

August, 2008

Dear Fourth Grade Families,

I hope you are all enjoying your summer and are excited about our upcoming time together. I am really looking forward to this next school year with your children, and have been making preparations and changes within the curriculum so that the coming school year can be the best possible year for the kids.

I am thrilled to be teaching fourth grade once again this year, and truly feel that the age of the kids and the curriculum are a perfect fit for me. I am a California native and am extremely proud of the state we live in. I love teaching the kids about how this whole place came to be as well as opening their minds to what they can do to keep California beautiful for future generations.

I will describe the curriculum in far more detail at back to school night, but for now, I would like to tell you all a little bit about my background so that you understand a bit more about the person who will be in charge of your children while they are here at school.

As I mentioned earlier, I was born and raised in California, except for a three year adventure in Hawaii and Tonga during the years when I was nine through the age of twelve. As a child, I mainly attended private schools with small classes, and I went to a relatively small high school. I received my college education at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, where I earned a B.S. in Horticultural Science with an emphasis on California native plants.

I decided to be a teacher when my daughter Emma was a year old and I realized that I always wanted to be a part of her day if at all possible while still earning a living. To make that happen, I earned my credential through U.C. Davis. Since earning my credential, I am happy to say that Emma and I have moved with each other to each school where I have been employed, starting with Emma in Junior Kindergarten while I taught a 3-6 grade combination class for two years at Oak Tree Community School, and then here at NCSA, where she started in Kindergarten and will be a big 6<sup>th</sup> grader this year. (yikes!)

As a teacher, my philosophy is that the student is the center of all learning that takes place. This means that I will not make a decision either curriculum-wise or emotionally that does not consider the needs of the child first. I also place an extremely high emphasis on all of us working together as a team and dealing with the issues that naturally come up when a group of children has passed through grades together for many years and are meeting a new group of students as the class increases in size. To deal with all the things that come up as your kids are getting older and experiencing different feelings and emotions, we usually have a class meeting once a week so that the kids can ask questions of me or each other.

Academically speaking, we spend a lot of time in class on polishing skills in the language arts and math areas. I make sure that all children are met at whatever level they come to me, and I like to challenge them all to reach a bit farther intellectually in order to create a solid knowledge base that will serve them well throughout the grades here and beyond NCSA. It's work, but it's a lot of fun too, to watch them have aha! moments and become more and more empowered as they learn about themselves and how to be scholars.

So, again, I look forward to seeing you all later this month, and I know that this will be a wonderful year with a wonderful class. I will be back at school regularly on August 14<sup>th</sup>, and will be available by appointment to talk. So, enjoy the rest of your summer, gather the things on the school supply list, which is available on the website, and we'll see each other soon!

Kate