



from the desk of our  
middle school head

Parents of Rising 7th Graders,

The middle school English courses are structured around a skills-based curriculum focused on written communication and reading comprehension. We believe that exposure to many kinds of literature and multiple perspectives is one of the best ways for students to learn about themselves and those around them. Reading also opens the door to new vocabulary, stylistic choices, and sentence variety. The middle school teachers use several novels during the school year to build an understanding of how to analyze a text and how to organize writing pieces that prove a thesis related to that text.

Because we believe reading is an important component of all of the skills associated with English, we want our students to continue to read during the summer. Though we certainly encourage our students to choose novels to read for pure pleasure, we also know that required summer reading provides an opportunity for a class to read and discuss a common book upon returning to school in August. Therefore, we require each 7th grade student to select one of the two titles listed to read over the summer. This novel should be completed before the first week of school so that students can come to class ready to share and discuss. While reading, we ask students to consider two of the themes in the book: identity and choice. In the fall, the idea of how our choices shape who we become will guide our class discussions.

**7th Grade Choices**

*Tangerine* by Edward Bloor

*The Seventh Most Important Thing* by Shelley Pearsall

In addition, we also request that our students *not* read any of the novels attached to our English curriculum for the coming year. We would like to make sure students can follow along with very specific reading assignments and skills as we work our way through these pieces. It is preferred that they read along with classmates and make discoveries and predictions together. These novels are: *Touching Spirit Bear*, *Uprising*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Chinese Cinderella*, and *The Giver*.

If you have any questions, please reach out. Have a wonderful summer. We look forward to seeing you in August.

Sincerely,

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