Welcome to Susitna Elementary School

“A caring community of critical thinkers.”

August 23, 2017

Dear Families,

Welcome to 2nd and 3rd grade in the Susitna Optional Program. I have really enjoyed getting to know your child the last few days and am looking forward to a fun and exciting year.

As you read the information about the 2nd/3rd grade curriculum keep in mind that just as no child learns to walk or talk at the same time, no child learns at the same pace. Therefore, each child will be supported and encouraged to move forward according to his/her individual needs. Our class also parallels the Anchorage School District’s pursuits of increased school attendance and Social Emotional Learning that we seek through student engagement.

Please know that you are welcome in our class any time. Your support and involvement in your child’s education will make a positive difference.

You may contact me by e-mail, phone or in person before or after school.

Thank you for all you do,

Heather Tierney

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# **Standards-Based Curriculum**

The following explains the basic parts of our daily program:

* **Daily 5**: The Daily 5 is a framework that teaches children to become aware of their needs as readers and writers and how they can meet those needs to become more proficient in those skills areas. The Daily 5 offers children an opportunity to make choices about their learning. For example, children may decide to choose reading before writing or vice versa, or they may choose to work on word work or to improve fluency by listening to a story. I believe that academic choice gives children a greater desire to learn. It also instills in them a sense of empowerment: they know what they need to improve and they are given a choice as to how they can make those improvements happen. Our official name for the Daily 5 is “Literacy Lounge.”
* **Reading**: Each day children will receive strategy instruction within one or more of the following categories: comprehension, accuracy, fluency, and expansion of vocabulary. These lessons will be taught whole-class and individually. Children are expected to choose books that are a good fit for them. They may read independently, with a partner, or in literature circles. They will also be expected to read books connected to the content areas of science and social studies. Children will be expected to show they are reading outside of school Monday through Thursday via a homework check-in sheet. I do, however, recommend that your child read for at least twenty minutes *every* day.

The Anchorage School District has a new K-2 Language Arts curriculum, *Cengage: Reach for Reading* by National Geographic. This is a Common Core aligned literacy program that uses a balance of fiction and non-fiction texts. A number of its books will be able to be used to supplement this year’s second grade science and social studies curricula.

* **Writing:** Writing instruction will be held each week as well. Children will gain knowledge of the writing process: collecting ideas, organizing thoughts, writing, revising, editing, and publishing. Children will have time in the Daily 5 to complete a given writing assignment. Once an assignment is finished, children will have the opportunity to write on a piece of their choice. Additionally, writing focus lessons will occur during the week based upon observed needs in children’s writing. Children will write a variety of genres such as letters, lists, narratives, directions, poems, and informational pieces.
* **Spelling:** The bulk of children’s spelling needs will be met in the classroom. Children will be taught how to listen closely to beginning, middle, and ending sounds in words, and to chunk words into meaningful parts. They will tune in to interesting words in their own reading and in class read-alouds. Practice of grade-appropriate words will occur within Daily 5 in the form of phonics lessons, close examination of word parts, and through word work choice activities such as magnetic letters, rainbow writing, cutting words out from magazines, and pyramid writing.
* **Math:** Our class uses a combination of *Go Math!* and math work stations to teach and reinforce math concepts. In 2nd and 3rd grade, children will be expected to complete math homework Monday through Thursday. Homework will be sent home on Fridays in the form of a packet. It is to be completed and returned the following Friday. Miss Heather teaches 2nd grade math, and Ms. Genie teaches 3rd grade math.
* **Science & Social Studies:** This year our science studies will focus on the Earth and its place in the solar system as well as properties of matter. The social studies focus will be Anchorage and the Iditarod. Science and social studies are generally high interest subjects for students, so I try to integrate them into the Daily 5 whenever possible!
* **Social & Emotional Learning (SEL):** In class, we call this teambuilding. This area of learning is extremely important in the classroom and in life. We do many activities that will build the foundation of emotional literacy. I primarily teach SEL through a hands-on approach called experiential education. Each initiative we complete taps into different learning styles. We start with the ‘action’ part of the activity. Everyone has the choice to participate or observe. Following the ‘action’, we ask observers to join us as we debrief feelings, behaviors (positive or negative) that were observed, discuss changes that could be made for next time, and many times morph the activity so it better fits the needs of our students. As the year continues, our class will become facilitators of these initiatives weekly in the Optional K/1 classes. We also work as a class community to gain mediation skills. Initially, I model these skills with individual students who need help problem solving. Soon thereafter, students shift to peer mediation. It is awesome to watch!
* **Behavior:** Our class uses Guidelines for Success set forth by our Susitna Optional Program (see *Expectations and Promise,* page 5). These guidelines are presented using the CHAMPS format to model clear behavior expectations. I employ natural consequences for both desirable and undesirable behavior choices made by students.

