Policy

The homework packet is sent home each Friday and is due back the following Friday. The homework will consist of:

\*A reading calendar

\*Family Message Journal

\*DLI – Daily Language Instruction

Reading Calendar

Students must read at home for 30 minutes five times per week. It is OK if they miss a day and need to read for longer another day to catch up. For example, a student may not read all week and then read for 150 minutes on Sunday, although this is not advisable. Each day of reading needs to be verified by an adult's signature or initials.

Family Message Journals

Once per week the student will write a message in the FMJ for a parent or adult family member. The family member will write a response to the student in the notebook and the student will bring the notebook to school with the homework packet on Monday. Students will write their message at home based on a prompt that will be included in the homework packet.

Both messages will be written in correct letter format, including a date, greeting, body, closing, and signature. For the beginning of the year, we will not focus on the length of the message. Later, most students will be writing a complete paragraph

Function of FMJs:

\*Students reflect on learning in all content areas.

\*Content areas are integrated while students are being asked to think about their learning in a new way.

\*Students will see writing as a purposeful tool for thinking, learning, and self-expression.

\*Students will practice writing in different modes and for different purposes. Even though each message will be in the form of a letter, students messages will also inform, persuade, or tell a story. Messages may also include poetry, fiction, and many literary devices that we will study throughout the year.

\*Parents are informed about and included in what students are learning in school.

\*Students get immediate feedback on their writing and see a good model of proficient writing.

\*Student growth in writing is easily documented and assessed.

Family Response may:

\*Demonstrate interest of interest in children’s ideas and learning and ask children to tell more

\*Expand children’s knowledge by providing new information

\*Share personal opinions and stories

\*Ask questions to encourage thinking and problem solving

\*Suggest solutions to problems

\*Model the correct spelling or usage. For example, if your child writes, “Today we went on a field trip and watched balay dancers.” You might respond, “Did I ever tell you that I love ballet? My favorite is Swan Lake.”

Using FMJs is an instructional strategy described in the book, *Family Message Journals, Teaching Writing Through Family Involvement* by Julie Wollman-Bonilla.