

June 5, 2025

Dear East Catholic Students and Families,

I hope this letter finds you and your family well, and that this summer brings you many opportunities to relax and rejuvenate together. I also hope you feel inspired to read, not only to expand your learning but to tap into the pleasures of reading in general. The English department recognizes how reading can ignite new passions and create new insights, especially when we have time and space to read thoughtfully. With this in mind, I am writing to share the expectations of the East Catholic English department regarding summer reading this year.

First, for the summer of 2025, our “One Book, One Community” assigned text for the entire school is *Just Mercy*, by Bryan Stevenson. This memoir details the remarkable story of a young, idealistic lawyer, the incarcerated people he defends, and a powerful call for empathy, compassion and restorative justice. Not only does Stevenson’s story serve as a poignant story, but it also vivifies our school’s theme for next year, *accountability*. Also, this text will inspire our first writing assignments in every English class. For the coming school year, then, *all East Catholic students for the 2025-26 school year are expected to have read this text by the first day of school. Please read the original text, not the Young Adult version of Just Mercy.* Of course, we encourage everyone in our East Catholic families to read our book as well.

Next, *for those students enrolled in Honors or AP English classes in the fall, we are assigning an additional text to read over the summer, yet we are not assigning notes or other writing tasks.* We recognize the inherent value of reading for its own sake, and we look forward to analyzing these texts with you in the opening weeks of the school year. We encourage you to annotate or take notes on these texts as you read, particularly if you choose to read them early in the summer, to foster comprehension and recall of important elements. That said, *no record of written notes or responses is required, and none will be collected or graded by teachers.* We hope you see our decision to assign summer reading, but not written responses, is an invitation to read more carefully, not less. Please understand that committing to Honors and AP classes includes committing to doing all assigned summer work ethically and on time. Lastly, please have a print copy of your text to read and annotate on the first day of school.

Please consult this list for the assigned literary texts in each Honors and AP class:

**Literary Arts (Honors freshmen):** *Small Odysseys: Selected Shorts* (edited by Hannah Tinti)

**Honors American Literature (sophomores):** *Anna in the Tropics* (play by Nilo Cruz)

**Honors English III (juniors):** *There There* (Tommy Orange)

**AP English Language and Composition (juniors)** *Man’s Search for Meaning* (Viktor Frankl)

**Honors English IV:** *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* (Stephen King)

**AP English Literature and Composition (seniors):** *The Kite Runner* (Khaled Hosseini)

Thank you, and enjoy your summer!

Sincerely,

Ms. Lisa Kirsche

English Department Chair