

September 23, 2018

Dear Merriam Families,

I hope you were able to enjoy this first fall weekend outdoors. I am amidst moving, and much of my weekend was spent driving between homes. However, I did sneak a moment at the beach with a hot mulled cider. Somehow autumn promises reflection coupled with cozy.

We look forward to welcoming you all on Tuesday evening to our Open House. I was raised in a home where I was trained to kiss cheeks, take coats and offer drinks. And though a school open house may be different from opening our homes (I won't be offering drinks), the same warmth and excitement exists. Teachers, students and our custodians have been preparing the school for all of you to come and learn about what your child will be experiencing this year. Additionally, Bryant and I look forward to sharing with you a bit about ourselves as we start in our new roles. Perhaps the most important part of understanding your child's day, is connecting with the people who teach and nurture each of them. I very much hope you will be there.

I also encourage you to come to one of the parent forums I will be hosting at Merriam School. This is an opportunity for me to hear what you value about Merriam School, as well a time to share your hopes as we move forward. Please RSVP with Kathleen in the office.

Thursday, 10/4 8:45- 9:30am, Conference Room

Tuesday 10/9 7:00- 7:45pm, Library

Thursday 10/11 7:00am- 7:45am, Conference Room

Throughout the last two years there have been many conversations district and school wide about homework. Many of you attended PTO Community Conversations on this topic, and last spring the School Council administered a survey to learn more about how you felt about last year's homework procedures which reflected a significant decrease in homework, as defined by the district. There were a couple of themes that emerged from your feedback: 1. Parents felt more disconnected from what their child was learning on a day to day basis than they had previously and 2. There were some concerns expressed about lack of nightly reading.

This year, while staying within the district homework policy, we have tweaked our homework procedures. These procedures reflect a communication component as well as incorporate suggested nightly

reading for all. As you read over the Merriam Homework Procedures, please notice our philosophy statement. Teachers spent a tremendous amount of time grappling with how our commitment to engagement, quality, differentiation and equity would be reflected in our homework procedures. Homework procedures are attached here, and will be added to our website. Please check out these two relevant articles:

1. [The best homework you child can have is to read!](#)
2. [The case for 20 minutes a day!](#)

This year, the Merriam School theme is WATER! If you have any expertise around water and would be interested in sharing your knowledge with your child's class (or even for a theme day activity), we ask that you reach out directly to the classroom teacher. We value such contributions and it's a great opportunity to volunteer (science, health, environment....).

For Community Day on October 5th, we are asking all children to bring either a photograph or a drawing of something "water related" that can assist the child in sharing something about themselves. They don't need to be in the picture. This will be the "get to know one another activity" allowing everyone to share a piece of their story while connecting to water. Thank you for assisting us in this task by helping your child get a picture.

And lastly, our collection case in the front lobby is a great way for children to share about themselves with the larger community. Please encourage your child to share their little museum by filling out the slip of paper located on top of the case. We will get in touch with him/her to confirm a date.

Wishing you a lovely evening, and for all of you Pats fan, a win!

Warmly,

Juliana