

March 29, 2016

Dear Parents/Guardians of a Talented Writer:

Congratulations to your child for being a top writer at Twality! Your child has expressed a desire to attend the Oregon Writing Festival, and based on the skills and love of writing, I am pleased to invite him/her to attend the 32nd annual **Oregon Writing Festival**. The OWF is co-sponsored by the Oregon Council of Teachers of English (OCTE) and Portland State University and will take place at PSU on Saturday, May 7.

More than 800 top student writers from around the state will attend this event. Students will be in small groups of 10-12 with a teacher who accompanies them throughout the day. **The small groups will be kids from across the state and not their friends from school.** Although they may be nervous at first, they get over it very quickly. (The reasoning is to have them meet people from other schools, and to give them a chance to focus on the workshops and activities. By the end of the day, they will have new friends and pen pals.)

There will be a bus to transport students from Twality and back at the end of the Festival. Students will **meet at Twality at 7:15 a.m.** to leave by 7:30 a.m., and we will be back about 4:30 p.m. Traditionally, we stop at Baskin-Robbins on the way home. Typically, students call parents when we are getting close to Twality. Any students without a cell phone can borrow mine. Please note that if for some reason you need to drive your child to PSU, **parents do not accompany children or attend sessions with them.** It is also not an appropriate place for non-attending siblings, no matter how well behaved.

The day is structured so that students will have a chance to workshop with other writers their age, as well as share and get feedback on their own writing. They will attend two writing workshops, and they will get the chance to meet authors and to purchase their books. This year, the featured writer is *NY Times* best-selling author **Roland Smith**. Cat Winters and Bart King will be speaking to other age groups, but our kids will get a chance to meet them as well. Sending money for books is optional, but it's pretty special to be able to get an autographed book, and many students do bring money for this.

In order for your child to participate, he/she will need to give me a polished copy of a writing sample they are exceptionally proud of and that can be read aloud to the small sharing group in about four minutes. If they have written a longer piece, they will just read a four-minute portion of it. This sample can be something they have already written or something entirely new. It can be fiction, non-fiction, or even poetry.

What I need right away:

- The completed, signed registration form.
- A check for \$35.00 made payable to OCTE (the Oregon Council of Teachers of English).
- The PSO has generously paid for a bus to help make this affordable. Yay PSO!

What I will need soon:

- The writing piece (I need to make copies and would like to preview it, to make sure it's the best it can be.)

What students need the day of:

- A sack lunch
- (Optional) Money for book(s)
- (Optional) Money for ice cream (we stop at Baskin-Robbins on the way home)

We are so excited to attend the Oregon Writing Festival this year, and our students look forward to writing and workshoping with fellow writers during this incredible event! For more information, check the octe.org website under "events," and I have information on my own website:

<http://johnsontwality.weebly.com/writing-festival-octe.html>

Sincerely,

Karen Johnson

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