We also have a Class Behavior Plan. We will discuss this document as a class so every student is aware of the expectations for behavior this year. Your child will be asked to sign this document, bring it home and explain it to you. After reviewing it with your child, please return the signed Class Behavior Plan to school. *A copy of our class behavior plan can be found at the end of this document to serve as a reminder throughout the year.*

To promote student independence and personal responsibility, we have created a system called Henie Bucks (Henie represents the combination of *Heather* and *Genie*). Each child has the opportunity to earn one Henie Buck each day for successfully completing a designated task in a timely manner. Students who do not complete a task by the deadline will finish it on Friday during recess and/or Choice Time. At the end of each week, students trade Henie Bucks earned for an in-class coupon that they can spend the following week. Coupon choices are listed below.

* + Happy Feet (get a whole day with no shoes)
  + Computer Time (15 minutes of free choice time on the computer)
  + Quiet Recess (play with a friend in the classroom during recess)
  + Lunch Anyone (eat in the classroom with a friend)
  + Bring a Stuffie (bring a small stuffed animal to class for the day)

**Assessment**

All reading, writing, and math instruction is guided by the Common Core State Standards. Standards are broad statements of what children should know and be able to do at certain grade levels. These standards are taught throughout the day during various activities.

(Standards are available on line at <http://www.asdk12.org/CommonCore/>).

Social Emotional Learning instruction is based on our district standards (found online at <http://www.asdk12.org/pld/sel/aboutsocialemotionallearning/socialemotionallearningstandards/>). These guidelines give overarching statements for students from kindergarten through high school, so students are assessed based on how these broad goals relate specifically to 2nd and 3rd graders.

Each quarter you will receive a standards-based report card for your child. An explanation of our grading system is given below.

B (Beginning), D (Developing), and S (Secure)

* **B** = Your child is unable to meet Common Core State Standards even with

support and/or does not demonstrate the ability to complete given tasks.

* **D** = Your child shows satisfactory understanding of Common Core State

Standards. However, errors or misunderstandings still occur. Reminders,

hints, and suggestions continue to be needed.

* **S** = Your child can apply Common Core State Standards correctly, consistently,

and independently. S/he is on grade level.

* **S+** = Your child goes above and beyond Common Core State Standards. S/he is

performing above grade level.

Assessment is on-going and occurs daily. The information gained from assessments guide instruction and allow for the creation of lessons that will be meaningful, fun and challenging for your child.

Assessments include:

* Written observations
* Samples of student work (portfolio)
* Presentations of learning
* Rubrics
* Standardized assessments
* Students’ self-evaluations

Your child will frequently add work samples into a portfolio by selecting his/her most meaningful work to present to family members throughout the year.

This year a new assessment tool will be used. MAP Growth will replace Aimsweb for students in grades 3-5. MAP Growth is a computer adaptive test. This means that children will be tested at a level that is “just right” for them, and just as with Aimsweb (which will continue for children in grades K-2), students will test three times per school year. This test goes beyond measuring fluency and basic computation. It will give a truer sense of each student’s academic growth over time by taking comprehension and conceptual understanding into consideration as well.

