

January 25, 2023



Welcome Students and Parents!

Dear Parents,

This letter serves two purposes: to keep you in the loop and to invite you to tell me about your teen.

No school can work well for children if parents and teachers do not act in partnership on behalf of the children's best interests. Parents have every right to understand what is happening to their children at school, and teachers have the responsibility to share that information without prejudicial judgment.... Such communication, which can only be in a child's interest, is not possible without mutual trust between parent and teacher.

-Dorothy H Cohen, teacher and writer

I hope you'll share your thoughts regarding one or more of the following questions.

1. *What are a few things you love about your son or daughter that will help me "see" them as individuals?*
2. *Can you tell me anything re: your teen's reading and writing experiences and skills?*
3. *Does your teen have a 504, IEP, and/or any reading, writing, and/or speaking accommodations?*
4. *What does your teen's day look like after school as far as work, sports, and/or other commitments?*
5. *Are you and your teen confident that the level of the English class is an appropriate fit?*

Your teen can show you how you can respond via Canvas email as an observer. I hope to hear from you before Friday, September 16.

LEARNING TO STRUGGLE WELL

Dear Students,

YOU CAN DO HARD THINGS!

Link: [Why Struggle Is Essential for the Brain — and Our Lives by Jo Boaler, Professor of Education at Stanford](#)

As [your] parents and teachers, we do just about everything we can to make sure that [you] don't struggle. It turns out we are making a terrible mistake. Research shows that struggling is absolutely critical to mastery and that the highest achieving people in the world are those who have struggled the most. The more I communicate this message to parents and teachers the more stories I hear of complete personal transformation.

Neuroscientists have found that mistakes are helpful for brain growth and connectivity and if we are not struggling, we are not learning. Not only is struggle good for our brains but people who know about the value of struggle improve their learning potential. This knowledge would not be earth shattering if it were not for the fact that we in the Western world are trained to jump in and prevent learners from experiencing struggle.

I'm committed to teaching you the power of reading, writing, and speaking. I want you to be warriors of words, armed with the power to change the world. The only person who can stop you is yourself.

Learning to handle words as a powerful tool is frustrating, challenging, rewarding, fun, sometimes boring, and HARD. Struggling is expected-even essential. Mistakes are inevitable. Perfection is impossible. I'm simply looking for you to do your best.

I hope you will choose to enjoy class and struggle well, but you-*and only you*-can make that choice. I will do what I can to inspire, support, and teach you, but I cannot make you learn. Earning a good grade is attainable for all, but that doesn't mean all will earn a good grade.

PARENT STUDENT CONFERENCES

Grading reading and writing assignments for 90+ students is time-consuming, so your PowerSchool grade won't be the best indicator of your grade. But you should not have to depend on PowerSchool to know how well you are doing; you will learn how to be the best judge of your growth. In the end, you will make a case for the grade you think you deserve, using the evidence in your daily notebook, videos, and revised work. Your notebook gauges your progress.

At least once a quarter, you'll be expected to have a sit down conference with your parents in order to show your progress. Your notebook will be an important piece of evidence.

I expect much from you, and there may be times when the expectations may seem unrealistic, but I ask you and your parents to please trust the process. Your final grade will reflect your growth evidenced in your notebook and revised work.

So, If your phone dings every time I enter a grade, I recommend for you not to be alarmed (or

relieved) because I may not have included grades that stem from your notebook. The time to be alarmed would be if you cannot show the daily chronological, labeled, and progressing writings in your notebook.

([Link to Writing Rubric and Notebook Contents](#))

Parents,

Ask to see your teen's daily notebook and online submissions. The notebook includes classwork and rough drafts. The online submissions include revised work. Even if I've not had the chance to provide detailed feedback, your teen can show you their progress. Continued progress means good grades.

HOW TO MAKE AN A OR B

HubSpot

"Hard work spotlights the character of people: some turn up their sleeves, some turn up their noses, and some don't turn up at all."

