

December 2, 2009

Dear 8th Grade Parents,

We are now halfway through the second quarter and progress reports will go home this Friday, December 4th. Please encourage your child to stay focused during the festive season, as there is still a great deal of work to be done. I have already told all your children that I am very happy to look at any of the essays they are writing to submit with their high school applications. I would not change any of the content of the essay, as it must come from them, but I will certainly check them for grammar if it would help.



We have started our second novel, *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*, which ties in very nicely with 8th grade social studies. The students have been researching the dangers of being a woman who could swim or cure ailments in 17th century New England and have a newfound respect for the hardiness of their ancestors. There is a lot of new vocabulary in this book, so these words will also serve for the regular vocabulary quizzes. As the characters in our book had such hard lives, they learned to find pleasure in the simplest treats. To see if they could feel grateful for the everyday things in life your children completed an *A-Z book of Gratitude* last week. They are all very colorful – ask to see them when they come home after a few days on display in the classroom.

I will be reviewing verbal and comprehension skills for the High School Placement Tests over the next few weeks. Hopefully, with a few weeks of test-taking practice, the students will be less nervous and feel more confident when the entrance tests come around in January.

After a class vote last October, I signed both the 7th and 8th grade classes up for the **Manning/Scholastic Reading Challenge**. To complete this challenge successfully, the students must have read 100 books by December 18th. If we do that, we will be joining Eli & Peyton Manning and Scholastic books who will donate up to a million books to students who attend school in disadvantaged areas. We still have quite a way to go, so please encourage your child to read at least twenty minutes each night and we can achieve our goal!

The following papers should be in this packet:

- Vocabulary quiz 11/13
- Vocabulary Turkey synonym activity 11/24
- Comprehension activity (Communication) 11/13
- The Witch of Blackbird Pond chap 1-4 quiz corrections 11/23

- *The Westing Game* favorite scene illustration (on display in the classroom) 10/14

If any of the above papers are missing from this packet, your child does not have a grade for it in my book. Please talk to him/her about it.

Mrs. Carolyn Doyle