed in third. The next mass is Whitcomb, the Cougars' left fielder.) It turned out that prior knowledge of baseball made a big difference in capacity students to understand the text, rather than their supposed level of reading. Children who knew little about baseball, including good readers, all did it wrong. And all those who knew a lot about baseball, whether they were good or bad readers, did well. In fact, bad readers who knew a lot about baseball outperformed good readers who didn't. About 25 years a variation in the baseball study shed more light on the relationship between knowledge and understanding. This team of researchers focused on preschoolers from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. First they read a book about birds, a subject they had determined that children with higher incomes knew more than those on lower incomes. When they tested understanding, the researchers found that richer children did significantly better. But then they read a story involving a subject that neither group knew anything about: makeup animals called wugs. When the children's previous knowledge was the same, their understanding was essentially the same. In other words, the gap in understanding was not a gap in knowledge. For various reasons, children from better educated families – who also tend to have higher incomes – come to school with more knowledge and vocabulary. In the first grades, teachers have told me, children from less educated families may not know basic words like behind; I saw a first-degree struggle with a simple mathematical problem because I didn't know the meaning of it before. As the years go by, the children of educated parents continue to acquire more knowledge and vocabulary outside of school, making it easier for them to gain even more knowledge, because, like Velcro, knowledge is better adhered to other related knowledge. Meanwhile, their less fortunate peers fall further and further behind, especially if their schools don't provide them with knowledge. This snowball has been called the Matthew effect, following the passage to the Gospel according to Matthew about the rich and the increasingly poor. Every year that the Matthew effect is allowed to continue, it becomes harder to reverse. So the sooner we start building children's knowledge, the better our chances of narrowing the gap. While in some respects American schools vary enormously, in almost every primary classroom the same basic structure is found. The day is divided into a math blog and a reading block, the latter consuming anywhere from 90 minutes to three hours. In perhaps half of all primary schools, teachers must use a reading textbook that includes a variety of passages, discussion questions, and a teacher's guide. In other schools, teachers are left to their own devices to figure out how to teach to read, and rely on commercially available children's books. In any case, when it comes to teaching comprehension, the emphasis is on skills. And the overwhelming majority of teachers turn to the Internet to supplement these materials, despite not having been trained in curricular design. A Rand Corporation survey of teachers found that 95 per cent of teachers they turn to Google for materials and lesson plans; 86 percent turn to Pinterest. Normally, a teacher will focus on a skill of the week, reading books aloud or passages chosen not for their content, but for the sake they need to demonstrate a certain skill. Demonstrating this ability may not involve reading at all, however. A common way to model the ability to compare and contrast, for example, is to bring two children to the front of the room and lead a discussion about the similarities and differences in what they wear. Next, students will practice the skill on their own or in small groups under the guidance of a teacher, reading books determined to be at their individual reading level, which may be well below their grade level. Again, the books do not cohere around any particular topic; many are simple fiction. The theory is that if students only read enough, and spend enough time practicing comprehension skills, they will over time be able to understand more complex texts. Many teachers have told me that they would like to spend more time in social studies and science, because their students clearly enjoy learning real content. But they have been informed that teaching skills are the way to boost reading comprehension. In general, policymakers and educational reformists have not questioned this approach and, in fact, raising the importance of reading scores, have intensified it. Parents, like teachers, may object to the emphasis on test preparation, but they have not focused on the most fundamental problem. If students do not have the knowledge and vocabulary to understand the passages of reading tests, they will not have the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to make inferences or find the main idea. And if they arrive in high school without being exposed to history or science, as is the case with many students from low-income families, they will not be able to read and understand high school materials. Common Core's literacy standards, which since 2010 have influenced classroom practice in most states, have made a bad situation worse in many ways. In an effort to expand children's knowledge, the standards call for elementary school teachers to expose all students to more complex and more nonfiction writing. This may seem like a step in the right direction, but nonfiction generally assumes even more knowledge of background and vocabulary than fiction. When nonfiction is combined with the skills-focused approach –as it has been in most classrooms- the results can be disastrous. Teachers can put impenetrable text in front of children and just let them fight. Or, perhaps, draw clowns. In a small number of American schools, things are starting to change. A few years ago, there was no such thing as an elementary literacy curriculum that focused on knowledge building. There are now several, including a few available online at no cost. Some have been adopted by entire school districts those in high poverty such as Baltimore and Detroit—, while others are being implemented by charter networks or individual schools. Curriculums vary in their particularities, but they are all organized by topics or topics rather than skills. In one, the first students learn about Mesopotamia and second-grade students study Greek myths. In another, kindergartners spend months learning about trees, and first students explore birds. Children often find these topics - including and perhaps especially historical ones - far more attractive than a constant diet of skills. In schools that use these new curriculums, all pupils grapple with the same texts, some of which are read aloud by teachers. Children also spend time every day reading independently, at different levels of complexity. But struggling readers are not limited to the simple concepts and vocabulary they can access through their own reading. Teachers tend to be surprised at how quickly children absorb sophisticated vocabulary (such as fertile and opponent) and learn how to make connections between different subjects. As promising as some of the early results are, it seems reasonable to ask: With rising inequality and a growing share of American students from low-income families, can any curriculum really level the playing field? The relatively few schools that have adopted knowledge-building elementary school plans may have trouble using test scores to show that the approach can work, as it could take years for low-income students to acquire enough general knowledge to carry out, as well as their wealthier peers. And yet, there is evidence –on a large scale- that this type of elementary curriculum can reduce inequality, thanks to an intentional experiment carried out in France. As E. D. Hirsch Jr. explains in his book Why Knowledge Matters, until 1989, all French schools were required to adhere to a detailed and content-focused national curriculum. If a child from a low-income family started public preschool at age 2, at age 10, it would almost have caught a very advantageous child who had started at age 4. Then a new law encouraged elementary schools to adopt the American approach, foreground skills such as critical thinking and learning to learn. The results were dramatic. Over the next 20 years, attainment levels decreased sharply for all students, and the drop was greatest among those most in need. The United States cannot simply adopt the kind of comprehensive national curriculum that France once had (and that the countries that outperform us in international tests still have). By American law and custom, the curriculum is determined locally. However, much can be done for individual schools and districts - and even states - to help build the knowledge that all children need to thrive. A couple of years ago, in a low-income suburb of Ohio, a fourth-grade teacher named Sarah Webb decided to try a new curriculum focused on the content her district was considering adopting. Adjusting a skills approach was not easy, but soon Webb could see that students at all levels of reading ability were flourishing. They wanted to know more about certain topics that appear on the curriculum, so Webb pulled books from the public library to satisfy his curiosity. She told me that after unity in What makes a big heart? a girl talked about plasma all year round. That was the way Webb had always wanted to teach, but he had never been able to make it happen. Like other teachers I've spoken to, he said children who were previously considered low earners were particularly fascinated. She remembers a sweet kid I'm going to call Matt, who had a history of reading difficulties. As the year progressed, Matt found himself very interested in everything the class was studying and became a leader in class discussions. He wrote an entire paragraph about Clara Barton –more than she had written before– which she proudly read to her parents. Her mother said she had never seen him so enthusiastic about school. Before, says Webb, Matt felt permanently consigned to what children see as the silent group. But at the end of the year, Webb wrote a thank you note. Reading, he told her, was no longer a struggle. This article is adapted from Natalie Wexler's book The Knowledge Gap: The Hidden Cause of America's Broken Education System. The staff very good.

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