June 2023

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to John W. Dodd Middle School! On Friday, August 25, 2023 from 8:30 am to 12 pm, an orientation will be held for our incoming 7th grade students. Parents are invited to attend the parent information session from 8:30 am to 9:30 am.

Students are required to:


- Write a five-paragraph essay that explains what each part of the motto means to them. The essay will be collected in the English classrooms on the first day of school – Tuesday, September 5th.

To ensure that all students have the opportunity to enjoy reading this summer, we will be giving away new books in the main office on July 27th between 10:00 am and 1:00 pm to all interested 7th and 8th grade students!

All students are held to the minimum performance bar of 80% mastery on all classroom assessments. Students that do not meet the bar are afforded many opportunities to master the skills they need through enrichment opportunities. Teachers analyze the assessment data and highlight areas in which students score above 80% proficiency and others in which students’ scores are below. This data work is done at our team and department meetings to further align all instructional practices to the Common Core instructional shifts that will further help students’ performance.

Numerical grades are used to indicate the level of academic performance in all subjects. Students’ averages are based upon their performance during the four marking periods and their performance on their final examinations. A passing grade is 65; however, we ask students to work to achieve mastery which is a grade of 85. Students who receive less than a grade of 80 will be asked to attend extra help.

Expectations at Dodd

- Students receive a numerical grade and an average per quarter.
- Homework is counted as part of the quarter grade.
- Requirement for Honor Roll is a combined average of 85 or higher.
- Requirement for High Honor Roll is a combined average of 90 or higher.
- For both Honor Roll and High Honor Roll, students can have no grades below 75 in any of their classes.
- A student can achieve Honor Roll status and not be enrolled in honors classes.
- To be considered for the math honors placement, students must have taken accelerated math at Atkinson.
- Only students who have achieved a final average of at least 90 and above will be considered for honors level placement per course.
- In order to remain in an honors level course, students must maintain an 85 average.
Our teachers and students work in teams that meet regularly to discuss and closely monitor student progress. Social emotional learning (SEL), through the teaching of Yale University’s research-based RULER Approach and the SKY! Program, is the cornerstone of our rigorous curriculum. All decisions are made through a close review of what the students need academically, socially, and emotionally.

Learning is a shared responsibility among teachers, parents, students, and community. This strong partnership between all members of the school community and our comprehensive curriculum ensure that all students reach their summit of excellence through the development of a lifelong love of learning, healthy and positive habits of the mind and body, high academic standards, and social responsibility.

Warmest regards,

Johane Ligondé
Principal

Be kind. Work hard. Dream big.

EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE
Required Dodd Essay Assignment for All Incoming 7th Grade Students

The Dodd Middle School motto is “Be Kind. Work Hard. Dream Big.” This motto guides Dodd students each and every day. As incoming 7th graders it is your job to think deeply about this motto and what it means to you and your success in life. Your first graded 7th ELA assignment is to write a five-paragraph essay that explains each part of the motto and what it means to you!

In order to do this successfully you must follow the *Steps to Success*:

**Step 1: Before writing, brainstorm by creating lists of ideas for each phrase in the motto.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Be Kind”</th>
<th>“Work Hard”</th>
<th>“Dream Big”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- In your opinion, what does it mean to be kind?</td>
<td>- What does it mean to work hard?</td>
<td>- If we define the word “dream” as a hope, goal, aspiration, ambition, desire or wish, what do you think it means to dream big? Think about your dreams.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- What does it mean to be kind to yourself?</td>
<td>- How does “working hard” apply to school?</td>
<td>- What dreams do you wish to accomplish at Dodd?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- How do people show kindness to one another?</td>
<td>- How does “working hard” apply to clubs or sports?</td>
<td>- What are your H.S or college dreams?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Explain a time that you have seen or experienced an act of kindness.</td>
<td>- How does “working hard” connect to reaching your goals?</td>
<td>- What are your future goals?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Have you ever intentionally tried to be kind to someone?</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Where do you see yourself after graduating from Freeport High School?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Have you noticed somebody being intentionally kind?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Step 2: Review your brainstormed ideas and plan your writing by setting-up a 4-square essay graphic organizer. Each box of the organizer will represent a paragraph in your essay. If you have another planning method that you like better, feel free to use it!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body Paragraph 1: Be Kind</th>
<th>Body Paragraph 3: Dream Big</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction Paragraph:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Paragraph 2:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Hard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 3: Put it all together! Using your graphic organizer, write a five paragraph essay that explains each part of the motto and what it means to you!

- Open a Google Document on your Chromebook.
- Type your first and last name on the top of the Document.
- Type your essay.
- Proofread and edit your essay.
- Be prepared to discuss, hand in and respond to this essay in ELA class during the first days of school.

Step 4: Be ready for the first days of ELA class by being prepared to hand-in your essay. In ELA you will be expected to respond on a padlet about what this motto means to you and how it will influence your year.