

8/31/2016

Dear parents, guardians and students,

My name is Therese Mendez and I will be the Language Arts teacher/Learning Resource Teacher for the 2016-2017 school year. I am excited to be working with your family this year to improve skills and learn new concepts in reading and writing. Learning to communicate effectively and gain information through reading is a critical skill and we will work together to achieve the goals set collaboratively with students to prepare them for high school and beyond.

I am new to Salem Keizer Schools this year, but have been in education for over 20 years with a focus on Reading/Literacy, Special Education, and English as a Second Language. I enjoy traveling, cooking, and learning about new cultures. I bring much of my own experiences to my teaching and share my interests with my students, and I hope that they will feel comfortable sharing their experiences and interests within the classroom to make their school experience more enjoyable and positive.

Programs and Curriculum

The foundational programs we will be using this year to help us achieve success in reading is READ 180/System These programs use small group direct instruction as well as computer based support to help students develop skills in the areas of decoding, word attack strategies, vocabulary and fluency in order to read and comprehend text effectively.

More information on these programs for families can be found here:

Read 180 <http://www.hmhco.com/products/read-180/family/> or

System 4.4 <http://www.hmhco.com/products/system-4.4/family/>

In Writing, we will be developing written expression and communication skills using the Six + 1 Traits of Writing process and daily writing and editing practice. Students will have individual areas of focus and goals while working towards developing grade level writing skills. Students will have a writing portfolio to show growth throughout the year.

Classroom Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports

In order to build a collaborative and positive classroom community I will be using Class Dojo to provide students with opportunities to earn points for demonstrating positive student characteristics such as working together, perseverance, task completion etc. these points can be used to purchase items from the student store as well as class and individual incentives that we will develop together.

It is important that class time is used bell to bell for teaching and learning therefore the following class rules and consequences will be followed for any minor student actions that interfere with the teaching or learning within the classroom, serious acts of misconduct will be referred to administration.

1. **Nonverbal redirection/reminder**
2. **Verbal redirection/reminder**
3. **Loss of class Dojo Point(s) individual or group**
4. **5 minute in seat change/written reflection and a behavioral checkmark (2 checkmarks in a week or 3 or more in a four-week period will result in a parent conference and possible counselor referral for additional support)**
5. **10-minute classroom/campus community service (to be arranged with parent notification)**
6. **Refocus in a buddy classroom/counselor referral with parent contact**
7. **Parent conference or classroom visit**
8. **Administrative referral**

Grading and Homework Policies

Students will be graded on completion of assignments, READ 180/System 44 tests, and writing projects. The grading scale and rubrics will be based on individual assignments and weighted accordingly. Students enrolled in this class are working towards grade level standards and grades will be modified to reflect that they are not on grade level.

Homework will count as an extra credit 10% for the grading period. Reading homework will consist of reading at home for 10-15 minutes daily and completing a student selected project on the book they have read. Once per week, students will be asked to do short homework assignments to support skill in writing/listening/speaking such as interviewing a family member, analyzing dialogue in a TV show or Movie, or practicing various forms of communication. This will be graded as completed or not completed and will be calculated as part of the 10% homework extra credit. This is the ONLY extra credit available to students.

Students who are not completing classwork or making adequate progress will have a progress report sent home for signature and parents may arrange a conference either at school or by phone to assist their student in becoming successful. Progress reports not returned within 3 days will result in parent contact by phone or a home visit.

Communication and Parent Conferences

I hope that this is the best year ever for you and your student! I feel that my job is to treat your family as my family, and help students reach their personal goals while learning skills needed to be successful in school and help them in their future career path. I am available by phone or e-mail, as well as before or after school by prior arrangement. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have, and be assured I will do my best to support students and their families in any way that I can.

Warm regards,

THERESE MENDEZ

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Please sign below to indicate you have received and read the classroom welcome letter.

Parent/guardian signature

Date

Student signature

Date