

September 3, 2014

Dear Family,

Welcome to SpringBoard English Language Arts *Grade 7, Unit 1: The Choices We Make.*

Overview

In this unit, students explore the idea of choices and consequences through the analysis of texts. Two **essential questions** focus their attention on the *skills* and *knowledge* presented and assessed in the unit:

- *How do authors use narrative elements to create a story?*
- *Why is storytelling an important aspect of a culture or society?*

Students answer these questions through the *activities* and *assessments* in the unit.

Assessments

Two *performance-based tasks*, called **Embedded Assessments**, give students an opportunity to demonstrate their new learning in the skills of *narrative writing and revision*. Specifically,

- **Embedded Assessment 1** asks students to *revise* a personal narrative about choice.
- **Embedded Assessment 2** asks students to *create* an original illustrated myth.

In both cases, students demonstrate their ability to organize ideas, develop narrative elements, and incorporate transitions to create coherence.

Developing Skills and Knowledge for the Assessments

Throughout the unit, students engage in activities in which they use **strategies** such as *think-pair-share* and *writing groups* to practice the important **skills** of *speaking and listening* and *collaboration in generating ideas and revising writing*. Students analyze and discuss a variety of texts such as Robert Frost's poem "The Road Not Taken," an excerpt from Zora Neale Hurston's autobiography *Dust Tracks on a Road*, and myths originating from a variety of cultures from around the world. Throughout the unit, discussion is promoted as a way to improve understanding of texts and to guide students through the writing process.

Students' **vocabulary study** concentrates on **academic vocabulary** of narrative writing, such as *subjective*, *theme*, and *coherence*, and **vocabulary specific to literary study** such as *stanza*, *genre*, and *symbolism*.

Helping Your Child

Students should be "practicing" every day in class for their upcoming performance on the Embedded Assessment. Help your child reflect on and focus his or her learning by asking the following questions:

- *What did you learn today?* What **texts** did you *read*, *discuss*, and *respond* to in writing? What **strategies** did you use during your reading, discussing, and writing?
- *What did you learn today that will help you succeed on the upcoming Embedded Assessment?* What do you still need to practice?

You may also find it helpful to read through the **Embedded Assessments** (particularly the **Scoring Guides**) and to note the **Learning Targets** that are located at the beginning of each unit activity.

Sincerely,

Marie Perez