Dear Students and Parents of the 2018-2019 Silver Wolves Team,

I know what a nerve-racking experience these first days of middle school can be, full of questions about the teachers, the school, and the future. *Will I be able to find all of my classes? How do I open my locker? What will the other kids on the team be like? When do we eat lunch?* Please rest assured that all of the teachers on the Silver Wolves team (and throughout Wakefield) will do our best to help you survive, and even enjoy, the beginning of this new school year.

While I may not have the answers to all of your questions, I can tell you a little about the procedures for English. Here are the answers to a few of the frequently asked questions:

* ***How much do tests, quizzes, homework, etc. count?***

Wakefield Middle uses a school-wide grading policy in every grade and every non-elective class:

*Homework = 10% Classwork = 20% Quizzes = 30% Tests = 40%*

Here’s a little bit of information about each one:

\* **Homework** will be assigned almost every day (including many weekends) and will be graded *primarily* for your effort. Naturally, if I believe that this work did not receive full *effort*, the work will not receive full *credit***. Take pride in your work! Don’t turn in a paper that’s ripped or wrinkled; take care of your work before, during, and after it’s completed.**  I can’t accept work over e-mail just in case your home computer has a virus or malware. If you choose to type any work at home (which you’re welcome to do), be sure you can print it out!

**\*** Your **classwork** grade will include work we do in class (obviously!) such as answering questions based on the previous night's homework, taking brief reading checks, working in collaboration and group work, or using our texts to answer workbook questions in class.

**\*** The **quizzes** category will include regular quizzes (including surprise pop quizzes) and larger/longer assignments that consume a considerable amount of time (in class or at home) and receive a letter grade.Use these to show off your best work! This category also includes **journals**. We’ll write these journals about once a week; these will be writing exercises ranging from “Compose a very descriptive Thanksgiving menu,” to “You’ve just been made principal. What changes would you make?” They are graded for completion and following instructions. One note about journals: the opinions, feelings, and thoughts you share in your journal are yours alone. However, it is my responsibility to alert other adults if your words threaten or relate harm to another individual, or if I feel that your own safety and well-being are at risk.

\* The heaviest category is **tests**: in-class tests, at-home projects, and essays – we don’t have as many of these, so each one counts a lot! This category also includes **Piggy Check-ups**.

\* What is the **Daily PIG**? Almost every day you will see a short **P***ractice* **I***n* **G***rammar* on the screen. As soon as class begins, I expect all students to be in their seats, copying, correcting, or

completing the PIG in their composition books. I will then show the correct response and we will

review it. Twice a quarter we’ll have Piggy Check-ups, where I will ask you to copy specific answers from your composition book to be sure that you've answered them correctly, and ask new questions on the grammar and language topics we covered to see that you understand the ideas.

\* Sometimes things don’t work out the way we planned. If you score below 70% on a test grade (test, essay, or PCU), you’ll have an opportunity to try again. You won’t redo the same task, but you will still have a chance to earn up to a 70% by making corrections or doing another task.

* ***What will we read?***

Our new curriculum doesn't use one large textbook. Instead, we will focus on 1-2 smaller books each quarter. I will lend you a copy of each book (which you'll return or pay for if it's damaged) or you can buy your own copy (meaning you can highlight and write in it and not worry about damaging it). The books we'll read include: *The Lightning Thief (by R. Riordan), Good Masters! Sweet Ladies! (L.Shlitz), World Without Fish (M. Kurlansky), Flush (C. Hiaasen),* and *Frightful's Mountain (J. George).* We'll also read several supplemental articles and essays in our workbooks that will stay in Mr. T's classroom.

* ***What about writing?***

Our new curriculum encourages writing - reflections, text-based answers, paragraph responses, and full 4-paragraph essays. Sometimes we'll write out our thoughts just to share them; sometimes your writing will be graded. Whenever you write, keep in mind what we've learned in our Daily Pigs, and take care of your GUMS: grammar, usage, mechanics, & spelling.

* ***How can my parents get involved and help out this year?***

Parents are always welcome to visit the classroom and are encouraged to contact me any time they have a question, concern, or compliment. I am excited about having parents help us inside and outside of the classroom. If parents are interested in helping more immediately, I would greatly appreciate the donation of any of the following items:

*Target / Wal-Mart gift cards, Kleenex, fun Band-Aids, Windex, stickers, pencils, markers, hard-to-kill plants, books or magazines students enjoy, floor pillows, or any other items you think may enhance our learning environment.* Thank you in advance for any help you may provide.

I hope that you now feel more comfortable about English and our new sixth grade year. I know that I am looking forward to a great year here at Wakefield and I hope you are as well!

~ *Mr. Tharrington*

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**