September 5, 2014

Dear Parents—

We are excited to introduce you to an opportunity our students have to expand their writing skills through digital learning: the use of blogging in the English classroom.

Edublogs is a platform designed exclusively for education. Over a million teachers and students in grades K-12 are actively using Edublogs in schools all over the world, and in each of the past three years our WRMS seventh graders joined those numbers. With their Edublogs, our students posted original poems and essays, shared their thoughts about current events and the books they were reading, and wrote about their experiences with fine arts competitions and sports victories. They scanned and uploaded their artwork, recorded and shared their drama skits, and composed and posted compositions about topics as diverse as writing Java script and baking lemon bars. With blogging, our students discovered a wonderful venue for their creativity beyond the four walls of the classroom.

There is much to explore at <http://edublogs.org>, but here are the basics as they relate to English class:

* **Under the supervision of the English teacher**, each student will activate his or her individual blog using the Eanes ISD Edublogs Campus blogging platform (<http://edublogs.eanesisd.net>). The username and login will be the Novell username and login.
* The student is the administrator of the blog, with the freedom to choose from over 240 design templates, to decide what to post when, and to add extras such as video, wikis and podcasts. **The English teacher is also an administrator of the student blog, able to see every post and comment made on the blog.** As administrators, teachers have the ability to modify or delete any content. We have found that those WRMS students who enjoy writing in their blogs are very responsible students, and inappropriate posts have not been a problem in the past.
* **Friends and family may subscribe to the blog**, including friends at WRMS, friends who attend other schools, a cousin who lives in another city, a grandparent who lives out of state, or you, the parents. What a great way for a young writer to share his or her writing!
* **All student blogs will be tied to a class blog.** For the most part, students will post to their individual blogs. However, there will be a few times when publishing a writing assignment to the class blog is required as a final step of the writing process. This was very successful last year when we wanted to read and respond to many compositions as part of a specific writing lesson.
* **Blogs are for exploring and questioning, not just publishing.** Sometimes students will post polished composition work, but more often they will write informal, conversational posts, perhaps closing with a question to consider. We invite you to join in the exchange of ideas we will be having through our blogging. Visit often, read our posts, and leave comments. We welcome your company!

The attached permission slip will allow your child to activate and use an Edublogs account. Students who do not have permission to blog will be able to turn in any required blog assignments on paper.

Thank you for your support,

Tracy Kriese Lorie Schoch Jessica Robinett

Below is the text of the Blogging Terms and Conditions students will keep on file in their notebooks. Parents, we ask that you review these points with your child before you both sign the permission slip.

Blogging Terms and Conditions

* Students using blogs are expected to act safely by not posting identifying information about themselves or others. You are not to post last names, home addresses, email addresses, phone numbers, or other such information about yourself or other people.
* Students using blogs are expected to treat the blog as an extension of the English classroom. Speech and content that are inappropriate for the classroom are also inappropriate for a blog post. Use your blog for your creative writing and expression about topics that you care about, but do remember that you are writing for an audience of people who are your classmates in a school setting.
* Student blogs are to be a forum for self-expression, but they are also a tool for learning in the English classroom. There will be times when you are required to post in response to specific composition or reading assignments. Directions for those assignments will be posted in class, on the teacher website, and on the class blog.
* Student blogs are vehicles for sharing writing with real audiences, and one of the benefits of blogging is giving and receiving feedback. Comments in response to blog posts are encouraged. When leaving a comment, you are expected to be respectful and helpful. All comments will be moderated by the teacher (viewed, approved, and released by the teacher before they appear on a blog). Students leaving inappropriate comments will be held accountable for their behavior.

**I agree to abide by the above terms and conditions in the use of my Edublogs account.**

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Student’s printed name

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Student’s signature

**I give permission for my child to use an Edublogs account.**

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Parent’s signature