



Biloxi Junior High School

Biloxi Public Schools

1921 Tribe Drive, Biloxi, MS 39532 • (228) 435-1421 • Fax (228) 435-1426 • Scott Powell, Principal



August 4, 2021

Dear 7th Grade Parents/Guardians,

In 7th Grade ELA, we focus on the concepts of perseverance and self-discovery. We explore these central themes as we read our core texts, *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, and *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton. In addition to these core texts, our ELA team has gathered a variety of short stories, supplementary articles, speeches, and multimedia texts to allow us to expand our understanding of the essential questions and ideas we will explore this year.

We will begin *A Long Walk to Water* during the second term with a plan to finish the novel before Christmas break. As part of this novel study, students will analyze how characters overcome adversity and discuss how an individual's identity is shaped through perseverance. Students will be introduced to topics such as survival, poverty, and war. Our main character shows us just how important it is to have hope in a seemingly hopeless world.

During the third nine weeks, we will be reading Lois Lowry's Newbery Award-winning novel, *The Giver*. This novel has been taught throughout our state and the rest of our country for many years, and it appears on the Mississippi Department of Education's recommended book list. *The Giver* is a futuristic tale of a seemingly utopian society where pain, hunger, and war do not exist. Over the course of the novel study, we will be discussing the sacrifices made to live in a world free from pain, hunger, war—and even pleasure. Your child will embark on a journey of thought-provoking themes—such as conformity, free will, and euthanasia.

Lastly, during the fourth nine weeks, we will read the novel *The Outsiders*. This classic novel is set in the 1960s, and students will see how easy it is for people to make judgments based on others' appearances and social groups; a struggle that is still relevant in today's society. Our main characters introduce us to societal issues such as divided communities, violence, and loyalty. We discuss topics such as empathy, individualism, and the importance of choices.

We have a class set of all three novels for use in the classroom. Students are not required to purchase their own copy; however, some students may wish to have a personal copy. In addition, we will post an electronic version of each novel on Google Classroom.

In an effort to enrich our students' learning environment and to encourage them to make connections to the text, we will be showing a variety of video and movie clips related to the units. These clips will correlate to the text we are reading and will be kept to a minimum in both length and frequency.

IMPORTANT: If you DO NOT wish for your child to participate in these novel studies, please contact your child's ELA teacher immediately. In the event a student is not allowed to participate in this particular novel study, he/she will be required to complete alternative assignments that are aligned with our state and classroom assessments.

For your convenience, we have listed all 7th Grade ELA teachers' email addresses below:

Mrs. Cauley – ginger.cauley@biloxischools.net

Ms. Huynh – loren.huynh@biloxischools.net

Mrs. Donnell – ashley.donnell@biloxischools.net

Mrs. Johnson – amy.johnson@biloxischools.net

Ms. Holloway – peyton.holloway@biloxischools.net

Mrs. Salloum – jennifer.salloum@biloxischools.net

We are very excited to offer these novels to our students. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your student's teacher.

Sincerely,

BJHS 7th Grade ELA Teachers