

August 2011

Dear Parents,

Welcome to a new school year! I hope you had a wonderful summer and enjoyed spending quality time with your children. This summer I have been deeply engrossed in discovering what research says most benefits students as they become readers, writers and lifelong learners. As a result, the structure of my literacy block may look and sound a little different and I am EXCITED!

It won't be long until you hear your child talking about "The Daily Five" and "CAFÉ." The purpose of this letter is to fill you in on what The Daily Five and CAFÉ are all about, so you don't have to nod your head while wondering what in the world your child is referring to. (Many of our fifth grade classrooms will also be using "The Daily Five" in math as well.)

The **Daily Five** is a way of structuring the reading block so every student is independently engaged in meaningful literacy tasks and engaged reading practice. These research based tasks are ones that will have the biggest impact on student reading and writing achievement, as well as help foster children who love to read and write. Students receive explicit whole group instruction and then are given independent practice time to read and write independently while I provide focused, intense instruction to individuals and small groups of students.

When it is up and running smoothly, students will be engaged in the Daily Five, which are comprised of:

- Read to Self
- Work on Writing
- Read to Someone
- Listen to Reading
- Word Work

There are very specific behavior expectations that go with each Daily 5 component. We will spend our first weeks working intensely on building our reading and writing stamina, learning the behaviors of the Daily 5 and fostering our classroom community. I will also spend time learning about your child's strengths and greatest needs as a reader in order to best plan for each student's instruction. Your child will be taught to select "Good Fit Books" or books they can read, understand and are interested in, which they will read during Daily 5. They will be spending most of their time actually reading, which research supports as the number one way to improve reading. I anticipate the motivation and enjoyment of reading will skyrocket when this gift of choosing their own books is accompanied by extended practice and specific reading instruction for each individual child.

**CAFÉ** is integrated within the Daily 5 structure to provide students with a variety of strategies to become successful when reading and comprehending a selection of text. I feel it is not only important to teach these strategies, but to post them and reinforce them often. CAFÉ is an acronym that stands for **C**omprehension, **A**ccuracy, **F**luency, and **E**xpanding vocabulary. These become the goals and the strategies that we use to achieve these goals will be listed below them on our CAFÉ board. Each child will have individual goals and strategies specific to his/her individual needs and therefore will get the direct instruction needed to move forward and become a successful reader. As your child declares his/her goal and works on various strategies, I will be sending home a **Parent Pipeline**. It is a letter informing you of the strategy your child is working on and provides suggestions for assisting your child at home. Please look for these letters throughout the year and support your child in his/her quest to become a better reader.

**Please think of our classroom as you visit garage sales or clean your own child's bookcase, magazine or comic book collection.** It is my goal to make our classroom library as appealing as your favorite bookstore for browsing.

On the back of this letter you will find additional information about the AR program in fifth grade. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have. Thank you for your time in learning more about the reading classroom structure and your continued support in your child's learning.

Sincerely,  
Kimberly Rowan