

Welcome to 4th Grade!

Ms. Merlini

Room 218

Dear 4th Grade Families,

Welcome to the 2014-2015 school year! My name is Meg Merlini and I am your child's teacher for fourth grade. This is my third full year at McCall, and I couldn't be more thrilled to be here! Your child will engage in many new and exciting things this year. We will continue to use the sensational Wonders Literacy program to implement the rigorous Common Core state standards. My mission is to provide high quality instruction so that your child can grow intellectually and socially, acquiring the skills necessary to move on to fifth grade. To enable this, I will work hard to create a community of learners who feel safe to express themselves through a variety of materials and outlets. I have high expectations for myself as a teacher, and for the students in my classroom. I promise to work hard for your child, but I cannot do this job alone. We need the support and involvement of parents and families in order to ensure the maximum achievement of our children.

The "ABCs of Ms. Merlini's Class" should be considered a "handbook" for the school year. Please take some time to go over these policies and procedures (more information will be given at Back to School Night on Thursday, September 18th). As usual, there are many forms for parents to fill out and return. Please return all and bring all school supplies by Friday, September 12. I am very excited to start the school year and look forward to meeting you soon!

Sincerely,
Ms. Meg Merlini
4th Grade Teacher
McCall Elementary
mmerlini@philasd.org
215-351-7350

ABCs of Ms. Merlini's Class

ABSENCES: Much of our learning takes place together in class. We do lots of hands-on activities and group work. Please plan to attend school every day, except in cases of illness or emergencies. If you know your child will be absent,

please inform me beforehand. Otherwise, send in a note the day your child returns to school.

ARRIVALS: All students are expected to line up in the schoolyard at 8:25 each morning. Students will be marked late if they arrive any later than 8:30.

Behavior and Work Expectations *These rules cover the gamut of classroom procedures and expectations*

Room 218 Rules

1. Be responsible
2. Be respectful
3. Work hard and do your best

CONSEQUENCES

First Warning: Verbal Warning

Second Warning: Student conference with Ms. Merlini, possible loss of privilege

Third Warning: Phone call or note home to parent

BIRTHDAYS: If you would like to send a treat with your child on or near his/her birthday, please feel free to do so. These treats will be eaten during our snack time or after lunch. If your child has a summer birthday, you may send in treats on his/her "half-birthday." Please do not send birthday party invitations to be distributed at school unless all children in our class receive an invitation.

BOOK ORDER FORMS will be sent home for you and your child to look over every month or two. Book clubs offer fantastic deals! Checks should be made payable to SCHOLASTIC.

CONFERENCES are held at the end of the first and third quarter. Watch for information and reply accordingly. I am also available to conference as needed, however, we will need to schedule a time convenient for both of us.

COMMUNICATIONS FOLDERS help keep us organized. This folder houses our weekly newsletter, homework, and other important information that assists with communication between home and school. They should be taken home and returned to school DAILY.

DISMISSAL: Students will be dismissed at 3:09pm from the doors on the 7th Street side of the building.

EMERGENCY CARDS should be on file in the office. If your address, or any of your phone numbers change, please inform the office (and me!).

EMAIL is my preferred method of communication because of the quick turn-around. If you have an email address that you check regularly, please provide it to me to maximize our communication. You can reach me at MMerlini@philasd.org. You can also leave a message for me at (215) 351-7350

FIELD TRIPS: We will be taking field trips this year, and would love for you to come! Details will be announced through our communications folder.

GRADING: Students will be assessed using letter grades this year (A, B, C, D, F) based on their performance in math, writing, science, and social studies, as well as the special areas (music, art, and PE). Student's reading grade will be their reading level.

HOMEWORK: Daily homework will primarily consist of vocabulary, journal entries, and math practice. A minimum of 30 minutes of nightly reading is also expected for a total of 120 minutes a week.

CONSTRUCTED RESPONSES: In addition to nightly homework, students will be assigned one constructed response (reading or math) every Tuesday night. Constructed responses will be scored using the PSSA scoring guidelines for Math and Reading (copies will be provided to students). It is expected that students

score a 3 on a reading response and a 4 on a math response. If students do not receive the full rubric score, they are expected to revise their response to bring it up to the full score.

