

September 7, 2018

Dear Parents & Guardians -

I feel privileged that I get to teach your child and look forward to working with you in helping them exceed their academic goals. I want students to feel empowered to learn, build healthy relationships, and enjoy coming to school each day. This is a lengthy letter, but the rest of my communication will typically be brief and via email or blog posts. Thanks for hanging in there!

I am very passionate about reading. Numerous studies have shown that engaged, consistent reading time has the biggest impact on a student's progress. Students are expected to read outside of school for at least 30 minutes a day, including weekends. This is one of the fundamental pillars of their education; it's difficult to overstate how much growth occurs when students dedicate themselves to reading. The material they read is up to them. They should, of course, challenge themselves as readers, but it is important that they enjoy reading. Some students will jump from genre to genre; many will find a certain author, series, or theme and read until they've exhausted it. Lately we have been reading books that are "fast and furious". These are a book that student should be able to read in a few days. It might be that book is below their current reading level, but it helps build their fluency. I will spend time with your student helping them select books they are interested in. This is also a great area that you can help support. A \$5-\$10 book can go a long way in helping her child stay in love (or maybe fall in love) with reading. We still have Scholastic Book orders in middle school. You can go online at <https://clubs.scholastic.com/> and use our class code HC668. I use points earned from the orders for additional books for our classroom library.

They should also be doing at least 30 minutes of math a day, including weekends. Some students are able to complete their lessons, or problem sets, in math class—this often depends on the teacher and the structure of the class they're in. However, even those who complete their lessons can spend time at home reviewing past concepts, preparing for tests, or working ahead in the program. Please feel free to reach out to your student's math teacher to get updates on their progress. Some teachers email weekly test updates.

Other than math and reading, students will have sporadic homework, usually pertaining to large projects. However, we typically have a good deal of work time in class, and if students manage their in-class time wisely, many of them seldom have much work to take home. I encourage students to use their time in class effectively. Having time to pursue interests outside of school is a healthy balance.

Procrastination and completion of work are common difficulties for middle school students. It is helpful for them to have set schedules for work time during the school week, and a method of checking due dates, planners, etc. We use a journal planner in class. Parental help with this is great, but it is also our expectation that they develop into mature students, capable of maintaining their own schedules, keeping track of their own assignments, and doing their own work. I often try to include the packets that students receive at the beginning of our big units. Again this is not a homework packet, but a place to help you touch base about how school is going.

Many students benefit from having an adult at home help them with work. Some parents will type while their student dictates the writing of their essay; some help with researching a topic at the library; some check over their student's math problem sets, etc. This can be helpful, particularly with younger middle school students, however, the expectation, again, is that the student becomes capable of doing these things independently. When they transition into high school, they'll need to have mastered time management, organization, and study skills.

Students will each get a education google account. These can be a handy tool for creating documents, sharing information in class and accessing this work from any place with an internet connection. We utilize google classroom for turning in some assignments, discussions, super quizzes, etc. I can link you to our google classroom to receive guardian summaries of what is happening in class and if your child is getting their online work submitted on time.

This is an exciting year of curriculum. We will focus on American history, Earth science, brain development and nutrition. We will write and read every day in class. It's a challenging, fast paced year that is highly interesting for middle level learners.

Please make sure you are linked to my webpage. It only takes a minute to sign up and is a very convenient way of getting updates. You can get all of my posts sent to you via email, twitter, rss feed or via facebook. Please go to [www.corbett.k12.or.us](http://www.corbett.k12.or.us) and link to my page. If you have difficulty getting this set up, let me know and I would be happy to help. **It's also great if you could send me an email if you haven't done so already so that I can include it in my class parent email list and add you to our google classroom.** I hope that this communication (website posts, emails, google classroom summaries, etc) do not replace what your child does in their school day, but gives you a starting point to the discussion.

Some important dates:

10/3 - 10/4 Mt. St. Helens Overnight Field Trip - permission slips will be sent home next week.  
10/8 - 10/10 Goal Setting Conferences – I will be sending out an electronic sign up.

Please feel free to contact me about concerns or if you need an update. The school will mail home a two-page narrative progress report three times each year. This will contain information about our units of study, scores and goals that I have for your child. The easiest way to get a hold of me is through email [ryoung@corbett.k12.or.us](mailto:ryoung@corbett.k12.or.us). I try to respond to email within one to two days. I am rarely able to answer my phone (503-261-4204) during the school day when students are busy. However, I do try to respond to all voicemails at the end of the day. If you need to get a message to your child you can email me or call the office (503-261-4200).

Thanks for sticking with me through this letter. I already sent home an update last week via email, so if you didn't get it please get in touch with me so I can get this information current. Once again, I look forward to working with you to make this an incredible year for your student.

Best Regards,

Rhiannon Young  
[ryoung@corbett.k12.or.us](mailto:ryoung@corbett.k12.or.us)  
503-261-4204