January 11, 2018

Dear Family Member:

Your child is engaged in a special language arts unit called *Autobiographies and Memoirs.* It is organized around the concept of change and designed specifically to meet the needs of high-ability students. The goals of the unit are as follows:

* To develop analytical and interpretive skills in literature.
* To develop persuasive writing skills.
* To develop linguistic competency.
* To develop listening/oral communication skills.
* To develop reasoning skills.
* To understand the concept of change.

In this language arts unit, we will study the concept of change by looking at talent development through selected autobiographies and memoirs of writers and by considering ways to take responsibility for our own education and individual growth. We will use the language processes of reading, writing, speaking, and listening as essential elements in harnessing talent. As we read literature from various cultures, we will relate it to our lives and use it as a springboard to learn about our own heritage and the heritages of our friends and neighbors.

In class we will read and discuss short pieces of literature: poems, short stories, and essays. As we read the literature, we will respond to it and think critically about it by analyzing ideas, vocabulary, and structure. We will seek to understand ourselves and to look at some of the catalysts for developing talent--the things that influence it and ways to nurture it. Everyone will keep a journal to clarify thinking and to help prepare for written and oral assignments. The response journal can be utilized in their existing 3-ring binder, however, they will need three tabs labeled: **Literature Journal, Response Journal, and Vocabulary Journal.**

This unit includes the following independent projects which will require some work out of class and may need your support at home:

* Reading an autobiography of an author and related writings.
* A revision of an existing autobiography, which we did in September, 2016.
* An autobiographical poem.
* An oral presentation based on some aspect of the written autobiography.
* A research project on an issue of significance.

Although the independent projects will be completed outside of class, we will discuss them in class. There will be opportunities to work with the teacher and classmates on each project as the unit progresses. The time frame for these projects is summarized in the schedule at the end of this letter*.* ***This is a tentative schedule and it may change, but we will try to stay with it as much as possible.*** Students will each receive a workbook; they will need to have that workbook in class everyday.

Student progress is the unit will be assessed in several ways. First, a pre-assessment will assess entering skills in the language arts areas of literature, writing, and linguistic competency. Secondly, a writing portfolio will document progress in writing. A journal will also enable students to uncover the layers of meaning woven into the literary selections. We will assess each project with a self-assessment, a peer assessment, and a teacher assessment. Post-assessments will be given to assess exit skills in the listed language arts areas as students complete the unit. Finally, I welcome comments and feedback from you.

Good curriculum and instructional practice should involve parents as well as teachers. The following ideas may be useful as your child experiences this unit:

1. Read the same books your child is reading and discuss the key ideas.
2. Research family history and heritage with your child.
3. Play games such as Scrabble®, Boggle®, MadGab, or Apples to Apples with the family to enhance vocabulary and language usage.
4. Encourage your child to write every day in a diary or journal. This could even be done as a family wiki or blogsite.
5. Try to set up correspondence with a relative who can serve as a resource for family history.
6. When viewing film or television together, discuss the ideas presented with your child, and encourage close attention to how persuasion is handled in the media and how various cultural and ethnic groups are portrayed.

Thank you in advance for your interest in your child’s curriculum. Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information as the unit progresses.

Sincerely,

Sheri E. Teeter

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| **LESSON NUMBER AND DATE ASSIGNED** | **DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENT** | **LESSON NUMBER AND DUE DATE** |
| Lesson 1Date: ***Jan. 16-17, 19*** | Autobiography reading and responses to questions | Lesson 8Date: ***Feb. 15, 20*** |
| Lesson 2Date: ***Jan. 23-24*** | Poem “What’s Important About Me” | Lesson 4Date: ***Jan. 30-31, Feb. 1*** |
| Lesson 3Date: ***Jan 25-26,29*** | Grammar Self-Study Unit | Lesson 22Date:  ***Apr. 20, 23-24*** |
| Lesson 5Date: ***Feb. 5-7*** | Reflections - Self-Portrait | Lesson 10 (revising)Date: ***Feb. 23, 26-27***Lesson 12 (editing)Date: ***Mar. 5-6***Lesson 13 (presentation)Date: ***Mar. 7-8*** |
| Lesson 8Date: ***Feb. 15, 20*** | Read the work(s) of author whose autobiography was read in Lesson 1 | Lesson 20Date: ***Apr. 12-13, 16*** |
| Lesson 14Date: ***Mar. 9, 12-13*** | Poem “Where I’m From” | Lesson 18Date: ***Apr. 3-4*** |
| Lesson 15Date: ***Mar. 14-15*** | Research assignment on issue of significance--written report and oral presentation | Lesson 20 (revising)Date: ***Apr. 12-13, 16***Lesson 22 (presentation)Date: ***Apr. 20, 23-24*** |
| Lesson 17Date: ***Mar. 21-22*** | Interview a writer in the community, topic: significance | Lesson 19Date: ***Apr. 10-11*** |