

*Frances C. Richmond Middle School
63 Lyme Road
Hanover, NH 03755*

June 1st, 2016

Dear rising 6th Graders,

Greetings, soon-to-be 6th graders. I am very excited to get to know you, and I am looking forward to a dynamic sixth grade year with you. There are two things I'd like you to do over the summer. The first thing is to write a letter to your 6th grade teachers about you as a learner. The second thing is for you to read at least two books between now and the start of school in September.

Sixth Grade Summer Reading Assignment

Your first task over the summer is to read at least **2** books and record them on the sheet attached. Don't stop at two books if you love to read! I encourage you to read to your heart's content, which is why I have left extra spaces on the sheet. Then, below your book list, there is a place for you and your parents to sign it (this is so that I know your parents are aware of what you have read over the summer). The full annotated book lists are on the Richmond School website www.richmondmiddleschool.org, in the left hand sidebar under "Students." Look for Summer Reading under that heading. The first list is the Dorothy Canfield Fisher Children's Book Award list, which you can find at <http://libraries.vermont.gov/sites/libraries/files/Masterlist1617.pdf> . The other is the Great Stone Face Book Award list, which can be found at <http://chilis.nhlibrarians.org/files/2016/05/GSF-brochure-2016-17-1.pdf> . However, if you prefer, you can choose your own books instead.

It is difficult to enjoy a book that is much too hard or much too easy to read. Therefore, look carefully at a number of books before you choose one. If you are a slow reader, it's a good idea to plan ahead. You should feel free to drop a book that you do not enjoy and find a better one. Please do not pick a book you have already read.

Letter to your 6th Grade Teachers

As your new teachers, we are very curious to discover as much as we can as soon as possible about you as a learner, as a student, and how you see yourself in school. We would also like to know about the things you are interested in outside of school. This will help us get to know you more quickly.

Your letter should be about 4 paragraphs long, although some of you may want to tell us even more, and that's fine. Please write a paragraph (about 4 sentences in length) about each of the following topics.

A *snapshot* of you - tell us about what you really enjoy doing in your free time. This can include things like: being outdoors or indoors, playing specific sports, taking care of animals,

hanging out with friends, being with your family, cooking, camping, skate boarding, kite-flying, whatever and etc. Or this can include your hobbies, such as making model airplanes, making jewelry or collecting something special like minerals, stuffed animals, coins, things that start with the letter “q” --- you name it! If you have pets of your own, we would love to hear about them as well – anything to help us know you better.

What is *easiest* for you in school? This can include subjects you enjoy (like reading, writing, science, math, history, art, music, sports, or drama) or, it can include things like: being really good at class discussions, memorizing things, using computers, problem solving, working in groups, doing school projects, following directions, meeting due dates, taking tests or quizzes, or other things like that.

What is *hardest* for you in school? Include specific subjects (math, writing, reading, history, etc.). Or, tell us about things like: listening in class, following directions, meeting due dates, sitting still for 40 minutes, staying organized, taking tests or quizzes, or working in groups, for example. Describe for us how teachers or your parents have helped you in the past solve some of these problems. Or, tell us things you wish your teachers or your parents would do to help you solve these kinds of problems.

What do you *imagine* yourself doing when you grow up? What kind of job (or jobs) would you like to try? (When I was in eighth grade I imagined myself becoming a marine biologist, but instead I became a jeweler and then a teacher.) Where do you imagine yourself living - - somewhere warm year-round? near the mountains? in the city? in the country? in a foreign country?

OPTIONAL PARAGRAPH - What kinds of things do you wish your teachers knew about you as a person? Maybe you have had a piece of your writing published or you have won a special award. Maybe you have traveled across the U.S. or have lived in a foreign country. Maybe you have some very special family traditions that mean a lot to you. Tell me anything else you really want me to know about you.

TWO DRAFTS: Begin the letter with “Dear Sixth Grade teachers,” and the date (like I do on mine to you) and then sign it with your name at the end (like I have signed my letter to you). Please write at least two drafts of your letter. The first draft is to get your ideas down on paper; some of your teachers may call this the “sloppy copy.” The second one is revised and “cleaned up” for the reader. Please write the second draft on the computer so we can have an electronic copy for your 6th grade electronic portfolio. Save it to your school Google Drive account and share it with me. If you are new to the district, a paper copy will be fine. Have your parents contact me if this presents a problem for you.

Print out the second draft and staple the two drafts together with the “final” draft on top and bring it and your reading list for the first day of school.

Ciao,

Ms. Sylvester
suzannesylvester@hanovernorwichschools.org

June 1st, 2016

Dear rising sixth graders,

To help you get to know me, I thought I'd share a few bits of "Ms. Sly" trivia. Things I love: music, the circus, animals, summer, the ocean, the smell of autumn, the sound of a cat purring, reading, writing, laughing, being with family and friends, making things - all kinds of things - AND so much more. Some day I'm determined to publish a story, a book, or some poetry. I'll read you some of my stories next year. All in all, I never miss an opportunity to be creative.

When I was in middle school, any project related to reading and writing was right up my alley. I also liked all the experiments in science and hearing stories about the history in social studies. I must confess that when I was younger, math wasn't easy for me. Word problems were mind-boggling, and as hard as I tried to get my equations right, they never seemed to "add up." It always seemed like math was so much easier for everyone else. Fortunately, I kept at it and worked hard. Now, as an adult, I can easily do the math I need to do in order to get along.

Speaking of things that were hard for me in school but got easier, oral presentations were my least favorite thing about school when I was in 6th grade. I was so shy that I would blush as red as a lobster! By 8th grade, I stopped feeling as self-conscious, and now, being in front of an audience doesn't bother me at all. Another thing that was hard for me in 6th and 7th grade was working in groups because I was so shy. As I got older and became more confident with my ideas, I found it much easier to work in groups. It still can be challenging to work in groups, depending on the group, but at least I know that I can do it.

I have some crazy dreams -- things I'd love to do some day but which seem a little outrageous like riding across the Sahara Desert on a camel. Last year, I started making metal sculpture again after taking a couple of welding classes. This summer I'll be back at work, making sculpture for my back yard -- something the deer can't eat!

Traveling is high on my list of "must-do's." I have driven across the U.S.; crossed the border into Mexico; lived in England; sailed in the Gulf of Mexico, up the Mississippi River, and along the Eastern Seaboard; traveled through Europe, and seen the Glass Window on Eleuthera, spent many a holiday in Scotland with my Scottish family. I'd really love to visit Hawaii someday, which is where my life began. Turkey, Greece, Machu Picchu, and Tibet spots are also high on my list of the places I'd like to go. How about you?

Well, I hope you've enjoyed this snapshot of "Ms. Sly." There's a lot more to tell, but we have all year to get to know each other. So, make the most of your summer, and get psyched for an exciting sixth grade year in our school!

Ciao, Ms. Sylvester