

May 18, 2010

Dear Sixth Grade Parents,

It seems as though every week goes faster! There are a number of important academic events over the next few weeks that I wanted to share with you. **Individual reading response activities are due tomorrow, May 19.** Please remember that the purpose of this activity was to give students choices, not only over their choice of novel, but over their response. We have a number of beautiful storyboards and reviews that the students have already completed. The handout is online for your convenience.

On Thursday, May 20, the students will take a test over their final novel, *A View from Saturday*. Students seemed to have enjoyed this novel and have practiced independently selecting important questions, quotes, words, characters, conflicts, connections, symbols, and recognizing changing points of view. We will continue to work on reading non-fiction and poetry in addition to drawing comparisons between novels we have read by the same author.

The class has asked for permission to hold an academic bowl tea party like the characters in the book *A View from Saturday*. It has been decided that good behavior over the next two weeks will earn them this privilege. The class has come up with a number of ideas for monitoring their behavior. They have asked adults in the building to write letters recommending their behavior. They have also set a goal of earning marbles (one marble is awarded in the class jar for good behavior and one is removed for poor choices) up to a certain point. The students wrote a letter to Mrs. Harner to ask permission to have their party and explain the strategies they were using to earn it. I commend the students for their idea, for taking responsibility for their actions, and for working towards this goal, which will hopefully prove to be both a fun and educational end of the year activity.

Students will be given two in-class workdays to revise and type their final creative writing piece. The class has enjoyed opportunities to share student responses to *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*, by Chris van Allsburg, and worked on establishing ideas, mood, and voice in a piece using various picture books as models. Picture books make ideal teaching tools for minilessons and examples of good short story writing. The students also worked with pictures in groups to study how authors created vivid characters and will hopefully apply these lessons to their stories. **Creative writing pieces are due, typed, on Wednesday, May 26.** The rubric is online for your convenience and must be included with the student's piece. Stories will be compiled and stored in the classroom library for future reading.

As we look towards the last two weeks of the school year, I know that summer seems to be very close. Please encourage your child to continue to complete his or her homework nightly, come prepared to school, and do his or her best on all assignments. Your continued support is appreciated. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,
Miss Colleen Bott
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