



SAMPLE MATERIAL

## Parent Letter

Fall Creek Elementary School, North Carolina

**Topic:** Teaching Elementary School Students to Be Effective Writers

**Practice:** Engaged Community

At the beginning of the year, a Fall Creek Elementary School teacher sends this letter to the parents of first- and second-grade students, alerting them to an upcoming classroom celebration that will celebrate all forms of writing and give students the opportunity to decorate their writing journals for the year. The letter explains the importance of discussing the value of writing and encourages parents to talk about their own uses of writing with their children.

This letter models one way teachers can communicate with parents regarding the importance of talking with their children about writing. It also provides one example of a writing celebration teachers can use to build an engaged community of writers that extends beyond the classroom.

To learn more about expanding the audience for writing, view the presentation *There Is a Larger Audience*. To learn more about creating an atmosphere where students are passionate about writing and take ownership over their writing, view the presentation *Giving Students a Choice*.

September 7, 2011

Dear Parent(s),

Today your child is receiving an invitation to a party at school on Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of this party is to celebrate writing in all its forms. Please discuss ways that people (especially you) communicate through writing daily (this could be grocery lists, letters, cards, writing checks, etc).

I would like you to consider a few things before you discuss writing with your child. Imagine if you were a world without written communication. If you believe that writing is important, explain why you think so to your child. Explain the types of writing that you have done and what you would want to write about if you had the opportunity.

It is very important to me that my students understand the importance of writing but even more than that, I want my students to know that **they have something to say**. Many famous poems and books have been written by child authors. Throughout this school year, your child will have the opportunity to write daily. Topics will be chosen by your child more often than not. If something sad, exciting, disappointing happens in your child's life, please encourage him/her to write about it. It might be something that he/she writes at home or something that he/she chooses to write at school.

Please understand that I will be helping your child to put his/her important and worthwhile thoughts down on paper. In no way is this meant to be intrusive or inappropriate but it will be from your child's perspective and his/her thoughts about life experiences. Writing from the first person perspective daily is intended to help develop writing fluency. In the same way that children develop reading fluency by consistent and meaningful practice, your child will develop writing stamina/endurance (an ability to write and tell a story).

I would like to ask you to help your child gather important "artifacts" to bring to our party on Friday morning. Please send your child to school with any important drawings, photos, stickers, magazine clippings... (anything that matters to your child) for him/her to use to decorate and personalize their journals. I will be helping my students to develop a sense of ownership over their writing and part of doing that is helping create a place for them to write down their personal experiences.

Thank you for your help and support,  
Kailey Adams