

Stillwater News Press

EDITOR'S PICK FEATURED

Stillwater battles summer learning loss with Reading Academy

By David Bitton dbitton@stwnewspress.com Jul 2, 2018

A dozen kids participating in the Summer Reading Academy huddled around librarian Susie Masters, eager to answer questions as she read them a book Monday during summer school at Will Rogers Elementary.

Nearly 180 Stillwater Public Schools students are taking part in a four-week program aimed at curbing the summer learning loss and building on the skills students learned throughout the year.

"The goal is to create a fun learning experience that can connect back to the classroom," said Darren Nelson, a Westwood Elementary principal who works as the summer school principal.



Second-grader Mayar Almatar, 7, works on reading comprehension Monday, July 2, 2018 while attending summer school at Will Rogers Elementary in Stillwater. (David Bitton/Stillwater News Press)

Participating are 91 Summer Reading Academy second- and third-graders, 54 English Language Learners in kindergarten through fifth grade and 34 elementary and secondary students engaged in Extended School Year learning.

Second-grader Mayar Almatar, 7, an English language learner born in Saudi Arabia, was busy working on her reading comprehension in the computer lab.

"I've learned a lot," Almatar said. "I learned the White House has a lot of bathrooms, doors and bedrooms."

Nelson said Almatar was learning on Istation, an e-learning program that was approved by the state for reading efficiency.

"I admire the kids and parents commitment to being here in the summer," Nelson said.

Nelson, who has lead the program eight summers, tries to mix things up and said this year's theme is agriculture.

The children have been doing agriculture-related projects with Shelley Mitchell, a 4-H and youth programs extension specialist with Oklahoma State University's Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture and her student volunteers.

Last week students planted a grass caterpillar and next week they will tour the district's agriculture facility where Nelson said they will be learning about horticulture and livestock.