

# Literacy Program

Welcome to fifth grade. As your child begins their first year of middle school I would like to share my literacy program and expectations, so that you are comfortable and aware of what will be happening in the classroom.

Throughout this school year your child will be exposed to a literacy program that will promote lifelong readers and writers. In the intermediate grades your child will move from childhood to adolescence and, as the classroom teacher, I will encourage all students to find their voices as writers and refine their choices as readers. My literacy program will foster active, responsible learning to help students begin to use their literacy as a tool that gives them the ability to find information they need to express their ideas. The classroom will consist of active learners who have individual goals that will be achieved with my assistance.

Within the literacy classroom I will be focusing on many different techniques to assess each child in order to know what stage of literacy they are approaching. Conferences where students will read a page or two from their “free read” book, followed by an oral summary, will justify that students are capable of selecting “just right” books. It is very important that children enjoy what they are reading and have the opportunity to select their own books. At the same time they must also select text that is at their appropriate reading level. Lessons will focus on skill-based as well as meaning-based instruction. The students will receive appropriate skill instruction, which will be practical to apply immediately in many curriculum areas. Response letters will be written weekly. The requirement of this letter is to summarize the “chunk” of text read in class, and to write one paragraph that demonstrates their thoughts while reading. The thought paragraphs should include evidence from the text to support the many reading strategies they are using. This can be very challenging for a fifth grader, but as the school year progresses, classmates share, and I model letters. I believe everyone will become comfortable with this assignment. Small group instruction will take place daily depending on the needs of the children. These needs are identified on a daily basis through response letters, guided reading group assignments, oral responses, written assessments and classroom observations. Speaking skills are practiced monthly

through a book project that will be assigned at the beginning of each month. Your child will be given a genre or theme for the month and must find an appropriate book that must be approved by me. Book projects are a fun process to motivate classmates to read books as well as a great opportunity to speak in front of the class as they learn the importance of public speaking skills. I encourage you to pick up an extra copy of the book your child is reading and get involved through shared discussions at home. This year our literacy-based classroom is going to be an exciting place to learn.

I would also like to extend an invitation to all parents and relatives to become involved with our classroom. You may have a special interest, some wonderful family history, a job, a hobby, etc. to share with the children. Parents are always welcome to present a book talk to the class. Having you participate in the classrooms literacy goals is a valuable model for the children to experience. Please feel free to drop me a note or call if you would like to come into the classroom at any time.

For the entire school year my focus will be on your child, his/her needs, and making sure that he/she receives the best educational experience possible. Balancing read-alouds, shared reading, independent reading, guided reading, modeled/shared writing, interactive writing and independent writing in one classroom is the sure combination of a successful literacy environment.