

August 2011

Dear Fourth Grade Families,

Welcome to fourth grade! I hope you all had a wonderful summer and are looking forward to a productive year full of growth and new experiences here at NCSA. I am eager to begin this school year with your children and have been making all kinds of plans and little tweaks in the curriculum to best serve my new group of wonderful kids.

This will be my sixth year of teaching fourth grade and I absolutely love everything about the fourth grade curriculum. I am a California native and am very proud of the state we live in. I love native plants and the study of California's natural history, and I look forward every year to teaching the kids about how California came to be and how to keep California beautiful for future generations.

My love of California plants and wildlife came from my education prior to becoming a teacher. Even though I grew up with an English teacher for a mother, I didn't lean towards being a classroom teacher at first. I loved the study of plants, and I received my Bachelors of Science from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in the area of Horticulture in 1996. When my daughter Emma was a year old, I began working as an aide at a local elementary school. There, I fell in love with the idea of working with kids and I went back to school, this time to UC Davis, to obtain my teaching credential. Emma has been with me at school since I began teaching and now I have to let go as I watch her start her first year of high school at Nevada Union. Whew!

As a teacher, my philosophy is that the student is the center of all learning that takes place, which means that I will not make a decision either curriculum-wise or emotionally that does not consider the needs of the child first. Additionally, I place an extremely high emphasis on all of us working together as a team and dealing with any issues that naturally come up in this fourth grade year of emotional expansion and change. Above all, I honor children as the unique and wonderful individuals they are and work very hard to understand what makes each student in my class tick.

I will describe the nuts and bolts of the fourth grade curriculum and happily answer any of your individual questions in more detail on Back to School Night, which will be announced when the date and time has been set. If you have any questions or comments before then, please feel free to email me at sunnykate4@gmail.com.

I look forward to a beautiful year with you and your children, and I'll be seeing you on August 24th for the first day of school!

Kate