

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

June 20th, 2017

**Dear rising 6th Graders,**

Greetings, soon-to-be 6<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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/Masterlist1718.pdf>. The other is the Great Stone Face Book Award list, which can be found at <http://chilis.nhlibrarians.org/files/2017/05/GSF-brochure-2017-18.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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 (look at the letter I wrote to you for an example) 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 you can eventually upload an electronic copy to your RMS Google. If you are new to the district, a paper copy will be fine. Have your parents contact me if you have any problems.

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](mailto:suzannesylvester@hanovernorwichschools.org)

June 20th, 2017

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. The bottom line is, I never miss an opportunity to be creative.

When I was in middle school, I loved any project related to reading and writing. I also liked all the experiments in science and hearing stories about history in social studies. I must confess that, math wasn't easy for me in elementary school. 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. Now, as an adult, 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 shy. As I got older and became more confident with my ideas, I found it much easier to work in groups. Working in groups is a part of life, so it's important to practice now so it will be easier in the future.

I have some crazy dreams -- things I'd love to do some day but may seem a little outrageous like riding across the Sahara Desert on a camel or starting an Internet radio station for audio dramas and local musicians. Two years ago, I took up welding again (something I did in college) and began making metal sculpture. This summer I plan to add to my collection of sculpture in my backyard. Traveling is also high on my list of "must-do's."

Family is also important to me. My daughter, who is 26, lives in San Francisco, working as a research scientist during the week, and mountain bike racer on the weekends. I miss her like crazy, and maybe when I retire from this crazy, wonderful job, I'll move out West.

Now, how about you? Make the most of your summer and get psyched for an exciting sixth grade year at RMS!

Ciao, Ms. Sylvester