

August 24, 2015

Dear Fourth Grade Families,

My name is Ellie Crutcher and I'm so thrilled to be your child's 4th grade teacher this year! This is my fourth year at Hyde-Addison and I'm very excited to meet all of you and work with you to help your child grow and learn this year.

We have a lot of exciting things to learn in 4th grade! In the first unit of Reading Workshop, students will be studying characters in fictional stories. Our first unit in Writing Workshop will be closely linked, as students will study how to write realistic fiction stories. In Math, students will start the year by learning about place value. Lastly, in Science students will begin by learning about the Earth and the water cycle and in Social Studies they will begin by studying Native Americans.

The First Six Weeks of School is a special time at Hyde-Addison as children in each class get to know one another and build a comfortable and safe classroom community. We believe that the social curriculum is very important, and work to make sure each child feels a sense of belonging, significance, and fun. Additionally, it is absolutely crucial for students to fully learn the routines of the classroom and form a strong, supportive community so we can have a year full of uninterrupted learning. However, we don't wait for six full weeks to begin teaching academic content. We will begin our units during the second week of school, while still working on aspects of the First Six Weeks of School. It is an important time for fostering cooperation among students and building up the students' stamina for independent work times. During the first week, I will be reading several of my favorite picture books to the class this week, so asking about these may be a nice way to start a conversation with your child about their day at school.

Later this week, your child will be writing down his/her hope and dream for this year. Engage your child in a conversation about what s/he wants to accomplish in school this year, but let him/her decide on the goal on his/her own. I would like parents and guardians to fill out their hope and dream for their child as well, and I will send home a template for that later this week.

As some of you may already know, I conduct home visits as a way to get to know students and families on a deeper level. I have worked with the DCPS's Family Engagement Collaborative for two years, and I also worked on creating family engagement resources this summer. I firmly believe that teachers and families see the most academic, social, and emotional growth among their students/children when they work together as a team, and I'm looking forward to working with all of you this year.

Home visits are one way for me to get to know the student's family, and they are one of my favorite 😊. A home visit consists of me coming over for 30 min-1 hour (or meeting you at a park, coffee shop, or other location that is convenient for you) it serves as a great opportunity to for me to get to know a student's family, and for you to get to know me! Included as part of this packet is a Home Visit Interest Survey. Please fill it out and send it to school tomorrow if you are interested at all. For some of you, I already did a home visit last year with Ms. Campbell. If I did, I would still love to come again! 😊

Additionally, please fill out the accompanying information sheet so I can learn a little more from you about your child and his/her needs. Please make sure your child fills out the student survey as well and brings both surveys to school tomorrow.

Lastly, we will be having a morning snack each day so please send your child to school with a healthy snack. Some ideas are: fruit, string cheese, Goldfish, pretzels, graham crackers, or granola bars. Please note that we are a nut-free school so avoid any snacks with any type of nuts or nut butter. If you are willing to donate some snack for the whole class as "back-up snack," please email me. Any donations are greatly appreciated!

I look forward to getting to know all of you this school year. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions, concerns or ideas.

Thanks in advance for all of your support!

-Ms. Crutcher

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