



PLEASE READ, SIGN, AND RETURN

Dear Parents/Guardians:

In Literacy class this year, your child, with my guidance, will set specific goals for independent reading requirements including the number of books and genres to read. In meeting that requirement, students exercise free choice with regard to the books that they choose. The district, the school, and the teacher determine assigned curricular reading. Independent reading requires students to exercise free choice in book selection. The ultimate goals of independent reading are to foster the love of reading, develop the skill of choosing a “just right book,” and improve fluency and vocabulary. The research clearly supports independent reading as critical to academic achievement, participation as citizens in a democracy, and personal fulfillment. Further information about the critical importance of independent reading and how purpose and preference shift as your child grows can be found in a review of the research entitled *Independent Reading and School Achievement* written by Bernice Cullinan. That review was commissioned as part of a national study on the effectiveness of school independent reading programs and can be found at the URL below:

<http://www.ala.org/aaslpubsandjournals/slmrb/slmrcontents/volume32000/independent#programs>

In an effort to help students achieve their reading goals, teachers maintain extensive classroom libraries. These libraries contain books with a variety of reading levels, some with mature content. These books are intended to challenge, engage, and satisfy students who are seeking material that is complex, either in content or reading level. Because the middle school years are the time during which students are “coming of age,” topics of interest may begin to shift. It is important to know that some chosen books may address a variety of issues, including, but not limited to sex, drugs, mental illness, and violence. Some may include strong language. As a result, parents and students should engage in discussions about independent reading selections. You can learn what books your scholar has selected by simply asking to see the book that he or she is currently reading or asking to see his or her Books Read list.

A critical element to becoming an independent reader is to recognize when a book is not a good fit. Students always have the right to abandon an independent reading choice. They can learn just as much about what genres and topics appeal to them from the reasons they abandon a book as they can from the reasons they love a book. Please note, you as the parent always have final say about independent reading books. If, for whatever reason, you or your child decides a book should be abandoned, please have your son or daughter notify me immediately, and I will do my best to suggest alternative titles.

In order for your child to select books from classroom libraries, you must sign and return this letter. Please feel free to include any comment that will help me guide your child to ‘just-right books.’ While the requirement for independent reading must be met, you have a choice about where your child obtains his or her self-selected books.

I am looking forward to my students achieving their reading goals, and I know we will have an exciting, rewarding, and successful year. Thank you for your continued support and cooperation. If you have any questions or comments, please don’t hesitate to indicate those below or contact me via email at cvogelsanger@d41.org.

Sincerely,

Courtney Vogelsanger

Courtney Vogelsanger
Literacy Department
Hadley Junior High
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I have read the notification regarding independent reading.

Student Name

Parent Signature

Date

Comments: