

August 6, 2007

Dear Parent and/or Guardian,

It is our pleasure to welcome you and your child to Edna Karr High School! We are operating as co-teachers in this classroom to give your child more one-on-one time, as well as small group instruction.

My name is Robin Jocius, and I will be one of your child's ninth grade Reading teachers. I am originally from Indiana, but I have lived in New Orleans for the past four years, and have grown to love the community and the incredible, resilient, and talented residents of this city.

We are looking forward to getting to know you and your child over the upcoming school year. In order for your child to have a successful year both personally and academically at Karr, we will need your support and involvement. You may be concerned about your child's year at Edna Karr High School and the policies and procedures in their classes. Hopefully, some of the details in this letter might help you in assisting your child in having a smooth and productive year of high school. In our class, your child can expect to work hard, read and write constantly, and learn skills that will help them throughout their lives.

Course Outline: We will be providing reading enrichment for English I, the other Language Arts class your child will be taking. For example, while the other class is reading short stories, we will be supplementing English I coursework with additional short stories, along with reading strategies and test preparation. We will also be working with small groups to address any weaknesses in reading or reading comprehension. Our ultimate goal is for your child to become a lover of books and a life-long reader, in addition to helping them excel on tests for graduation and admission to college. The following is a general guide for the course curriculum. Each unit will last approximately six weeks.

Unit 1: Introduction (Class rules, procedures, icebreakers, goals, diagnostics)

Unit 2: Short Stories

Unit 3: Nonfiction

Unit 4: Drama

Unit 5: The Novel

Unit 6: Poetry

Unit 7: The Epic

Grading Policy: Your child's grade in our class will depend on many factors, including his/her willingness to participate, progress in reading and writing, and performance on tests and exams. Your child will receive progress reports so that they know how you are doing in our class. Please ask them to share any reports.

The grades are broken down as follows:

25% Final Exam

20% Tests and Quizzes

20% Attendance and Participation

10% Homework

25% Written Assignments, Including Final Writing Portfolio

Books and Materials: We will be reading many novels, short stories, essays, and articles in my classroom. Students will also need to bring a pen or pencil, folder, and notebook. We have provided folders for each student, but each student will have to bring in a notebook that will serve as their journal. As we will periodically grade their journals, we need them to have one notebook that is used for my class ONLY, and does not contain notes for any other subject. As your child will not have a textbook, it is essential that they keep track of their materials and bring them to class everyday. Please ensure that your child helps to maintain school property.

Class Rules:

Be respectful of your classmates, teacher, and school property.
Come prepared to think and work with the materials necessary to do so.
Raise your hand to speak.
You must request excusal to leave the classroom.
No cellular phones or contraband items will be allowed in our classroom.

Uniforms: Students must wear their uniforms correctly, as outlined in the student handbook. Students who do not arrive to school in the official uniform will be given a School Wide Detention.

Homework and Study Habits: Your child will be assigned homework on a regular basis, at least three days a week. Homework calendars and journals will be collected and graded every two weeks. Your child is expected to complete all of his/her homework. Please talk to them and ask them about what they are doing and make sure that they are spending a significant amount of time studying.

Academic Honesty Policy: Karr Students are expected to complete all assignments and all tests/exams honestly. For the purposes of this policy, cheating is defined as “accepting or providing work or information that is not one’s own.” The full outline of consequences for offenses is outlined in the student handbook. If your child is caught cheating in our class, you will receive a phone call from us.

Planning Period and Tutoring Hours: Our planning period is from 1:06-1:58. We are dedicated to helping your child succeed at Karr, so we also offer additional tutoring sessions. On Mondays, we will be available after school from 3:50-5:30. On Tuesdays, we will be available both before and after school, from 7:30-8:15, and 4:00-5:00.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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