August 29th, 2016

Hello Fifth Grade Families –

In her book, The Book Whisperer, Donalyn Miller discusses the importance of creating a love of reading and a desire to read within our students. With this year’s class, we’ve spent a good portion of our reading time discussing what books we like to read, what our reading styles are like, where we like to read, etc. Beginning on **Monday, August 29th**, we are going to enter into our “40 Book Challenge,” something that Miller also used with her 4th, 5th, and 6th grade language arts students. What this means is that students will be required to read 40 books over the course of our year together. We will be dropping the 30 minutes per night requirement that is a usual staple in elementary classrooms, although that is still a great habit to have, and be moving towards encouraging students to find books that they *want* to read for *any* amount of time. The students and I discussed this challenge in class today, and I will be participating in the challenge as well. I’ll be reading 50 books by the end of our year, or trying my best to get as close to that number as possible; which is what I’ll be encouraging the students to do, as well. Forty is a number that can seem daunting to some, but what I’m hoping is that in having a requirement of this nature, students will widen their palates of what they normally read, and find books that make them yearn to read. By the end, I think students will find that forty isn’t such a big number after all. In addition to this numbered requirement, students will have to fulfill that forty books by reading from varying genres. This information is below:

**Realistic Fiction – 6 Free choice - 8**

**Historical Fiction – 3 Adventure – 3**

**Science Fiction – 3 Fantasy – 5**

**Non-fiction – 5 Biography – 2**

**Mystery – 5**

I’ve heard from several parents over the years that their child typically reads from one genre, and with this challenge they won’t be able to! By participating with the students myself, I truly believe they will be enthusiastic about this! I have been doing this challenge for two years now, and every year my students have LOVED it!

In order to hold the students accountable for this assignment, they will be recording each book’s information in a records sheet at school, by marking a grid with each genre read, and by completing a book talk for each finished book in front of the class. At the end of this challenge, our class will have a plethora of book recommendations to send them off into their next year of school!

If you have any questions about this challenge, please feel free to let me know!

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