Benchmark Prep—Sophomores Spring 2014

Mr. Jacob Meza

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**Overview of Course Content**

This year-long class is designed for students who need extra reading practice to pass their OAKS assessment, a prerequisite to graduating with a regular diploma. The class helps students prepare for both the OAKS State Reading Test and the alternative assessment (ESRWS). Using margin notes, students engage with both fictional and nonfictional texts. They summarize, question, connect personally, decipher context clues for unknown words, interpret, infer, and analyze the author’s craft in order to engage more deeply with texts. Familiarity with and practice of the alternative assessment method, rubric, and procedures are key. When appropriate, we will also work on writing.

Opportunities for passing the OAKS Reading test and/or an alternative assessment occur in November, February, and April, as directed by the state. Passing the OAKS test with a score of 236 or better will count as the graduation requirement. When students pass the OAKS reading test, they will be allowed to drop this class, even if that falls in the middle of a semester. After working with their counselor, a new class will be assigned to them. If they are currently passing the Benchmark Prep class when they pass OAKS, they will receive an English credit for the semester. (The exception is the February window as that comes right at the beginning of the semester; only elective credit will be given in that case.) If they are not passing the class at the time of passing OAKS/2 alternatives, they will only receive an elective credit for the time spent in Benchmark Prep.

Be sure to visit my website for class materials and additional resources.

[**www.mrjmeza.weebly.com**](http://www.mrjmeza.weebly.com)

**Grading Guidelines**

Points are accumulated from the first assignment through the semester final exam. Students in this class are assessed on a pass/no pass basis. A 70% is the lowest percentage for a passing grade.

**Class Requirements**

• Absences: Upon returning to school after an absence, it is **the student’s responsibility** to ask about what he/she missed. By October, the daily task(s) will be recorded on our class website. Students can check there and/or with me to make-up work.

• Personal time management: when a task is completed, students are expected to use any remaining time to read silently or individually complete work for another class.

• Homework: Students should not expect homework from this class regularly; rather homework will be necessary only when daily tasks are not completed in a satisfactory way. All work is to be completed individually unless specifically stated otherwise.

• Bathroom passes: One pass every 3 weeks; if the pass is not used during that time, the pass/opportunity will carryover into the next 3 weeks. Violation of that pass (extended time or disruption, etc.) will result in loss of future passes and/or detentions.

* SSR Book

**Availability and Accommodations**

I am happy to make the time to meet with students. On most days, I am available before and after school. Also, students may leave me a message on email or by calling the school office. Accommodations will be provided as specified in your IEP.  If you feel that additional accommodations are needed, please let me and your case manager know.

If students desire accommodations on assignments due to an IEP or due to the need for more of a challenge, students should talk individually with me to agree upon potential alternatives. If students feel that additional accommodations are needed, please let me and the case manager know. In each subject/course students will be pre-assessed on the knowledge and skills that will be learned in the subject/course. The purpose of this pre-assessment is to find out what students already know and are able to do to avoid repetition and to give the student access to advanced and/or accelerated content.

Formal or informal pre-assessments may include OAKS tests, student input and self-evaluation, placement test, specific teacher observational data, lab demonstration or test, work samples, fist of five, thumbs up/thumbs down, or other forms of pre-assessment. Below is a list of differentiation strategies that may be used.

**Differentiation Strategies**

 Enrichment Multiple Intelligences Contracting

 Acceleration Compacting Learning Styles

 Independent Study/Project Tiered Assignments Critical Thinking

 Assignment Modification Flexible Grouping Cluster Grouping

**Academic Ethics/Expected Behavior**

This class presents high expectations both academically and in terms of behavior.

Students are expected to refer to the daily objectives both at the beginning of class to understand the day’s focus and again at the end to check for comprehension. If students are having trouble understanding, please let me know so that we can work to increase learning. Plagiarizing—using someone’s words and/or ideas as one’s own—or cheating will be handled according to the handbook policy. Dishonest methods are not the way to deal with academic difficulty; instead, see me, and we will develop a strategy.

In this room students are expected to come prepared, listen attentively, think critically, contribute constructively, and be creative and flexible. If students choose to behave in a manner that disrupts one’s own learning and/or the learning of others, they may expect any of several consequences including but not limited to a teacher/student conference, phone call home, detention, and referral to the office.

**Confidentiality**

Any discussions or writings that are confidential in nature will remain private. However, there are legally mandated exceptions. Any teacher who has knowledge of child abuse (physical, emotional, or sexual) or suspects a student is contemplating harming him/herself or another is required by law to report this information to the proper authorities.

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I hereby confirm that, I understand and agree with the terms and conditions to upheld within this class.

Student name(print) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Parent/ Guardian Name(print)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 (optional)Email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Parent/ Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_