**Letter to Students**

Monday, August 24th, 2015

Dear Bright 8th Grade Students,

 Welcome to 8th grade! I am so glad that you are here and that I have the honor of being your Language Arts teacher. An amazing year of learning is in store for you. All of your 8th grade teachers are devoted to helping you become the best version of yourself and to prepare you for your next phase in life, high school. I know that there will be challenges throughout the year, but do not hesitate to come to me with any problems that you may encounter, no matter how small.

In this class, Language Arts, we are a family! We treat each other with respect and allow for each of us to grow in our learning and understanding of the curriculum as well as our acceptance of each other. There will be zero tolerance for negativity or bullying towards one another. If such negativity occurs, you will be removed from the group setting and your parents will be notified of your actions. This class is a place where we can feel free to be ourselves and share our ideas without ridicule. I will challenge you this year to go beyond what you have previously achieved. It will not be easy, but it will be rewarding.

This is my third year at Mills Park Middle School, though I have taught 8th Grade Language Arts in the Durham school district for a few years and three years ago I taught 7th grade Language Arts at Heritage Middle School in Wake Forest.

Sometimes, it is nice to know a little bit about the person who you will be working with everyday, so here is some biographical information about me. Originally, I grew up in the Chicago-land area but I moved to North Carolina because my husband is getting his PhD in Philosophy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Go Tarheels! This past March I had a baby girl named Penelope. I think she is pretty amazing! She is five month and feisty. I’m sure I will talk about her ad nauseam during the school day. Thank you in advance for listening to my Penelope stories. I also have three dogs that I treat as if they were my babies. There are Will and Grace, who are two retired greyhounds, and then little Jack Jack who is a Pomeranian. In my spare time, I like to read, craft things I find on Pinterest and run (when it is not 100 degrees outside!).

I have no doubt that this is going to be an amazing year full. Remember that you are completely in control of your destiny and that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Therefore, if you turn in all of your work and review the material presented in class, the reaction would be a successful outcome on the assessments and ultimately the E.O.G. My job is to encourage you as a reader, enrich your learning experience, and empower you as a student and as a person. Let us make this a great year!

Best wishes,

Mrs. Bertrand