

AR becoming burden

Almost every student in junior high and high school is required to earn at least 10 Accelerated Reading (AR) points each six weeks. Although the intent behind AR is good, it is not fulfilling the purpose that it was designed to do.

AR was created to keep students reading and to increase their vocabulary, but this program is not working anymore.

The first reason for this is that many students simply do not have enough time. Students are being pulled in a million different directions throughout the week, and AR points are just one more thing to add to the pile. Weekdays are filled with school, practice, games, jobs, homework, youth groups, and other extracurricular activities, and the weekends are just as busy. With all of these events to occupy their time, many students aren't able to finish a book before the deadline.

Another flaw of AR is that it can cause some students to despise reading. Some people love reading, while others strongly dislike it. Forcing students that don't enjoy reading to read will only cause them to dislike it more and may scare them away from reading for good.

Lastly, often students don't even read an AR book. Students will take the test based off of the movie version that they watched, or use SparkNotes to read a summary of the book. This bypasses the purpose of AR entirely, and unfortunately there is no way to prevent this.

The purpose of Accelerated Reading is to expand students' vocabulary and keep them reading. However, this goal is not being accomplished. Many students don't read at all, and those that do often skip over words that they don't know instead of learning them.

Although the AR program is supposed to foster a love for reading, it has become another homework burden that many students dread. Teachers and students need to work together to find an alternative method that will keep students reading without all of the complications of AR.