September 22, 2012

Dear Parents,  
  
This year the fourth graders will be participating in a shared literature experience known as the Global Read Aloud. Involving over 10,000 students this year, the Global Read Aloud selects a book that is read aloud to all students on the same schedule over a 4 week period. Students are then able to connect with one another across the globe to discuss the story, share predictions, etc. This year our class will choose betwee two wonderful stories: [The One and Only Ivan](http://www.amazon.com/The-Only-Ivan-Katherine-Applegate/dp/0061992259/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1346510141&sr=8-1&keywords=the+one+and+only+ivan) by Katherine Applegate or Charlotte’s Web by E.B. White  
  
There are many ways we can connect with other students and classes. This year we will be using Edmodo. It is a free and secure learning network for schools.  It provides a safe way for us to connect, share content, and participate in discussions. Edmodo has closed groups that you can only join if you have the special code for that group. A group has been created on Edmodo for students to discuss the Global Read Aloud story. Discussion prompts are posted by teachers, and students respond and share insights.   
  
Another way we plan on connecting is by [Skype](http://education.skype.com/?kme=Google+Adwords&utm_source=adwords&utm_medium=paid&utm_campaign=signup&gclid=COvDmcvNlLICFcRM4AodWhIA7w). The students will create questions and responses to the story to discuss with another class in a Skype session. This year, I have made a contact with another 4th grade teacher, Tammy Egesdal, in Forest City, IA. Students in our class will have a chance once a week to talk via Skype to these 4th graders in Iowa. Creating comprehension questions requires deeper understanding and analysis. The students are excited to see how the other class will answer their questions!  
  
The ability to connect students in these ways is an incredible way to enrich learning, and make it engaging for students. Most importantly, students will learn that by taking advantage of connected learning, they are able to discover endless learning resources.