**Daily Schedule**

Here is an overview of what our week looks like. Please feel free to come in and help any time! You are always welcome to work directly with students or behind the scenes helping keep our class running smoothly. Also, if you have a special talent or interest you’d like to share with the children, let me know, and we can arrange a time for you to teach a lesson.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **MONDAY** | **TUESDAY** | **WEDNESDAY** | **THURSDAY** | **FRIDAY** |
| **8:45-9:00**  **Breakfast & Morning Routine** | **8:45-9:00**  **Breakfast & Morning Routine** | **8:45-9:00**  **Breakfast & Morning Routine** | **8:45-9:00**  **Breakfast & Morning Routine** | **8:45-9:00**  **Breakfast & Morning Routine** |
| **9:05-10:30**  **Literacy Lounge** | **9:05-10:25**  **Literacy Lounge** | **9:05-10:25**  **Literacy Lounge** | **9:05-10:25**  **Literacy Lounge** | **9:05-10:30**  **Literacy Lounge** |
| **10:35-10:55**  **Read Aloud/Snack** | **10:35-10:55**  **Read Aloud/Snack** | **10:30-10:55**  **Teambuilding in K/1** | **10:35-10:55**  **Read Aloud/Snack** | **10:35-10:55**  **Read Aloud/Snack** |
| **11:00-12:00**  **Math** | **11:00-12:00**  **Math** | **11:00-12:00**  **Math** | **11:00-12:00**  **Math** | **11:00-12:00**  **Math** |
| **12:10-12:55: Recess/Lunch** | | | | |
| **1:00-1:40**  **Chromebooks** | **1:00-1:40**  **Chromebooks** | **1:10-2:10**  **Art/Health** | **1:10-1:40**  **Music** | **1:00-1:40**  **Social Studies/ Science/SEL** |
| **1:45-2:15**  **Music** | **1:45-2:30**  **P.E.** | **1:45-2:30**  **P.E.** | **1:45-2:15**  **Library** |
| **2:20-2:40**  **Handwriting** | **2:35-2:45**  **Handwriting** | **2:20-2:40**  **Handwriting** | **2:35-2:45**  **Handwriting** | **2:20-2:40**  **Exploration Time** |
| **2:45-3:15**  **Target Practice (Interventions)** | **2:55-3:20**  **Target Practice (Interventions)** | **2:45-3:15**  **Target Practice (Interventions)** | **2:45-3:15**  **Target Practice (Interventions)** | **2:45-3:15**  **Target Practice (Interventions)** |
| **3:20-3:30**  **PREP TO GO HOME** | **3:20-3:30**  **PREP TO GO HOME** | **3:20-3:30**  **PREP TO GO HOME** | **3:20-3:30**  **PREP TO GO HOME** | **3:20-3:30**  **PREP TO GO HOME** |

**Expectations and Promise**

Children are expected to do their personal best and to participate fully in classroom activities. Children are expected to be respectful, responsible, safe and caring towards one another.

As a class, we have discussed the Guidelines for Success:

**🙠 Be safe**

**🙠 Show respect**

**🙠 Be responsible**

**🙠 Give my best effort**

**🙠 Be kind**

Children will be taught how to be problem-solvers by becoming familiar with such strategies as stopping to think about choices, learning how to refocus when necessary, working through natural consequences, and Kelso’s Choices. We will also use the CHAMPS program to provide clear direction as we engage in various activities throughout the day. **CHAMPS** helps students think about voice levels as they ***C****onverse*, shows them how to ask for ***H****elp* when needed*,* specifies the type of ***A****ctivity* we are working on, clarifies appropriate ***M****ovement* for that activity*,* and sets forth expectations for ***P****articipation…*all to facilitate a ***S****uccessful* activity.

**Children’s Expectations of the Teacher**

Children expect me to be consistent in my routines and expectations. They expect me to be prepared and a good role-model. They expect me to help them reach their full potential!

**Class Behavior Plan for Miss Heather’s Class** *(copy for reference)*

**Guidelines for Success:**

* Be safe
* Show respect
* Be responsible
* Give my best effort
* Be kind

**If you choose to not follow the guidelines:**

First Time: Name on board. Warning.

Second Time: “Needs Work” reminder given through ClassDojo.

Third Time: “Needs Work” reminder through ClassDojo *and* natural consequence given.

Fourth Time: Fix-it Form filled out *and* contact parent.

Fifth Time: Go to a buddy classroom or the office.

Severe Disruption: Fix-it Form filled out; contact parent.

Go directly to a buddy classroom or the office.

Names are erased daily. Natural consequences occur daily.

**Rewards**

* Praise (daily)
* Positive note home (randomly)
* Trade in Henie Bucks for in-class coupons (weekly)
* Whole-class extra exploration time (earned by working together)
* Whole-class kudos party (after receiving 25 kudos)
* Various other positive perks (throughout the year)

**STUDENT:** I understand the Class Behavior Plan and I will follow it.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**PARENT:** My child has discussed the Class Behavior Plan with me. I understand it and I will support it.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**TEACHER:** I will be fair and consistent in using the Class Behavior Plan.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_