[YOUR SCHOOL LETTERHEAD]

**[DATE]**

Greetings,

This week in class, our students will be introduced to an exciting new subject of study, historic preservation. Although less familiar than other more common social studies curricula, such as civics, politics, and historical eras, historic preservation starts with the study of old, historically significant buildings that give insight into how a community or culture develops, why a community or culture was the way it was or why it is the way it is now. In so many ways, buildings are overlooked, treated as a background props instead of the historic and telling artifacts they truly are.

What’s also exciting is that this week’s curriculum is taught with an emphasis on local history. The lesson plans and activities we will be using have been adapted from a curriculum developed by Preservation Iowa, a non-profit organization working to “support, broaden, and strengthen” historic preservation statewide through education and outreach and in accordance with the Iowa Core Curriculum Standards for Social Studies Education.

At some point this week, you may hear your son or daughter talk about historic buildings in your area, their significance, their architectural features, and what he or she has learned about preserving them. I encourage you to engage your child by partaking in these discussions. To better support your child, ask questions and see what you can learn from him or her, or ask how you can help. One activity, for example, requires your child to interview an adult or caretaker about a historic building he or she is familiar with. This activity familiarizes students with the process of historical research, feeding into more effective preservation advocacy and effort. It also crosses curricular boundaries as a language arts activity through the use of oral interviewing and written recording of answers.

The educational theme used is one of mystery and investigation, the uncovering of lost stories through the search for historical clues that allow students to “read” old buildings. Reading old buildings can be thought of as reading a book or other text that gives some details (clues) but involves the reader’s critical thinking skills to find the answer or, in this case, the history-story. Talk with your child about this theme and how it can relate to language arts education.

And finally, this curriculum is available for your perusal, too. If you’re interested in learning about old buildings or how to preserve them, Preservation Iowa has resources available to learners of all ages. If you’d like more information, please visit the organization’s website, [http://www.preservationiowa.org](http://www.preservationiowa.org/).

I hope this unit proves enjoyable as a refreshing new take on “reading” history’s mysteries, and perhaps, you’ll be able to learn alongside your daughter or son.

Sincerely,

**[Signature]**

**[Your Name]**

**[Your Title]**