

Dear Family Member:

Your child is engaged in a language arts unit called \_\_\_\_\_. It is 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.

A wide variety of reading material will provide the context for our exploration of change. The readings will stimulate discussion, writing, vocabulary study, and research activities. In class, we will read and discuss short pieces of literature-poems, short stories, and fables along with non-fiction literary essays. Everyone will keep a reader's response journal to clarify thinking and to help prepare for written and oral assignments. Specifically, we will look for insight into the concept of change.

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

- Independent reading that includes selected stories and books
- Written homework assignments
- A research project on ways to preserve memories

Independent work will be discussed in class, and further information will be sent home as assignments are given. There will be opportunities for students to work with the teacher and classmates on each project as the unit progresses.

Student progress in the unit will be assessed in several ways. First, a preassessment will assess skill level in the language arts areas of literature and writing. Secondly, a writing portfolio will document progress in writing. We will assess a number of writing pieces through three perspectives: self, peer, and teacher. Finally, a postassessment will assess growth in the areas of literature and writing over the course of the year.

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

- Read the stories and books your child is reading and discuss the key ideas.
- Play word games such as Scrabble® or Boggle® with the family to enhance vocabulary and language usage.
- Encourage your child to write every day in a diary or log.
- Try to set up a letter-writing arrangement with someone from another country or another part of the United States in order to encourage writing on a regular basis, either through regular or electronic mail.
- When viewing film or television together, discuss the ideas presented with your child, and encourage close attention to how ideas are handled in the media.

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

Sincerely,