



# FREE PRESS NEWSPAPERS

## ADVOCATE COURANT JOURNAL SHOPPER

Sports Obituaries Columnists Classifieds About Us Subscriptions Shop Local Submit Guest blog

home : braidwood journal : braidwood journal

Share

September 20, 2012

3/6/2012 9:38:00 PM

### Schools hope to 'jump start' into next year

**Marney Simon**  
Staff writer

Few things will make a child moan and groan as much as the mention of summer school. But unfortunately, for some students, hitting the books in the summer months is the only way to ensure success.

But a new proposal in front of the Reed-Custer School Board is hoping to make the need to head back to school while others are on vacation less of a chore.

Reed-Custer Middle School Principal Pam Surprenant has been pitching the idea to the members of the school board. The program will be a change from traditional summer school to a program called "Jump Start."

The idea is simple - to give students a positive learning experience to "jump start" their learning before they go into the next grade. Surprenant said the program replaces the traditional model of summer school, where students simply re-take courses they've failed. Instead, Jump Start creates a more comprehensive program that addresses the student's overall deficiencies.

"The intentions of traditional summer school are good, they want kids to learn the content that they've missed," Surprenant said. "But over time, it's gotten a really negative connotation [of failure]. We're looking at the results that we're getting from the kids that have gone through summer school, and started to wonder what better results could we get. Rather than saying, it's a punitive thing, you've failed, you're in bad standing with us and you have to do the summer school gig, it was really about making it more positive."

Surprenant said traditional summer school has been successful at Reed-Custer, but the hope was a boost to the program so that students not only make up for poor grades, but are propelled into the new year.

One major new take on the program versus traditional summer school will be the addition of a physical education component.

"There is a tremendous trend in the data coming out that says if you partner physical activity and intentional brain activities, the learning is more sustainable, more meaningful for kids, and likely to be more applied into future learning," Surprenant said. "We want to incorporate the physical part of it. You don't have to be in great shape, it's not a sports camp, but a physical activity along with the academic activities."

Surprenant said that the addition of exercise to stimulate the brain is a theory explained by Dr. John Ratey, who published the book Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain in 2008. Dr. Ratey, an associate clinical professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, has conducted research that shows that exercise can improve the ability to learn. Exercise can help to "supercharge" the brain, which can result in sharpened thinking skills, enhanced memory and an overall positive impact on cognition.

Surprenant said using that theory, students will participate in physical exercises, such as obstacles or tossing a ball, while at the same time defining words or identifying concepts.

"That way, the body is activated, the brain is activated," Surprenant said. "We're physically involved, we're not sitting in rows like a traditional school day, we're saying let's partner the physical aspect with the learning aspect as well."

Another major change will be moving the program to the end of summer. Surprenant said that students can be resistant to continuing school at the start of summer vacation. By scheduling Jump Start at the end of the summer break, the kids will be ready to hit the ground running when the school year starts up in August.

"They're going to get ready, so that by the time they start the school year, they'll have an advantage that you wouldn't have had before" Surprenant said. "So we can expose kids to reading strategies, math strategies, coping mechanisms for incoming sixth graders and incoming ninth graders. So they know their building, they have connections with people here."

Surprenant said the Jump Start program will help students with the skills they need, instead of throwing them into a class where they've struggled with that subject before.

"It's really a positive spin on what we've done in the past," Surprenant said. "We're really dedicating ourselves to how we make the learning really engaging. How do we make it less traditional than a classroom where you're sitting in rows and working through packets. And how do we make it more collaborative so that the kids are working with different kids. So we'll have 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th [graders], but we're really looking at the incoming 6th graders and 9th graders

Advanced Search

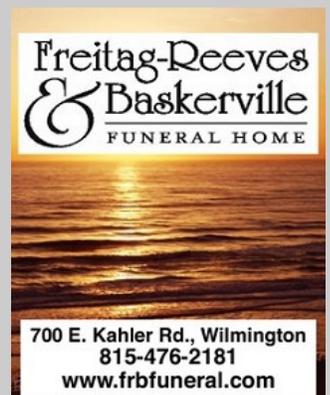
search...

search

Subscription Login  
[LOGIN](#) | [SUBSCRIBE](#)

Garage Sales This Week  
Place an Ad  
Photo Gallery  
Breaking News Alerts  
News Partners  
Submit Soundoff  
Extras  
Ask a Lawyer  
Ask the Editor  
CCPD Feasibility Study, Final

September						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						



**Freitag-Reeves  
& Baskerville**  
FUNERAL HOME

700 E. Kahler Rd., Wilmington  
815-476-2181  
www.frbfuneral.com



**815-634-8858**

715 S Broadway  
Coal City, IL 60416

**Geo's**  
PIZZA

Click Here

Online

to have connections before they even start. The research shows that pays off in dividends, because they're already committed to school rather than fearful or resentful that they had to go to summer school."

