

## Dear Family Member,

Welcome to the start of the new school year!

This year, our school district is using a new reading/language arts program, *Benchmark Advance*. It's published by Benchmark Education and is the newest program on the market, built specifically to meet the demands of today's standards.

These standards require students to engage with more rigorous, complex text as well as dive deeper into the interpretation of the text. This has led us to look for and implement a more engaging, interactive, and modern program.

*So...what's different about Benchmark Advance?*

The biggest difference: **the reading textbook.**

The core student books are light and manageable, magazine-like texts. These books are designed for students to interact with the readings by writing on the page and annotating the text.

*Wait...does this mean that my student can write in his/her books?*

Yes! Not only are students allowed to write in their books, but they should be writing in them! Annotation encourages students to take ownership of the text and dive deeper into the content, which improves comprehension.

Each book is meant to be used for just three weeks. After three weeks of reading and working with the texts in class, students will bring the annotated book home. Your student's annotations will allow you to see exactly how they are interpreting and engaging with the readings.

As your student is working through each unit, you'll notice that all of the readings are centered on one topic. These topics include social studies and science content as well as literary subjects such as point of view, theme, and character. Every three weeks, you'll receive a school-to-home letter that will provide additional activities you can do at home with your student. These activities connect to the unit topic as well as the vocabulary, comprehension, and phonics/word study skills being taught during the unit.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. I look forward to using *Benchmark Advance* with your student and working with you to ensure a successful school year!

As always, should you have any questions about our new reading/language arts program or about your student's progress, please don't hesitate to contact me.