



May, 2026

Dear Incoming Freshman,

Next year, you will be a ninth grader at North Shore Hebrew Academy High School. It is our hope that you have developed habits that include doing your assigned homework in all of your classes. In your English classes, the assigned work next year will consist of doing a great deal of reading. In class, you will be expected to use your experience of reading the assigned literature in order to participate in the class activities. These activities may be discussions, group work, vocabulary study, presentations, quizzes or worksheets. A careful reading of all assigned texts is the first step to achievement in your English classes. In ninth grade, the literature we assign will all be under the thematic umbrella we call American Voices. This means you will be reading about people of diverse ethnic backgrounds who live in various areas of our county. You will learn about the cultural practices of the various groups and how they relate to being Americans.

Your first reading assignment of the year is to read a book over the summer break. You are required to buy the book and bring it to school on the first day of class and on other days according to the instructions given to you by your ninth grade English teacher. The title and author of the book and the isbn# identifying the required edition are as follows:

Harbor Me by Jacqueline. Woodson 9781510111752

The book is about six Brooklyn kids who share their stories in a special room every Friday. They all have fears and frustrations that they share with each other over the course of a year, and by opening up, they discover a collective strength.

As you read, you should realize that the events of the story are told in flashbacks. Also make note of how each student handles his or her problems and the help and advice that is offered by their friends.

Have a nice summer!

Mrs. Susan Newborn,
Chair of the English Department