

Kelly Mill Middle School

Dear Eighth Grade Parents and Students,

Reading is the most important lifelong skill that we can help our students to learn and to practice. Along with the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Commission on Reading, we believe that reading is not just a skill learned and practiced at school, but a developmental and continual process throughout life.

Kelly Mill Middle School encourages students to maintain the reading skills and strategies taught and practiced throughout the school year by having a summer reading list that offers students choices in their reading selections. Students are asked to read one book from the grade-leveled list provided. We encourage parents and students to choose books according to interests and the Lexile scores (reading level) provided for each selection. Parents should refer to their student's Lexile score that was reported on the spring MAP score report.

Every child is encouraged to create a journal responding to the story as he or she reads it. Responding to literature is an important part of the reading process and allows students to explore their ideas, impressions, and reactions to the literature. Journal entries include a brief summary of the section along with a personal response. Responses might include:

- Questions about the reading
- Predictions about what will happen next
- Interesting or surprising quotes
- Personal opinions about characters and their actions

When the school year begins, students will be asked to respond to a writing prompt about the novel he or she read over the summer. Students will be required to write a literary essay in response to the prompt. The aforementioned journal can be to use as a reference when responding to the written prompt.

The Kelly Mill Middle School Summer Reading Committee, comprised of language arts teachers, the curriculum specialist, the principal, and media specialist, has provided a list of summer reading choices for rising 8th graders (attached). In order to assist you in finding copies of the books, local book stores and local branches of the Richland County Public Library have been provided with a copy of the list. Other good resources for finding books are Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble at bn.com.

Happy Reading!

8th Grade Summer Reading List (2009-2010)

Lexile

***Pool Boy* by Michael Simmons.....650**

Brett's life as a wealthy teenager ends when his father is convicted of insider trading. He moves from their mansion to his aunt's ramshackled house and gets a short-lived fast-food job before signing up to help 70-year-old pool cleaner Alfie Moore. Under Alfie's tutelage Brett faces the humiliation of cleaning the pools of his friends, as well as the pool of his old home. Can Brett's summer with Alfie teach him to accept his father's infallibilities and plan a future for himself?

***Bucking the Sarge* by Rodman Philbrick.....1000**

LUTHER T. FARRELL has got to get out of Flint, Michigan. As his best friend Sparky says, "Flint's nothing but the Titanic." And his mother, a.k.a. the Sarge, says, "Take my advice and stay off the sucker path." The Sarge milked the system to build an empire of slum housing and group homes. Luther's just one of the many people trapped in the Sarge's Evil Empire—but he's about to bust out. If Luther wins the science fair this year, he'll be on track for college and a future as America's best-known and best-loved philosopher. All he's got to do is beat his arch rival Shayla Patrick, the beautiful daughter of Flint's finest undertaker—and the love of Luther's life.

***Swindle* by Gordon Korman.....810**

After a mean collector named Swindle cons him out of his most valuable baseball card, Griffin Bing must put together a band of misfits to break into Swindle's compound and recapture the card. There are many things standing in their way -- a menacing guard dog, a high-tech security system, a very secret hiding place, and their general inability to drive -- but Griffin and his team are going to get back what's rightfully his.

***The Trap* by John Smelcer.....1100**

Seventeen-year-old Johnny Least-Weasel knows that his grandfather Albert is a stubborn old man and won't stop checking his own trap lines even though other men his age stopped doing so years ago. When Albert doesn't come back from checking his traps, with the temperature steadily plummeting, Johnny must decide quickly whether to trust his grandfather or his own instincts. Written in alternating chapters that relate the parallel stories of Johnny and his grandfather, this novel poignantly addresses the hardships of life in the far north, suggesting that the most dangerous traps need not be made of steel.

***Heat* by Mike Lupica.....940**

Michael Arroyo grows up in the shadows of hallowed Yankee Stadium, a boy forever on the outside looking in. His only chance to see his field of dreams? Pitch his Bronx all-star team to the district finals and a shot at the Little League World Series. But there is a problem. Michael is good—*too* good. Rival coaches and players can't believe a boy could be this good and be only twelve years old. And Michael has no way to prove it—no mother, no father, and a birth certificate that is stuck home in his native Cuba. If the people from social services find out his secret, he will have an even worse problem: being separated from the only family he knows, his older brother Carlos. Baseball can be a game of heroes, of champions who refuse to lose. Or it can be a field of crushed dreams. For one boy, the game is about to turn serious.

***So Be It* by Sarah Weeks860**

Thirteen-year-old Heidi lives a sheltered but rich life in Reno with her developmentally disabled mother, So B. It, and their agoraphobic neighbor, Bernadette, who takes care of them. The pair arrived on Bernie's doorstep 13 years ago, and because So B. It's vocabulary consists of only 23 words, Bernie has never been able to figure out where she and her mother came from or if they have any other family. Bernie homeschools Heidi, who is intelligent, determined, and energetic. One day while cleaning a closet, Heidi discovers an old camera with film inside. When the photos are developed, they find a young, pregnant So B. It at Hilltop Home for the Disabled, in Liberty, New York. Determined to solve the mystery of her mother, Heidi sets out alone on a cross-country bus trip.

Touching Spirt Bear by Ben Mikaelson.....670

Caution - This book contains graphic violence.

Cole Matthews is angry. Angry, defiant, smug--in short, a bully. His anger has taken him too far this time, though. After beating up a ninth-grade classmate to the point of brain damage, Cole is facing a prison sentence. But then a Tlingit Indian parole officer named Garvey enters his life, offering an alternative called Circle Justice, based on Native American traditions, in which victim, offender, and community all work together to find a healing solution. Privately, Cole sneers at the concept, but he's no fool--if it gets him out of prison, he'll do anything. Ultimately, Cole ends up banished for one year to a remote Alaskan island, where his arrogance sets him directly in the path of a mysterious, legendary white bear. Mauled almost to death, Cole awaits his fate and begins the transition from anger to humility.

Fire from the Rock by Sharon Draper.....830

An honor student, Sylvia Patterson is thrilled when she is chosen as one of the first black students to integrate all-white Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957. But the racism in her town is terrifying, and she is not sure she can go through with it. Unlike her older brother, she does not want to be a hero and change the world. Besides, many in her black community are against integration; why not stay with her friends, concentrate on academics, and get to college?