



WESTERN HIGH SCHOOL

4600 FALLS ROAD
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21209

30 May 2008

Dear Families:

Research has shown how important it is for students to read and read often. The following points are from *Reading In and Out of Schools*, a publication prepared by the Educational Testing Service for the US Department of Education, and *Patterns of Reading Practice*, a 1996 publication of The Institute for Academic Excellence:

- The amount of reading that students do for school, and do out of school are both positively related to their reading achievement.
- Students who reported discussing their reading had higher average reading achievements than students who reported never having this opportunity.
- When ranked according to the amount of reading they do, students in the top 5 percent read 144 times more than students in the bottom 5 percent.
- Students in private schools practice reading 67 percent more than public school students.

Because you have chosen Western as the institution to prepare your daughter for college, we take this responsibility seriously. In an effort to help her become truly learned and to increase her standing among many students with whom she will compete for college placement, Western's English Department requires that she continue to read and think over the summer. As an incoming ninth grade student as of August 2007, your daughter will be expected to have read the following literature:

***Of Mice and Men* - John Steinbeck**

(ISBN 0140177396)

***The Color of Water* - James McBride**

(ISBN 159448192-X)

Additionally, your daughter will need to purchase the following book, one that she will use primarily as a reference source in conjunction with other texts throughout her career at Western:

***Mythology* - Edith Hamilton**

(ISBN 0446607258)

She will present her Summer Reading Assignments upon returning to school. Her marked copies of each book and her reading response work will be collected for evaluation. Additionally, she should be ready to take an assessment on her reading of the works and to write about each of them. Please ensure that the assigned works are purchased for her as soon as possible after you receive this letter. Make sure that your daughter completes both the reading of the works and the responses outlined on the reverse side of this sheet. The assigned literature may be purchased at most local bookstores; Greetings and Readings, Barnes and Noble, and Borders are the best sources. We will address these works during the Summer Academy for incoming freshmen, so it is to her benefit to have all the books by that time.

Because the two works listed above will be used throughout the 9th grade course, it is imperative that your daughter has her own paperback copy of each title. Additionally, she needs to have the copy of Hamilton's *Mythology*; this book will be used as a reference as she studies Greek literature.

Please ensure that your student has the summer reading texts as soon as possible so reading and response can be completed promptly. Because this preparatory assignment will be time-consuming, we encourage your daughter to begin no later than early July, 2008.

We hope that the summer vacation will be exciting, refreshing, and productive. We applaud your daughter's induction as a member of the Western family. Additionally, we appreciate your support of this summer reading program, a must for students planning to attend college. You may call Celia Rocca, our English Department Head (410-396-7046), if you have any questions or concerns.