Dear Parents,

This nine weeks, we are going to be a in-depth study of the novel The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963 by Christopher Paul Curtis. We are using this novel to follow along with the 3rd Quarter Common Core study of historical fiction. This novel takes place during the Civil Rights Movement and follows a typical African American family living in Flint, Michigan as they deal with both fun, light-hearted side and the difficult side of being a regular family. It also explores what it was like for African American families in the northern United States versus life for similar families in the southern United States.

This book is written at a 5th grade reading level, which should be perfectly appropriate for 4th grade AIG students, however because it deals with sensitive topics (civil rights, bullying, racial discrimination, and the 16th Street Church Bombing in Birmingham, AL) and has some mildly inappropriate language, I would like for you to look over this novel and decide whether or not you would like for your child to participate in this unit study. Please sign below if you approve of your child reading this novel and participating in the activities and discussion that will follow in class. You can always follow along with what we are studying by accessing the Green Hope Elementary website @ <http://greenhopeaig.weebly.com>.

The unit will wrap-up with a look at other historical fiction children’s books and how they address similar themes in different ways. Students will be creating a travel brochure detailing locations and events that one might encounter during a specific time in history. As always, if you have any questions or concerns, don’t hesitate to contact me at adrake@wcpss.net.

Sincerely,
April Drake (Warner, Nowak, and Buckley—typically have AIG on Tuesdays)
 (Hickman, Nichols, and Hampton—typically have AIG on Thursdays)