

Hello Parents!

I want to give you a detailed update of what's happening in our classroom in regards to Language Arts. This year we are utilizing Reading and Writing Workshop formats. This means we are starting each workshop with a mini-lesson that focuses on comprehension skills or writing skills, and then providing students with adequate independent practice time to engage and try new strategies in their own reading and writing.

In **Reading Workshop** for the month of September, your child has been engaged in learning three literacy activities that will guide their independent practice this year. The three activities are Read to Self, Work on Writing, and Read to Someone.

Read to Self is simply a time for students to read independently and practice strategies of effective reading.

Work on Writing is an independent activity where students may choose the genre of their writing while working and striving to use strategies previously learned.

Finally, **Read to Someone** is a partner read where students may read a book in three different ways. First, students can "Check for Understanding" with one partner reading a page while the other partner describes what happened on that page. Second, students may do "I Read, You Read". This activity focuses on building fluency by having a more fluent reader read one page, and having the other partner reread that same page while trying to mimic fluent reading. The final way to Read to Someone is "Read Two Different Books". Students choose two different books, read a page from one, and then check for understanding. After checking for understanding, the partners switch books, read a page, and then check for understanding again.

As students practice, I pull small groups of students or conference one-on-one to focus on meeting goals the students and I have chosen together. These goals are tailored to each student dependent upon how their individual assessments have gone and what I've noticed during other literacy times. As students show mastery in their goal areas, new goals are promptly chosen and students can work toward meeting those goals right away.

Writer's Workshop is functioning in a similar way to Reader's Workshop. During Writer's Workshop, students may not choose the genre of their writing, but have complete choice over the topic they want to write about. Currently, we are writing personal narrative stories that are true and have been experienced by each student. We start each day with a mini-lesson that is focused on strategies to improve our writing. When then follow with a time of independent practice. As students are following the writing process, I move around the room again and coach students on making their writing better. I am in the process of meeting with each student to assess their skills and inform them of what goal areas they need to be working on. When these meetings are done, students have a clear vision of what it is they are trying to do as writers in order to improve the quality of their writing.

My hope is that this update gives you a clear understanding of our Language Arts program this year. The connection we possess between home and school is truly amazing and very vital to the success of your child in school. Thank you for your dedication and support each and every day. Have a blessed year.

Sincerely,

Chris Bowen