



EAGLE MOUNTAIN SAGINAW ISD

Fostering a Culture of Excellence

Dear Families,

Welcome to your final middle school English Language Arts and Reading (ELAR) class! We are excited about our plans this year, and we look forward to working with you. This year we hope to support our students' development as critical readers and writers through the workshop model in both reading and writing. By the end of this school year, our students will be prepared to enter high school with the skills they need in order to be successful in their high school English classes.

Because the ELAR TEKS have changed this school year for Kindergarten through Grade 8, please know that coursework in ELAR will really look much more integrated--students will be reading, writing, listening, speaking, and thinking all the time! Furthermore, students will no longer have a textbook in their ELAR classroom; rather, they will have access to a classroom library of grade-appropriate texts to further their engagement as readers and writers.

In this initial unit students will examine a variety of literary texts, considering the profound and dynamic tension between the needs of the people in the text--the characters--and the great and powerful forces of the time and society in which they live. The goal is for students to learn that successful readers of literary texts think about their personal connections to a text while also considering the significance of the context in which the text is situated. This approach will help to position our young readers to situate their analysis of characters, plot, setting, and theme within the real world.

During this grading period, all eighth grade ELAR students in EMS-ISD will have two writing assessments that will be given before and after the writing unit. Teachers will use these assessments to drive instructional decisions and measure growth in writing over the course of the year. Moreover, these assessments create an opportunity for teachers to evaluate their students' ability to transfer the skills that have been taught when students write independently. This approach reflects our goal of nurturing great writers rather than simply producing great pieces of writing. The first writing assessment will be administered at the beginning of the unit and is designed to provide information for teachers about individual student needs as they plan for instruction. The second writing assessment will be administered at the end of the unit and creates an opportunity for students to demonstrate what they have learned during a particular unit. The second assessment will be graded using a common standards-based rubric. Students will also complete a district reading assessment during the unit.

We encourage you to speak with your students about what they are reading, writing, and learning in class. Please be sure to review your student's performance via Skyward Access, and contact his or her teacher if you have any questions or concerns. We look forward to working with you this year!

Respectfully,

EMS-ISD 8th Grade ELAR Teachers