

Dear Parents,

September 5, 2017

Welcome to the 2017-18 school year! I will be your child's direct instruction special education English teacher this year. The primary purpose of the direct instruction special education English class is to address those deficits outlined in your child's IEP. Each student presents different deficits with different reading and writing ability levels. During the course of the year, our class focuses on strengthening reading skills by reading two different novels through the year. We practice daily warm-ups where we address various writing skills that will be put to the test with a creative writing assignment each quarter. Each student's English assignment is tailored made for his or her ability level and deficit need.

Another goal of the direct instruction special education class is to return your child to the regular education setting, special education is not a life sentence. We begin the year with student reading assessments that determine ability levels after summer break. Each student will be assessed prior to Thanksgiving break to determine how their reading level has improved from the beginning of the year. Another assessment will happen at mid-term, right after Christmas break. These three assessments will help in determining if your child may benefit from an extended school year, which needs to be established in early spring. Or, if your child's ability level has strengthened to the point where he or she can return to regular education setting and experience more success at a higher rigorous level not presented in the direct instruction course.

What can you expect your child to read this year? "The Boy on the Wooden Box" by Leon and "UGLY" by Robert Hoge will be two novels that we will read this

year. However, we are not limited to these novels and if the reading level is not appropriate for your child, I will find something that will be appropriate. Your child will experience research on background information pertaining to, but not limited to a novel, story, or author as well as written responses to prompts based on the reading. The assignments will be based on your child's skill level, not grade level.

**Assessments:** In addition to the reading assessments already mentioned, your child potentially may have assessments on inferential and comprehension understanding on what we have read. Assessments are based on skill level ability, not grade level ability.

**Participation Quality:** In addition to the school wide classroom expectations, the direct instruction English class will focus on specific areas of participation quality. We will begin the year with a daily points system that will be faded out when the students demonstrate a high level of participation quality. Participation quality will be averaged weekly and will constitute no more than 25% of your child's grade for the first marking period. Should we need to continue the point system after the first quarter, we will discuss your child's progress to see what can be made into improvements.

**School Wide Classroom Expectations:**

- Listen to staff
- Maintain personal space
- Be on time
- Be polite
- Use appropriate language and tone
- Be prepared Be honest Do your own work
- Use electronic devices only when permitted
- Do your best work
- Celebrate academic success
- Have a positive attitude
- Take ownership of learning

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|--------|--|
| Points | Direct Instruction Class Participation Expectations:   |
| 2      | <b>Respect of others:</b><br>Treat others as you would want to be treated.                       |
| 2      | <b>Focus:</b><br>How much effort are you putting into your assignment?                           |
| 2      | <b>Completed Assignment:</b><br>Did you meet the daily goal today?                               |
| 8      | Grand Total will be averaged weekly and posted as "Participation Quality" for the first 9 weeks. |

**Homework/Late Work Policy:** no homework will be assigned in this class. However, we do follow the district rules on late work when a student has been absent. We also follow the school district's unexcused absence policy where an assignment or a test that was to be taken on the day of an unexcused absence is no longer permissible to be made up.

**Celebrations:**

I personally challenge each student to average or above average grades on their report card. While "average grades" may seem like an expectation, to some this is a struggle. When academic success happens for all students in a class, we celebrate and acknowledge each person's efforts. We also celebrate "A"s on tests and written assignments from other classes. Like many teachers at EFHS, I am more than willing to stay after school to help any student with their school work, I just need a little notice beforehand to make sure I don't have an afterschool meeting.

Please look through the Academic Integrity chart listed on the next page. Our Special Education Department developed this chart as means to communicate our expectations with the students.

I look forward to being your child's teacher this year. Should you ever need to reach me, it is easiest for me to respond by email since I am in and out of my room all day, or can take phone calls after 2:30.

Thank you,

[dkeller@efsd.net](mailto:dkeller@efsd.net) (412) 896-2360



ACADEMIC INTEGRITY  
SPECIAL EDUCATION



- Do your own work using the resources that you have
- Be honest with yourself in terms of what you know and what you need to work on
- Trust that you are capable of doing great work
- Do not copy another student's work and present it as your own
- Do not pretend you understand when you don't
- Do not doubt that you are capable of doing anything but great work



“The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.” – B.B. King



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Please Sign and Return to Mrs. Keller, English class

Parent/Guardian name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian phone \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian email \_\_\_\_\_