

Dear Parents,

It's hard to believe that summer is so quickly approaching. Before the break begins, we wanted to remind you about the Middle School summer reading program. As in previous years, students are required to read one book prior to the start of the school year. The eighth grade team will begin the year exploring themes of injustice, prejudice, inalienable rights, and moral imperatives. To begin this examination, we are asking in-coming eighth grade students to read *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet* by Jamie Ford.

This is a beautifully written novel that considers the relationship between minority and majority groups in American society during the war years of the 1940's. As the novel opens, a Chinese American man is grieving the recent death of his wife and the silence he endures with his son. A serendipitous event awakens a memory that he has long suppressed—his innocent love for a Japanese American girl who he lost to an internment camp in Idaho. With this memory, we are quickly transitioned to his childhood in Seattle's Chinatown, which is separated from Japantown by a thin, imaginary line and the Panama Hotel.

We encourage parents as well as students to read the novel and have provided some historical background and a list of questions to promote discussions between parents and children around some of the central issues of the book. There is no required written response over the summer, but students should be prepared to be articulate in their class discussions of the book. Additional assessment demonstrating basic factual knowledge of the book will take place following classroom discussions.

Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet is available in hard cover at local bookstores at the cost of \$24.00. Amazon is charging \$16.32 for new copies, but it offers used copies at a lesser cost as well. There are several copies of the novel available for loan through the Bosque School library. If you would like to borrow a copy of the novel from the school's library, please contact Mary Tuttle at mtutt@bosqueschool.org to make the necessary arrangements.

For families who would like extra reading opportunities, we have also included a list of recommended titles and authors.

Education is a partnership, and your encouragement, involvement and support are important components of your child's success. Thank you for your help in promoting literacy and a love of reading.

Sincerely,

Bosque School 8th Grade Teachers