



Mrs. Lofton's Sixth Grade Computer Exploratory Class

January 25, 2010

Dear Parents,

First, let me introduce myself. I am a graduate of Stanford University with a B.A. with Distinction in English. I also completed a Post-Graduate Diploma in English Language Studies at the University of Edinburgh and then earned an M.A. in English and an M.L.S. in Library Science at the University of Toronto. I am credentialed in English/Language Arts and in Teacher Librarian Services. I began my career as a librarian in a reference library, then worked for a number of years as a technical writer in the software industry. During the last seven and a half years, I served as Lindero's teacher-librarian and loved sharing my passion for reading, information literacy, and technology with students, parents, and other teachers. This year, due to budget cuts in our district, I am teaching in the classroom. I teach four 7th grade language arts classes and this computer exploratory rotation.

I am passionate about the value of computer and technology tools and the role they can play in enhancing learning. Twenty first century learners also need the opportunity to learn about and practice being good digital citizens. Students in this class will be participating in a new enrichment project and online tutorial, Middle School Learning 2.0. This tutorial will introduce them to a selection of free Web 2.0 online software tools, such as blogging, image generators, and Google documents. This experience will give your child the opportunity to build new technology and productivity skills he/she can use both for school and personal projects. Middle School 2.0 was recently developed by a team of teacher librarians from the California School Library Association as an adaptation of their earlier online tutorials for teacher librarians and classroom teachers, and the team is interested in student feedback. Students will therefore also have the opportunity to offer suggestions to improve the project for future participants.

Students will all create their own personal blogs and post information about their experiences using the online tools they learn about in class. They will create blog accounts that will not reveal any identifying personal information. The class instruction and their blog posting experiences will also help them to learn more about being responsible digital citizens. As part of the course, we will have lessons on digital citizenship, copyright, Creative Commons, research methods, and website evaluation skills.

Our class activities require that your child have an email account, as well as Google Blogger, Google Docs, and VoiceThread.com accounts. Since your child is under 13, these accounts need to be created either by you or with your permission as a family account. Please fill out the form attached to this letter to allow permission to have your child participate in this activity and to create family email, Google Blogger,

Google Docs, VoiceThread, and other Web 2.0 tool accounts for their use as part of the tutorial. To see the plan for the project, please visit <http://linderolearning2.blogspot.com/>.

Please contact me with any questions. The best way to reach me is by email at jlofton@lvusd.org. I will be happy to write back or call you. Alternatively, you can leave a message at 818/889-2134 x513, but email is definitely a quicker way to reach me.

A note about supplies: Students will be working on two different sets of computers. They will use desktop computers in our computer lab and laptops in my classroom. Although we have minimal homework in this elective, they may also want to do some of their work on a home computer. It will be very helpful if they have flash drives to transfer files between computers when necessary. I would recommend that you provide your child with a flash drive. You can purchase a flash drive at any office supply store. If you do not have a flash drive or do not want to purchase one, I will provide your child with access to one of my class flash drives.

Thank you very much for your support of what I am confident will be an engaging, enriching, and fun educational experience for your child.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Lofton". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and legible.

Jane Lofton
Computer Exploratory Teacher

Name of Student _____ Grade ____ 6 ____

Name of Parent/Guardian _____

I give my permission for my child to participate in the Computer Exploratory Middle School Learning 2.0 Tutorial and to create a personal blog and post reflections online about his/her experiences using the software tools. Some of the tools we will be using require that the account holder be 13 or older. I will allow my child to create and use a family account for Gmail, Google Blogger, Google Docs, VoiceThread, and other Web 2.0 tools for this project. Students will create accounts that will not reveal any identifying personal information, and the project will also help them to learn more about being responsible digital citizens.

This permission will remain in effect throughout my child's time at Lindero Canyon Middle School unless I cancel it.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

I, the student, also understand my responsibility to protect my personal privacy and to be a responsible digital citizen in information I post online.

Student Signature _____ Date _____