GOOGLE DRIVE: I often will use Google Drive as an important means of communicating with parents and sharing documents. Assignments can be turned in and other resources can be "shared" with this great tool. We will also schedule report card conferences and use Google Drive for other sign-up lists. Stay tuned for more information on how students will be receiving their own Google Drive accounts. Parents can email me at mmerlini@philasd.org to connect through Google Drive.

INDEPENDENCE is a goal for students because it builds self-esteem and self-confidence. Fourth graders are very capable of doing many things on their own and I encourage them to do as much as they can for themselves in the classroom. Please encourage them to think through and problem-solve in everyday situations.

JOURNALS (or composition books) are used in every subject area. They may be taken home as needed for the purposes of studying or sharing, however, they should be brought back to school as they are used frequently.

KEEP INFORMED by checking the Communications Folder daily for notes and information. Also, please check out my blog for information on great websites for your child and classroom information at <http://mmerlini.edublogs.org/>

LUNCH takes place at 12:08pm.

Medications

If your child has any medications that need to be administered during school hours, please send them to the nurse to be kept in the nurses' office.

NEWS AND CURRENT EVENTS: Your child will be asked to complete a writing assignment based on a current event they have read about monthly. Please check out Dogonews.com for kid friendly news stories.

Planners/Agenda Books

Students will receive agenda books or “planners” for keeping track of assignments and important events at school. Students will be expected to take home planners and bring them back to school each day. Unfortunately, any planners that are lost will not be replaced.

QUESTIONS: Instead of asking your child, “What did you do in school today?” ask, “What book did you read during independent reading?” or “What did you learn in math?” or “Tell me what you wrote about during Writing Workshop!” Show that you’re interested, and ask specific questions. Most likely, your child will respond positively and more openly.

REPORT CARDS will be sent home every nine weeks. Please see the district calendar for specific dates.

SOCIAL STUDIES AND SCIENCE: Students in room 218 will switch to room 213 on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons for Science with Mr. Oliver. He will teach Science all year for both classes while Ms. Merlini teaches Science to both classes.

SNACK: Kids need snacks! When healthy snack choices are made, they provide the nutrients and calories kids need for growth, good health and energy to get through the day. Please pack your child a healthy snack to enjoy on a daily basis.

SUPPLIES: A supply list was handed out the first day of school. Please make sure your child is prepared for school every day with those essential items. Your child should also have supplies at home (as well as a quiet place to work) to complete at-home assignments.

STUDY ISLAND

Study Island is a web-based program that gives students rigorous practice in all of the skills included in the PSSA test. All students will have time to work on Study Island in class and in Technology Lab. If an internet connection is available at home, students are also encouraged to work on Study Island in free time at home. Students should be actively working to collect blue ribbons on the Math and Reading portions of Study Island. Students achieving 100% blue ribbons in both Reading and Math will have their name read aloud over the morning announcements and take part in a pizza party.

UNIFORMS: It is the School District of Philadelphia's policy that all students wear a uniform to school. Students need to wear their uniform every day. Tops are to be white and bottoms are to be navy blue. Blue jeans are not allowed.

UNIQUE: Each student in my classroom is unique. I will do my best to differentiate instruction to ensure that all children get what they need to be successful in fourth grade.

VOLUNTEERS and VISITORS are welcome! There are many opportunities for you to be involved in the classroom this year. Be on the lookout for upcoming info. When you arrive at school to volunteer or visit, please sign-in at the office instead of coming directly to the classroom. This policy is for the safety of your children.

WATER BOTTLES: Please feel free to have your child bring a water bottle to class. I prefer the reusable, aluminum water bottles with tight fitting lids (fewer spills). Please encourage your child to bring their water bottle home regularly to wash it.

WISH LIST: An amazon.com wish list has been created for this classroom with additional school supplies and activities that would be great to have for the school year. A link can be found on www.meetingmccall.com.

