

September 12, 2019

Dear Parents / Guardians;

I am so excited to welcome your children into **Grades 5 and 6**. I am looking forward to a wonderful year filled with spiritual and academic growth. I am proud to be a member of our school's alumni and the mother of two graduates. I have well over 25 years experience teaching, and yet I still find each new school year to be an exciting challenge.

I have spent the summer preparing the ELA curriculum. I was fortunate enough, along with several other SFDS Faculty Members, to take Level I in OG Reading Training. This is a program that helps all students with decoding, phonics, and spelling. It is important to remember that ELA entails a balance between **listening, speaking, reading, and writing**. These four domains will all be explored this year. I am fortunate enough to be well-versed in the **New Generation Standards and Learning Styles**. We worked on planning and creating the curriculum which will include monthly book exploration on specific genres and formal monthly writing assignments in various genres, as well. This is in addition to our group novel studies.

Students and parents can keep fully informed by checking the computer. For example, all assignments and due dates will be listed and explained on **Google Classroom**. **Monthly Reading and Writing Genres** are listed, along with assignments and announcements concerning tests, etc. All writing assignments will include a **rubric**; so students are fully aware of what is expected and can learn to monitor their own progress. Please refer to the rubric so as to understand the 1,2,3,4 grading system. This will be used in addition to traditional numerical grades. **This is the grading system that is used on the state tests and since Grade 6 will be tested in ELA and Math this year, it is very important.** Remember that these

numbers 1,2,3,4 refer to how a student is doing in relation to meeting a standard.

Option C is another useful tool. It has all grades listed and displays the **weighting system** that is used in ELA. This will enable parents and students to understand how grades are calculated. Tests are just one way to monitor progress. Book reports, writing samples, classwork, homework, projects, and oral presentations are some of the other ways that students can “**show what they know.**” In ELA reading tests and quizzes are worth 40%, writing samples are 40%, homework is 10%, and classwork and participation are worth 10%. Additionally, I can be reached via email at nre@StFrancisschoolbh.net. I always respond promptly, and I encourage you to reach out with any questions or concerns. Parent / teacher communication is necessary for student success. (SFDS has a **school website** and an **application** for your phone, too.)

It is my hope to foster a love of Reading and Writing in our classroom. We will allocate time for **DEAR** (Drop Everything and Read) and will have **Read Alouds**. Reading to students is not only enjoyable, but it is necessary in order for one to become an **active listener**. Students will be encouraged to **communicate verbally**. Lively discussions, share outs, and debates are commonplace in our class. This is also an excellent way to build vocabulary. Students will be doing **in depth novel studies** as a class. Extended reading responses, comprehension, journal writing, vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and many other skills will be drawn from these novels. Reading Responses will include probing questions that assess challenging skills; such as, inferencing and critical thinking. Students will need to do much more than just refer to the text. They need to be able to problem solve, create, analyze, and think out of the box. They need to be able to respond both verbally and in writing in complete sentences and paragraphs.

Writing Workshop will be used in conjunction with the **Writing Process** in our class. **Students will learn that the only way to write well is to first learn to speak well.** Then one must **prewrite, draft, revise, edit,** and eventually **publish** (share). Students will peer edit, self-edit, submit and resubmit work to me until they have created a finalized product. **Google Docs** is an easy way to send writing samples for review and then I will offer feedback. Students will soon accumulate a **Digital Portfolio** with each monthly writing sample. From these samples, students will be grouped for **guided reading and pair shares.** I will also use these samples to assess what reading and writing skills need to be addressed. Quizzes in grammar skills and vocabulary will be commonplace and are imperative for one to become a prolific writer. They will also help to prepare for the ELA state test. (Additionally the 6th graders will be using a State Test Coach book to prepare.) Don't be surprised if you hear your children talking about "calling the COPS" to edit a paper. (That means check your Capitalization, Organization, Punctuation, Sentence Structure and Spelling). They may be singing songs, memorizing poetry, using mnemonics, or other strategies to master the skills necessary to write well. These are motivating ways to learn the grammar rules that improve one's writing. The students will learn that the computer is an excellent tool to assist one with writing, but it is just one tool. The greatest computer is one's brain, made by God, and that is the tool we should utilize most.

On a final note, I want to make sure you are all familiar with our two classroom mottos! I am sure your child will tell you all about them!

They are **J O Y** "Always spread **JOY.**" That means love **Jesus** first, put **Others** second, and **Yourself** third. This can be difficult for students, but it will be emphasised. This will enable us to develop our Christian values of compassion and understanding. "**What Would Jesus DO?**" will be a common question asked in our classroom. I have found that by taking a moment to think about **WWJD** before making choices, students

usually follow a Christ-centered path. These two class mottos will help us to be respectful of one another and enable us to grow spiritually.

I look forward to a wonderful year filled with spiritual and academic growth. I encourage you to reach out to me for assistance if needed, and I thank you for entrusting me with your children.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Re

“If you want to be a good writer, you must do TWO things above all else: read a lot and write a lot.”

-Stephen King