



WESTERN HIGH SCHOOL

4600 FALLS ROAD
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21209

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 a tenth-grade student as of August 2007, your daughter will be expected to have read the following literature:

***Night* – Elie Wiesel (ISBN 978-0374500016)**
***The Joy Luck Club* – Amy Tan (ISBN 978-0143038092)**

(Note: All students also should have a copy of Edith Hamilton's *Mythology* [ISBN 0446607258] and of Sophocles' *The Oedipus Cycle* translated by Fitts and Fitzgerald [ISBN 015602764x]. Most students here last year do.)

Your student will present her Summer Reading Assignments upon returning to school. Her marked copies of each book and her reading response journal work will be collected for evaluation during the first week of school. Additionally, she should be ready to take an assessment on her reading of the works and to write about each title. Please ensure that the assigned works are purchased for her as soon as possible after you receive this letter so that reading and response can be completed promptly. 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. Because this preparatory assignment will be time-consuming, we encourage your daughter to begin no later than early July, 2008.

In order to help prepare your daughter for college, we also ask that she have her own copy of the latest edition of *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. This is an invaluable resource for completion of research/term papers and is a book she will be able to use wherever she goes after graduation.

We hope that the summer vacation will be exciting, refreshing, and productive. We applaud your daughter's success at Western so far; we want to make sure she continues to be successful and that she gains entrance to the college or university of her choice. Thus we appreciate your support of our 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.