Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Your child is taking part in classroom lessons from the Common Sense Media Digital Literacy and Citizenship curriculum. The goal of this curriculum is to encourage young people to harness the power of the Internet and digital technology for learning, and to become safe, responsible, and savvy digital citizens. In the Research and Information Literacy portion of the curriculum, your child will learn that the Internet is a powerful tool for research. Through hands-on activities and classroom discussion, your child will learn effective Internet search skills, as well as how to evaluate the quality of online information.

What we teach

In this set of lessons, younger students will learn how to search for information online. Older elementary school students will learn how to choose good websites for research, how to perform effective Internet searches, and how to recognize advertising on websites.

What families can do

Common Sense Media takes a school-community approach to digital literacy and citizenship and provides parent educational resources to help you support your child's learning. As we complete these lessons in class, we will be sending home parent tip sheets, links to online videos, and an occasional homework activity for you to do with your child. We encourage you to read and view the parent materials, have fun with the homework activities, and use this as an opportunity to learn about research and information literacy together. If you have access to the Internet at home or at work, you can visit the Common Sense Media website at **www.commonsensemedia.org** and take a look at the parent resources on kids and media.

Here are some tips you can use to teach your children about research and information literacy.

Searching:

- **Search together with young kids.** Younger children have a more difficult time searching and making sense of their search results. Your guidance will help them get the results they're looking for.

- **Consider using safe search settings.** Even typing innocent keywords into a search engine may yield search results you don't want your children to see. If you decide not to turn on filters, then you may want to keep an eye on your kids during their search process.

- **Choose search terms carefully.** The most precise words will yield the best results.

- **Add more words to narrow a search.** As kids get farther into their search, they may want to narrow their results. For example, there's a big difference between "Apple" and "Red Delicious Apples History United States."

Research and Evaluation:

When your child visits a new website, ask them to consider the following questions:

- **Who wrote this?** Encourage them to make sure the author or organization is credible by looking at their title, expertise, and background.

- **What is the source of the information?** Have them consider whether the site comes from a well-known organization or news source.

- **How does this compare to other information?** Remind them of the importance of looking at multiple sites so they can compare information.

- **When was this updated?** Ask them if the site has been updated recently. If not, they should move on. Ask them about what the site is linked to. They should consider whether the site is linked to another webpage that they trust. It's a good sign if it is.

- **Are advertisers targeting you?** Help your kids notice when advertisers are trying to get their attention as they search. Teach your kids to question what the ads are saying.

Working together, we can educate a generation of safe, responsible, and savvy digital citizens!

Sincerely,