Downing Parents,

         I want to start off by saying how excited we are to have your child involved and to try out for such an exciting program! UIL Academic Competitions have been around for years, and our school is lucky to have the privilege of having the opportunity to host and to compete in such events. Students are welcome to sign up for events until November 1, 2023, and will be expected to work hard with his/her coach in preparation. The UIL Ready Writing Event will be held at Shadow Ridge Middle School on Thursday, February 22, 2024, and the main UIL event meet will be held on Saturday, March 2, 2024, at Downing Middle School.

         Starting the week of October 16th, students are allowed to pick up study materials and sign up to try out for the various events. To build strong teams, participants are limited to 2-3 events, and must be committed to show up for coaching on the specified day(s) and on the day of the events. The coaching schedule is attached, and coaches may also recruit from their classes. Tryouts will be held during the first week of November, and teams must be finalized by November 17th. Each event will require 3 participants per grade level, in addition to a 4th participant to stand in as an alternate on the day of the event, if needed.

 It is important that we inform you of the events which take place on the day of the Ready Writing competition and on the day of the main event. If your child competes in the Ready Writing event, they need to be dropped off in front of Shadow Ridge Middle School by 8:30 am on Thursday, February 22, 2024. An administrator from Downing will be taking roll and counting kids as they enter, and again when they board the buses to return to school. Snacks and lunch will be provided, and buses will bring the students back to Downing by 11:30- 12 noon.

On the day of the main event at Downing, a UIL volunteer from DMS will be taking roll and counting kids as they enter. Your child is allowed to bring food, drinks, electronics, cards, games, etc. to keep them entertained during the down time throughout the day (the time in which they are not competing). Pizza lunch, snacks, and some games will be provided as well. Please remember that your child will be held responsible for keeping track of whatever they bring with them. Downing MS/UIL staff will not be held responsible for any lost or stolen items. If your child wants to leave the competition after they are done, we will need a handwritten note (to be turned in to their coach) by the morning of the competition. Your child will be allowed to use their cell phone to call you to pick them up, and please make sure you sign them out on the sign out sheet that a staff member will be keeping track of. Your child’s safety is very important to us, and we want to make sure all students are accounted for at all times.

Parents of students who make the teams will fill out and sign the UIL parent permission slip handed out by UIL coaches so that we have a contact number for you in case of emergency. If your child is participating in a speaking event, they may have to stay at DMS a little longer due to judging. Awards ceremonies are usually held around 4 PM, and last about an hour. More information will be available on the Downing website as deadlines approach.

         If you would like to sign your child up to try out for a team, have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Courtney Cochrell. This includes if you are running late to a coaching time, or have an emergency the day of the event. You can reach me by email at cochrellc@lisd.net. Thank you so much for allowing your child to participate. On behalf of all the UIL coaches I want to say it will be exciting to work with such an intelligent group of students.

Thank you,

Courtney Cochrell

7th Honors & 8th Grade Math/UIL Coordinator

Downing Middle School