



# Welcome to 4th Grade!

August 27, 2009

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome back to school. I am looking forward to working with you this year. We will explore many interesting topics together this year. At times, the work may seem a bit tough, but if we work together and support one another, I know that we will be able to accomplish our goals.

To accomplish these goals, we will be utilizing a new piece of technology. It is an *interactive whiteboard*. Our board is scheduled to be hooked up to the classroom computer by next week. The class and I will have a lot of fun learning how to use this innovative tool while we develop a greater understanding of our outcomes.

To better meet the needs of each student, our school will also *regroup students for reading and "Word Work."* This regrouping will take place within each pod area. That means that your child may be attending these classes in Mrs. Crockett's room, Mrs. Houck's room, Mrs. Meehling's room, or our room. This regrouping will begin on Monday. Also, on Monday, some students will also be attending a different math class in our pod area to better meet their needs. All regrouping will be based on your child's needs as determined by data collected from last year (MSA; county-wide tests; etc.).

For social studies and science, we will alternate these subjects. This will enable students to study each subject in depth one at a time.

It is going to be an interesting and productive year!

Miss Susan Donnelly

## August/September Plans

**Reading:** We are working with a new reading series this year called *Harcourt Storytime*. The stories in our first unit, "Facing Challenges," have characters who discover their hidden strengths and abilities while facing challenges.

**Word Work:** We will build our vocabulary and spelling skills in this class.

**Written composition:** In our first unit of "Fundamentals of Writing," students will have an overview of the different purposes for writing and we will begin *Writers' Workshop*.

**Math:** We will name and construct geometric figures. We will also identify and construct patterns. Finally, we will review our basic addition and subtraction facts.

**Social studies:** We will explore the geography of Maryland. Later this year, we will study the history of our state.

**Science:** We will examine Nature's Resources and Cycles.



# Special Notes

## Lunch Time



Our class will eat lunch from 12:54-1:24. Students who bring lunches from home should have their names on their lunch boxes/bags. If your child purchases lunches, snacks, or drinks, please make sure that they have enough money in their accounts to cover their charges. Please review with your child his/her PIN number. Since our lunch time is rather late in the day, students who wish to bring in a *nutritious snack* (fruit, vegetables, granola bar, etc.) to eat mid-morning may do so.

## Food Allergies

Food allergies affect more than seven million Americans. Please be sure to alert me if your child has a food allergy.



## Birthday Celebrations

Students celebrating a birthday are allowed to bring in a small treat to share with the class. The least complicated treats are non-edible ones such as pencils, stickers, etc. If you prefer to send in an edible treat, our school system has a healthy choice initiative. Consider sending in snacks that are healthy choices as a birthday treat (granola bars, packaged natural fruit snacks, etc.).



There are several requirements regarding any birthday snacks being sent in:

- Any snack sent in for your child's birthday **must be purchased from a store and must come in its labeled package.**
- As a preventative measure, all birthday snacks must be "peanut-free." Please double-check the label on the package carefully since many products contain "traces of peanut."
- The snack must be easy to distribute and require no cutting.
- If your child is transporting the snack on the bus, it should be easy for your child to carry along with his/her other belongings for the day. .

Not every student will have a birthday that falls on a school day. If your child has a birthday on a weekend, we would like to celebrate it in school on a date close to their special day. If your child has a **summer birthday**, please have your child pick an "Unbirthday" to celebrate. Please contact me by September 1<sup>st</sup> informing me which special day you and your child have picked as your child's "Unbirthday."

## Water Bottles



Scientific research shows that the brain functions better when a person drinks enough water. Students in our class are invited to bring in a plastic water bottle to keep at their desk so they can re-hydrate their brains as needed. Students will retain this privilege as long as the water bottle contains water (tap, spring, or mineral—no flavored waters or energy drinks). The water bottles should also not become a distraction with regards to learning.

## Special Area Classes

**A-Day (Mondays):** Music (Don't forget your recorder!)

**B-Day (Tuesdays):** Library (return and renew books)

**C-Day (Wednesdays):** PE (Wear sneakers)

**D-Day (Thursdays):** Art

**Fridays:** Consult your weekly Gator Aid to see what special we will be having.



## Back-to-School Night for 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

September 15<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM



## Reading Charts



In your child's Take Home folder you will find a home Reading Chart. The purpose of the chart is to encourage your child to make reading a part of their *daily* life outside of school. Your child's reading chart should be initialed each night (no initialing ahead of time!) and shown to the teacher the next school day. Each new initialed date will then be stamped in school. Your child should strive to earn *at least* 15 stamps by the end of the month. To qualify for *Book It* (from October through March), your child will also need 15 or more stamps.

### **Grading for reading charts:**

√-- 5 or less stamps

√+ 15-19 stamps

√- 6-9 stamps

√++ 20 or more stamps

√ 10-14 stamps

## Communication

In order to ensure that the year proceeds smoothly, I will use the following means of communication:

- Homework pad
  - Please make sure all homework is finished **prior to signing** the pad.
  - If your child has any difficulties with his/her homework, please jot me a note or an e-mail to give me a heads-up.
- <http://homepage.scholastic.com/CHBuilderWeb/jsp/StudentParentLogin.jsp>  
This is a new site for me, so it will be a work in progress. On this site, I plan to post homework and upcoming events (tests, celebrations, field trips, etc.)
  - Username: ybesgators
  - Password: ybesgators
- Progress folders
  - These will be sent home at least once every 2 weeks.
  - These folders will contain your child's graded work and a comment.
  - Please **sign and return** the contents and initial the comment by the next next school day.
  - **When signing papers, please sign your entire last name.** Also, feel free to write a short comment to your child regarding his/her work. It means a lot to them to see Mom or Dad take the time to write, "Way to Go!" or "You really worked hard on this piece" on their papers.
    - Thursday folders—Our school will continue to send home important papers every Thursday in a clear-plastic folder. I will also put some papers that need signing in the Thursday folder as needed.
    - E-Mail: [Susan.Donnely@hcps.org](mailto:Susan.Donnely@hcps.org)



PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS BOX FROM THE NEWSLETTER BY August 31<sup>st</sup>

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(STUDENT' SIGNATURE)

Student Survey: \_\_\_\_\_ I can use the Internet at home (with my parent's supervision).  
\_\_\_\_\_ We don't have the Internet at home.

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(PARENT'S SIGNATURE)



Parent Survey: \_\_\_\_\_ I have easy access to the Internet (via home or work).  
\_\_\_\_\_ I do not have easy access to the Internet. Please  
remember to send me paper copies of anything important.

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