SAM EWING
Author



I expect you to engage in class. Examples include: willingly participating, trying at all times, maintaining eye contact with whomever is speaking, active listening, following directions, working hard, being present. I expect you to be respectful. Examples include: being kind and polite, esteeming others, having a positive attitude.

If you engage and work hard, I expect you will enjoy class, your struggles will be manageable and rewarding, and you'll be eligible for extended time on assignments with no points deducted.

If you disengage and hardly work, I expect you won't enjoy class, your struggles will be overwhelming, and you'll be ineligible for extended time.

If you don't enjoy reading and writing, your initial grades may not look like your final grades. Unrealistic expectations will frustrate and discourage you. All I ask is that you do your best. Anytime you are disappointed in your grade, I will ask, "Are you showing me that you are an engaged learner?" While PowerSchool may say otherwise, your F1 grade will be either an A or B if you and I agree that your answer is yes.

ENGLISH 2 LEARNING STANDARDS

[Link to NCDPI English 2 Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Language Standards](#)

English 2 includes an EOC State Exam [Link to Released Test](#)

CLASSWORK AND HOMEWORK

If you are in Honors English, you are expected to read outside of class at least two hours a week beginning in October. You have ample time to ask questions and complete at least half of most assignments during class.

If you are in On-Level English, you will have extended time to read and complete your work during class. If you use your time wisely, most of your homework will be optional.

EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED LATE WORK

To request extended time, Canvas email me the reason at least 24 hours in advance, attach or share the doc. the work you've done so far, and tell me when you will be able to complete the work.

You are fortunate that I accept unexcused late work, but I won't take time away from giving feedback to the other students in order to grade your unexcused work. Your grade will be amended by the end of the quarter.

COMMUNICATION

Students,

I ask for your trust in how I deal with concerns, questions, issues that may arise. One of my highest aims is to treat you the way I'd want to be treated-with respect, dignity, and concern. I am for you! If you ever feel otherwise, please reach out to me. I wholeheartedly believe when you come directly to me as soon as possible, solutions are resolved as soon as possible.

Parents,

I ask for your trust and support. I welcome the opportunity for a follow-up conversation after your child and I have been given the chance to talk, but I respectfully request a chance to talk with your child first.

ABSENCES

Students,

Exchange numbers with a couple people in class whom you could call in case you are absent. If you have questions after checking the calendar and asking a classmate, Canvas email your specific questions on the day you are absent--preferably during school hours.

The work you missed in class needs to be completed within three days. Deadlines on work assigned prior to your absence still stand.

I count on you to know what you missed **BEFORE** the day you return to school. If you wait until the day you return to ask if you missed anything (which I encourage you never to do with any teacher) or what you missed, you will not only be unprepared for class, but you will also indicate a lack of concern and commitment.

Parents,

When your child is absent, please point them in these directions.

CELL PHONE POLICY

Students,

When entering class, you are required to place your turned off cell phone in the designated holder.

Parents,

If you call the office, your messages will be delivered.

MATERIALS

Maintaining your notebook is non-negotiable. Your work must be arranged in chronological order. (I encourage you to take pictures of your work each day just in case you misplace your notebook, I cannot grade what you do not have.)

I will give you your first single subject college-ruled notebook.

1. 3 ring binder
2. Folder with 2 pockets
3. Colored pencils or pens (blue, red, green)
4. Yellow highlighter
5. Post-it notes (2 x2 size)
6. Black pen

CONTACT INFORMATION

Students and Parents,

Contact me via Canvas email, preferably during working hours.

Parents,

Your child will log into their accounts and generate pairing codes for you to register as a class observer.

1. *Link to Directions:*
<https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Observer-Guide/How-do-I-sign-up-for-a-Canvas-account-as-a-parent/ta-p/540>
2. Login link: <https://nhcs.instructure.com/login/canvas>

I look forward to your Canvas email and learning about your teen.

Sincerely,

Miss Lucas

Stay tuned for information regarding how to register for online resources (FlipGrid, Castle

Learning, Noredink, etc...).