**Ms. Berry’s Classroom Reference Guide**

**Homework**

Homework will consist each week of the Star Homework – an assignment sheet that students will receive each Monday and glue into their agenda. Each night there are three homework assignments – independent reading for 20 or more minutes, 15 minutes of math practice and 15 minutes of spelling word practice. Math practice options will change quarterly and the links will be available on our class web site under the Math tab. Spelling suggestions and web site links are listed under Reading as well as glued into each student’s planner. On Wednesdays, instead of spelling, there is a weekly Reader’s Response letter (see more information below). Each night, the student should circle which assignments each or she completed. On Friday, a parent should sign and date the Star Homework sheet and return it to school.

For each assignment completed, the student earns a star for that week that goes toward our class goal. If the class together earns enough to meet or exceed our class goal, we will have extra minutes of free choice time during Fun Friday.

This “universal homework” is intended to simplify the homework process and make it easier for students, parents, and teachers. The general expectation is that all three assignments are to be completed each night. However, if your child has a particularly busy night one night each week or you have a night every so often that’s super busy, that’s ok. We understand that students have activities, family, and other things going on outside of school and we also want students to relax, have fun, and be able to do kid things like play outside. Occasionally, students may have additional assignments such as for a project or book report. We will adjust the Star Homework for that week when/if this arises.

**Nightly Reading Assignment, Weekly Reader’s Response Letters**

Each student should be reading nightly at home independently most nights for approximately 20 minutes or more – if you are having a busy night and need to pick one Star Homework assignment, I’d always prefer it to be independent reading. The actual amount of time each night is less important than establishing a regular independent reading habit at home. Books should be the child’s choice – fiction, non-fiction, even magazines on occasion are perfectly acceptable. It is also great to have your child read aloud to a parent or sibling.

As part of their Star Homework, each week on Wednesdays your child will be responsible for writing a letter to me about the book they are reading at home. Your child has letter suggestions in their homework folder and the list is available on our class web site under both the Homework and the Reading pages. These letters should be no longer than a page and more than 3-4 sentences. These can be typed if the student wishes or notebook paper is fine as well. We will be discussing the format and practicing these in class as well.

**Student Planner/Agenda**

Each Monday, your child will receive their Star Homework sheet, which should be kept in their homework folder. Please check in with your child about what Star Homework assignments they have completed each night and sign the homework sheet before it comes back to school on Friday. Also, look for upcoming test dates as well as due dates for returning papers – these will be written on the board when they are needed and it will be the student’s responsibility to write them down. Due dates for major tests, assignments, and projects will be under the calendar tab on our class web site and I usually put them in my “Dates to Remember” section of my weekly e-mail.

**Year-Long Reading Goals**

My goal for each student, if they are not already, is to turn him or her into a reader – someone who enjoys reading and seeks out books and reading opportunities. Completing books is a critical part of becoming an independent reader. Each student will have a goal of reading 25 books by the end of the school year and reading across a variety of genres. Each student will also have a reader’s notebook at school to keep track of books he or she has read and book he or she wants to read. Books completed at home count toward this goal. When your child completes a book at home, they should write down the title, author, and genre in their planner so they can add it to their reading list at school.

**Friday Folders**

Every Friday, unless otherwise noted, checked/graded papers will go home in your child’s Friday folder. You will also receive any field trip forms, announcements, or papers that need to be reviewed by an adult. Please sign the form inside and return any necessary papers on Monday the following week.

**Behavior Expectations**

We will learn all of the classroom and school rules as well as practice procedures during the first few weeks of school. In general, I believe that children, with the right guidance, high expectations, and practice can manage themselves quite well. My focus is on building relationships and teaching children what is expected and the right thing to do with regards to their behavior. With this in mind, I do not do any sort of visible behavior chart or send home daily or weekly reports – if your child has a major behavioral issue at school, you can expect a phone call from me and it will be noted in Veracross. I’d much rather speak to you directly about behavioral issues than use Veracross or email as a first response however and I will only email if I have been unable to get in touch with you. On the other end of this spectrum, I will send home occasional notes or quick emails about great things your child is doing in school.

**Snack**

Snack will be held from 9:45-9:55 each morning. Please send a snack Mondays through Thursdays – Fridays will be our special snack day. It is important that you send appropriate snacks for your child. PLEASE do not send snacks that are messy or that leave a residue on hands. Soft drinks or sports drinks are not acceptable as beverages. Also, please avoid snacks that require a fork or a spoon. If the student does not have one, I do not usually have extras in the room.

**Birthday Snacks**

If you would like to send in a special birthday snack for your child we will have them at the end of the day just before we go home at 2:30. We do have allergies in our classroom so please email me before sending in a birthday snack and we do not allow snacks with nuts or nut products. Please make sure these snacks are ready to serve – if anything needs to be sliced or anything similar it needs to be done ahead of time as we are on a tight time schedule throughout the day. Please also always email me ahead of time to ask about bringing in a birthday snack – some days there may be conflicts with the time and another may work better. I always try my best to have birthday snacks on the student’s actual birthday if possible. As always, this is optional.

**Absences**

If your child has to miss school, please email me or send in a note the next day with the reason so I can note it in Veracross.

**Transportation Changes**

If your child is riding home with a friend, I must have a note either in writing or by email to that regard. I cannot let your child go home with another family without it. If there is a last minute transportation change (day of), please always call the office so they can buzz our room in addition to emailing. While I make every effort to check email during the enrichment subjects, I cannot guarantee that I will be able to do so every day just not knowing what might come up in the course of a school day.

**Class Web Site**

Our classroom web site can be found at <http://www.msberrysts.weebly.com>. It can be accessed from the main STS web page as well. On our site, you can find quick links to important web sites, such as Scholastic Book Orders, homework web sites, and other sites that we will use throughout the year. In addition, there is a blog where I will post a version of my weekly newsletter (minus things like student names if applicable), a calendar where major events, assignments, and tests are posted, curriculum information, photo gallery, and specific information about special projects or assignments as they are assigned. I intend this to be a hub of information about our class and I will continue to add to it and change it throughout the year. Please let me know if there is some specific information you wish was available on our web site but is not there currently.

**If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me at eberry@sttimothys.org**