

Dear incoming 12th graders,

The book you will read this summer is a book you no doubt have heard of before: *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. I want you to lay aside what you have heard about the book or what you think happens in the book. By doing this, you will be able to follow the rich story of Hester Prynne, Arthur Dimmesdale, Roger Chillingworth, and Pearl as they struggle to live meaningful lives, despite their own failings and shortcomings and the values their society embraces. We read this book because their struggles are not unique to them; they are our own struggles as well. By reading this book, we hope that you grow in your understanding of the human condition and discover that the only path to the good life is through love, which reaches out to others, and humility, which embraces our fallenness and quickly confesses and repents of wrongdoing.

It will be very important for you to annotate as you go along. Here are some themes and questions for you to consider (and annotate) as you read:

- **Isolation** and its impact on individuals and society as a whole
- **Sin, guilt, and hypocrisy.** How does the confession of sin/withholding of confession impact people and society? What role does guilt play in the novel? Is anyone hypocritical in the novel?
- **Redemption.** Is anyone redeemed by the end of the story? If so, how?
- **Repentance and forgiveness.** How does the presence or absence of these impact the characters and society as a whole?

You will begin reading chapter 1 on page 45.

The first five days back at school, we will discuss the book and have a few major assessments (which may include a test, writing assignment, and/or Socratic Seminar).

We are really looking forward to teaching you next year! If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at jrutherford@chcslongview.com or kterry@chcslongview.com.

Have a great summer!

Mr. Rutherford
Mrs. Terry