Dear Parent or Guardian,

As an invested partner in your child’s learning, I want to share some information about the literacy assessment I’ll be using in my class this year. The *Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System,* Third Edition is a one-on-one assessment that helps me identify your child’s specific reading strengths and appropriate instructional reading level for small- group instruction as determined by the F&P Text Level Gradient™. The data gained from this standardized assessment helps me identify goals and plan instruction that supports your child’s reading progress across the school year. Within each level are easier and harder books, and a range of topics and book types. The text levels are not intended for students or for families to categorize readers, but in the hands of teachers, they inform instruction.

The *Benchmark Assessment System* provides a snapshot in time of your child’s literacy development and will be given three or more times across the year, from September to May. Over the next few weeks, I will assess each student in the class by having him or her read several *Benchmark Assessment* books, having him or her think about the books, and talking one-on-one about each book. This natural, authentic assessment conference is a wonderful opportunity for me to get to know your child as a reader and to observe him engaged in literacy activities. It will provide a rich source of information to inform my teaching.

Your child will experience a wide variety of book levels across the day in read-aloud, shared reading, book clubs, and independent reading. When selecting books for enjoyment, your child selects from a wide range of books that appeal to his interests; they are not selected based on reading level. Your child will also have leveled instruction in a small group for a small part of the day, as it is one critical component of our literacy teaching for lifting your child’s competencies.

I invite you to ask any questions that arise throughout the school year and I look forward to upcoming parent/teacher conferences so we can discuss your child’s literacy progress. In the meantime, here are some ways you can support your child’s literacy learning at home:

# Visit your local library together. Encourage your child to select books that interest and excite him or her.

1. **“Give Us 20!” Read books to or with your child and talk about them together *at least* 20 minutes per day.**
2. **Listen to your child read books and talk about them together.**
3. **Most importantly, enjoy your time together reading, writing, and talking!**