September 6, 2017

Dear Parents and Families,

Greetings, and welcome to a new school year at Eisenhower! I am thrilled to start another year teaching 6th grade English/Language Arts, and even more excited to have your child in my class. If you’re curious about me, here is a brief introduction: This is my third year at Ike; I previously taught English Language Learners (ELL) at Evergreen Middle School. I have a Master’s degree from Seattle University in Teaching Secondary English and ELL from Seattle University; for undergraduate work, I studied English Literature at Western Washington University. In addition to my time in Everett schools, I have been an educator for several years – teaching ESL to adults and children, tutoring, and leading an after school reading program. When I am not here at school I can be found exploring the many neighborhoods of Seattle (where I live), hiking in the mountains, spending time with my family and friends, or curled up on the couch with a cup of tea and a good book.

As we begin a new academic year, I want you to know that I am committed to supporting your child in their academic growth and all-around well-being. I know that everyone learns differently and each student has unique needs. In these first weeks of school, I will be getting to know your child and finding out what s/he needs to achieve academic success. Please use the attached sheet or email to communicate any insights or concerns that you want me to be aware of as we begin the year.

I know that when parents are involved in their child’s schooling, the child will be more successful. For this reason, I encourage communication between home and school and am always willing to talk with you. I aim to connect with parents proactively, so if you receive a phone call from me, please don’t assume that something bad has happened! I may just be looking for insights regarding how I can best support your child.

You can reach me by email any time; I do my best to respond within 24 hours during the week. I am available before and after school to meet in person (by appointment, please) or to speak on the phone.



Sincerely,

Erica Mercker

6th Grade English/Language Arts

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6th grade ELA Q&A

**How much homework will my child be getting?**

* Not much, because I expect students to READ AT HOME EACH AND EVERY DAY. The best way to get better at reading is simply to read more. Please help your child find books (or magazines, audiobooks, etc.) that interest them, and help them build an identity as a reader by talking with them about what they’re reading. Your child is expected to read 20-30 minutes a day from a book of their choice. Starting in October, there will be a small genre study project due each month.
* There will also be weekly quizzes on vocabulary that will require some studying, and an “Article of the Week” assignment that involves reading and responding to an assigned non-fiction article. Combined, these assignments and study time should take only about one hour per week.
* Occasionally, work not completed in class will need to be finished at home. I will ask students to write those assignments in their planner if this is the case.

**What are all those different codes in the online gradebook?**

M = missing; student has not turned in the assignment

AB = absent and needs to make up

R = student scored a 59% or lower and needs to study and retake/redo (summative assessments only)

TI = turned in but not scored yet

TL = too late to turn in; the final unit deadline and retake period has passed

X = excused

**What is the procedure for making up work if my child is absent?**

I keep a binder of lessons and assignments from each day. If your child missed class, they are responsible for checking the binder to get the items they need to make up. They should also ask a buddy in class to relay important information from the lesson, and if they have any questions or need help catching up, they should see me directly to set up a time outside of class.

**How can I be kept in the loop about assignments, updates, and general goings-on in ELA?**

* Check my website regularly, especially the “C118 Blog” page. I post a new blog entry about every two weeks, or more frequently if there is important news.
* I will occasionally email general reminders to all parents using the contact information the school has on file; please make sure this information is up to date!
* You may also choose to subscribe to Remind updates by texting @merck to 81010.
* Finally, I will also be using ClassDojo as a tool for communication about how individual students are participating in class. I’ll be sending home more information about how to sign up.