

September 8, 2017

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome to 5<sup>th</sup> Grade! We're excited about the opportunity to continue to learn and grow with all of our returning students, and we've been delighted to meet all of our new students. It is going to be a thrilling and productive school year. There are a few things we want to share with you.

WE HAVE A NEW READING CURRICULUM!!! MPS has adopted Benchmark Advance for all elementary schools, districtwide. You will be seeing pieces of this curriculum coming home. The students are already engaged and motivated during our Reader's Workshop, and we expect them to share their learning when materials are sent home. Look for the first "consumable" (meaning it is your child's to keep) to come home sometime in October.

A new addition to our established Math block is DreamBox! All students will be able and expected to engage in the online program during the school day. The children will also have the ability to login at home. Look for more information regarding DreamBox in the next few weeks.

Our homework policy is carried over from 4<sup>th</sup> grade. We expect students to read 20 – 30 minutes a day. Think about ways to keep reading at home exciting and fun for all. Your child may be reading a book independently. You may want to choose a book to read–aloud to the entire family. Another option is for your older child to read to a younger sibling, or vice versa. The options are unlimited, as long as your child is reading. Additionally, 5<sup>th</sup> graders should have all their facts MASTERED. Ideally, your child should be able to answer 100 fact based problems, regardless of the operation ( +, -, x, / ) in a 5 minute timing.

We have heard that families and/or their students want more! There will be "optional" activities for your student to choose from. Your child will be encouraged to take the initiative to manage any optional homework. Throughout the year, incomplete assignments will also filter home and need to be completed. Your child will be made aware of such work, and the assignment will be noted in your child's planner.

Last year we used the **AVID** program (Advancement Via Individual Determination) to grow academic, social, and organizational skills. This year we will continue the program and build on that foundation. AVID is a great way to connect our learning to the middle and high schools in the District as well as allow students to develop skills they can use throughout their education and beyond. At this time of year we are focusing on two key learning tools, Planners and Binders.

*Planners*- help students learn and track goals set and work completed. They will be sent home to be signed weekly.

*Binders*- help students organize their materials, their classes, and their assignments.

We will be hosting an AVID Family night at the end of September or early October. Look for more information coming home soon!

There is a new “House” system at Jenny Lind. Your child participated in the first school-wide House meeting today! Ask your child which House he/she is in... Isibindi, Amistad, Alturismo, and Reveur. Each House has its own designated color and each of those words has an important meaning. Isibindi is the House of Courage, Amistad is the House of Friendship, Alturismo is the House Giving, and Reveur is the House of Dreamers.

5<sup>th</sup> graders have a number of activities unique to our grade level. Here’s just a few...

Zoo Safari - MN Zoo

Camping Trip – Eagle Bluff

*The Wiz* - The Children’s Theater

CTC Artist in Residency

Musical in the spring

If you have any questions or concerns or if you would like to visit our classrooms, we invite you to schedule a conference, or volunteer to help out anytime. Our contact information is listed below. The best times to reach any of us is before school (7:30 – 8:15 a.m.). Emails are easier for us to respond to at anytime during the day while we will return most phone calls after school.

Once again, welcome to 5<sup>th</sup> Grade! Let’s work together to make this the best year ever!

Sincerely,

201 - Ms. Beal and Mr. Skjerseth

204 - Ms. Lucas and Ms. Rhea

206 - Ms. Ferster & Mr. Anderson

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