Surprenant said the school will look at multiple points of data to identify the students with deficiencies in reading, math, and/or overall school performance, including organization and planning skills. The school will then analyze that data to see which students are viable candidates for Jump Start. It's a change from the past's criteria, where two failed courses meant summer school. With this plan, Surprenant said, the school is recognizing deeper needs of the students.

"What we're saying is, we recognize that there's some academic weakness, so here's what we're going to offer you to get on to the right track for the next school year. That transition from middle school to high school can't be underestimated. There's a lot that goes into getting kids ready to make that jump start into a different building, into a different staff, into a different administration. So we want to maximize their opportunities to do really well. And also not be punitive, you failed, now you have to take summer school."

The Jump Start proposal will affect middle school students and students going into their freshmen year of high school. While the input of the high school administration was important to the process of creating the program, the high school itself will not be a part of Jump Start. The high school summer school program will not change or be affected by the change, and will still take place earlier in summer.

The school board is expected to take a vote on the proposal in March. If the Jump Start program is approved, the program would start this summer. The program is expected to last about 90 minutes per day for four weeks.

"The ultimate hope is that we'll close the gap in what students haven't learned and what they will learn, before they even start the school year," Surprenant said. "The hope is that we'll build confidence in their ability to be self directed in their learning... The other goal is that connection, especially for students transitioning into a different building, to say, I have a team of people who I know, have worked with, and have had academic success."

### Article Comment Submission Form

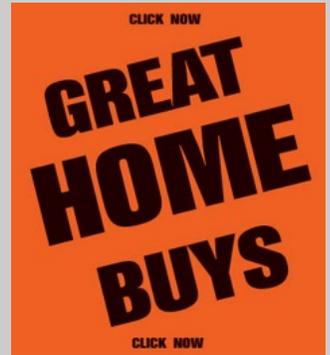
Please feel free to submit your comments.

Article comments are not posted immediately to the Web site. Each submission must be approved by the Web site editor, who may edit content for appropriateness. There may be a delay of 24-48 hours for any submission while the web site editor reviews and approves it.

**Note:** All information on this form is required. Your telephone number is for our use only, and will not be attached to your comment.

#### Submit an Article Comment

<b>First Name:</b> <i>Required</i>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Last Name:</b> <i>Required</i>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Telephone:</b> <i>Required</i>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Email:</b> <i>Required</i>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Comment:</b> <i>Required</i>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Passcode:</b> <i>Required</i>	<input type="text" value="613uz5"/> <a href="#">Click here to see a new mix of characters.</a> <input type="text"/> This is an anti-SPAM device. It is not case sensitive.



#### Ask an expert

##### Ann Gill

Expertise: Coal City Courant/Braidwood Journal Editor

**Q:** What are the trick-or-treating hours for Diamond and Coal City, and which day is it being done?

**A:** Trick-or-treat hours in Coal City and Diamond are set for Monday, Oct. 31 from 4-7 p.m. Carbon Hill trick-or-treating...

Submit

Reset

**Q:** From where do Braidwood homes get their water, from a treatment plant or wells? Is it contaminated with tritium? The CBS Ch.2 news story the other night made it sound as if living in Braidwood was a invitation to cancer. Are there individual water companies that supply water to various Braidwood subdivisions, as I thought I had read in a related internet link? Thanks in advance.

**A:** The city of Braidwood distributes water to city residents pulled from five wells. The wells use groundwater taken from...

[Sports](#)

[Obituaries](#)

[Columnists](#)

[About Us](#)

[Subscriptions](#)

[Classifieds](#)

[Submit](#)

[Extras](#)

[Shop Local](#)

[Life](#)

[Home](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [RSS feeds](#)

**Site Design and Content**

**Copyright 2012 1up!**

Software © 1998-2012 1up! Software, All Rights Reserved