iLit Family Letter

Grade 8, Unit 4

Dear Parent or Caregiver:

In Unit 4 of the iLit program, your child is engaged in many learning activities that support mastery of the English Language Development Standards (ELD Standards) and the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (CCSS for ELA). The ELD Standards and the CCSS for ELA are aligned. Accordingly, aligned ELD Standards and CCSS for ELA for this unit of instruction are cited together in parentheses within this letter. ELD Standards are cited first, and CCSS for ELA second.*

During Unit 4 students read *Freak the Mighty* by award-winning author Roman Philbrick (PI.8.6; RL.8.10). This novel tells the story of Maxwell Kane, a boy with a learning disability, and Kevin, a boy with a physical disability. Maxwell and Kevin become close friends. They realize that they have strengths that are complementary. With Kevin riding on Maxwell's shoulders, they become *Freak the Mighty* and are unstoppable. As students read this compelling story they reflect on this question: *How does learning change the way we see ourselves?*

Students also read many short fiction and nonfiction texts (PI.8.6; RL.8.10, RI.8.10) in Unit 4. As they read and discuss the unit literature, they cite textual evidence that supports analysis of the texts (PI.8.6; RL.8.1, RI.8.1); determine the main idea, compare and contrast characters, analyze a theme, and summarize the text (RL.8.2); use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words (PI.8.6; L.8.4); acquire and use grade-appropriate vocabulary (PI.8.12; L.8.6); and demonstrate an understanding of verbs and verb phrases (PII.8.3), nouns and noun phrases (PII.8.4), word relationships, and nuances in word meaning (PI.8.8; L.8.5).

In addition, students evaluate language choices (PI.8.7; L.8.1), choose words to support their opinions (PI.8.11; W.8.1, L.8.1), and identify text structure (PII.8.1, PII.8.2; RI.8.5). Students also write an argumentative essay (PI.8.10; W.8.1) and present their essay to an audience (PI.8.9; SL.8.4). In addition, they engage in collaborative discussions on a variety of topics, including the ideas they encounter in the unit literature (PI.8.1, PI.8.5; SL.8.1).

To support your child's learning during this unit, here are some suggestions for at-home activities:

- To help your child expand his or her thinking about the unit theme, discuss some of the experiences he or she has had in the past few days. Talk about how your child felt and what he or she learnt from those experiences.
- Have your child identify one new fact he or she learned in the last few days. Then have your child do a search online or in a print reference book to confirm the fact or find related facts.
- During this unit, your child will be writing an argumentative essay. Ask what the topic of your child's essay is and what his or her opinion is on the issue. Also ask your child to state the reasons that support that opinion. Offer one or two counterarguments and encourage your child to consider how to respond to them in writing.

Thank you for your support of your child's learning.

Sincerely,

*To read the cited English Language Development Standards, please refer to the ELD Standards document for your child's grade, which you can access using this link: https://www.wida.us/standards/eld.aspx

To read the cited Common Core State Standards for ELA, please refer to the document "Common Core State Standards, English Language Arts and Literary/History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects." You can use the following link to access the document: http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/

iLit inspireLiteracy

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