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Nixon Elementary School

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4K's web site: http://fc.sudbury.k12.ma.us/~Jeffrey_Kotkin/?Plugin=Block

E-mail: jeff_kotkin@sudbury.k12.ma.us

..The Writer's Notebook.....

Dear Parents:

I wanted to inform you about one of the most important tools students will be using soon to generate ideas for, and interest in, writing. Each student will be keeping his or her own WRITER'S NOTEBOOK. Some students have experience with this concept. For others, it is a new endeavor. Let me explain what a Writer's Notebook is all about and a little about what it's not.

The Writer's Notebook is the starting point of the writing process. It is meant to be the **holding place for ideas** to be used later in narratives, memoirs, poetry, persuasive essays, and more. It is a place to record feelings, memories, wonderings, opinions, lists, questions, observations, and many other ideas a writer does not want to forget. In each student's Writer's Notebook is a pre-printed list of subjects to write about if he or she is stuck for an idea.

Finding a writing topic is often the most difficult part of writing for many children. Students are encouraged to write what they know and what they are passionate about: what they care about. They may not use all of the seeds in their notebooks when they write in the future, but it is good to know those seeds are there in case they are needed.

Please remember that a Writer's Notebook is not a diary or a daily journal. We don't want entries such as, "Yesterday I went to the mall with my dad. I got new sneakers. I like them so far..." Also, we do not stress proper spelling, grammar, or punctuation. While it is always good to pay attention to these things, it can sometimes hamper the creative process. Therefore, complete sentences are not necessary, and the form each student's writing takes will be different.

The notebook is a place to react to the world around us and to personal experiences at any time during the day, not just in school. Students will often decide to take it home after school and on weekends. The more comfortable they feel interacting with their notebooks, the more meaningful their entries will be. I am keeping a Writer's Notebook throughout the year as well. And while students are never required to share their notebook entries with anyone, we often share voluntarily.

We're off to a solid start! Building and honing these writing skills is not an easy task, but as they interact regularly with their Writer's Notebooks, students will begin to appreciate them as a basic writing tool they won't be able to live without.

Have a great week!

Mr. Kotkin