Dear Parents,

This summer, we participated in a class which studied the work of Penny Kittle. She is a guru in independent reading instruction, and we share her philosophy, and plan to teach accordingly. Below, please read through the entire letter explaining our thoughts, and laying out our expectations for working together this year.

A central goal of Writing is to establish a reading habit in the busy lives of students. We are hoping we can work together to recapture the pleasure and passion of readers. In order to become better at basketball, soccer, piano, singing, gaming, dirt-bike riding, or basically any activity we love, we must practice. Therefore, to become better readers, we must read. We expect our students to read.

We won't know the details of every book students read and refer to this semester, and we won't remember the details of all the books we recommend to students. What we seek for all of our students is a compulsion to read-for pleasure-for knowledge-for a passion for story or information that will keep them into the pages of a book past our assigned time for reading-past our monthly minimum AR expectations (discussed below), as many of our former students have. This has tremendous benefits. Here are a few:

* **Reading relieves stress.** Reading takes you out of the present and into another place and time; it is a perfect escape.
* **Reading builds stamina** to prepare students for college and beyond. Reading for an hour or two in one sitting is a basic expectation in college. In this class, we will exercise muscles soon to be strained in the coming years. Reading for fluency and stamina has been proven to improve the reading rate for students. Fast reading develops confidence and an appetite for books as well as teaching vocabulary in context, which improves writing, but it only happens when students find books they *want* to read.
* There is a lot of talk in the media that students today won't read, but we believe students substitute all of those other distractions (the internet, TV, gaming, etc.) if they feel no passion for the book assigned to them. In our experience, students who haven't been readers will suddenly become quite passionate about reading with **the right book** in their hands. But those books might challenge your values. Is that okay with you? Can your child choose to read what he/she chooses?

We encourage you to have conversations with your child about what he/she is reading. If the content of the book is troubling to you, please contact whichever one of us is your child's homeroom teacher.

Students will be expected to read within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This is a range where reading is comfortable, yet stimulating for your child. A parent letter will be sent home periodically letting you know your child's current ZPD. We will be tracking your child's reading rate, setting goals, and upholding weekly expectations. If those weekly expectations aren't met, your child will be expected to stay for Power Hour the following Monday. If he/she hasn't met expectations he/she will be calling you to make a plan to stay that day. Each student will have a tracking form on which he/she will document each time reading is done, the length of time spent reading, and how many pages are read. We also have Accelerated Reader (AR) monthly expectations for our students. These should all work very well together for the improved fluency of your child. Each month, your child's AR grade will be an average of the scores from AR tests over books they have independently read, and tests taken over those books.

As is everywhere, budgets are tight. If you have books you no longer need, please consider donating them to our classrooms. Even better, if you have books you love, come share your enthusiasm for the book by sharing a little bit about the book with us! We would love to have you.

Thank you so much for your time and dedication to your child's educational success.

Respectfully,

Mrs. Larson & Mrs. Chada

I have read and agree to the contents of this letter.

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student's name parent's name