

August 18, 2008

Dear Parents,

Welcome to fourth grade! With a new school year beginning, I want to explain my classroom to you. Each year I realize students have their own individual interests and abilities so I approach every year as a new adventure. Part of this adventure involves helping each student discover how he or she learns best, how to optimize their individual talents, and how to help them use their strengths to overcome their weaknesses. I am anxious to get to know your child and learn how they are smart. According to Howard Gardner, psychologist, there are eight kinds of human intelligence. People can be smart in one or more ways! There are a few things I would like you to know about our classroom.

### **Miss Bray**

I have lived in Canon City for approximately nineteen years. I graduated from Canon City High School, attended Western State College, and received a bachelor's degree in Math with a minor in Elementary Education. I worked at the Canon City Public Library for two years as the Children's Librarian before starting my teaching career at McKinley Elementary. I have been teaching for eight years and have taught Title One, fourth grade, and sixth grade. In December of 2005 I finished my Master's degree, Integrating Technology into the Classroom. Since my master's degree is in the area of technology, I will incorporate technology into our classroom on a regular basis. Students will have ample time at school to complete the projects requiring technology in case they do not have access to technology outside of school. Our fourth grade class web site is <http://www.missbray.com>. Please take time to see what is available on our web site and check back often because I add information almost every day. In my spare time I enjoy doing ceramics, scrap booking, cross-stitch, reading, creating web sites, and walking my dog.

### **Mission Statement**

My mission as an educator is to create a diverse, cooperative, nurturing, respectful, and technology-enriched learning environment which empowers students to maximize their potential in order to become compassionate, responsible, independent, and productive citizens. This high-quality learning environment will emphasize positive learning experiences, implement cooperative learning, and evoke mutual respect between students and teacher.

## **Homework**

Students are given assignments daily. If they are not completed and turned in by the end of the day, they become homework. Students will usually have a short Reading and Math assignment each night. Each night students are required to independently read for 20 minutes in their Reading Counts book and write a response. Students will also be required to practice math facts for 10 minutes each night. On most nights students will also be required to complete a Math Study Link. Homework should not exceed 60 minutes a night including the 20 minutes for independent reading and 10 minutes for practicing math facts. All homework is due at 8:45 the following morning. Any assignments that are not turned in at this time are considered late. Students will be given one week to turn in late or incomplete assignments. They will only be able to earn a 50% on these assignments. If the student does not turn in the assignment within that week, they will earn a 0 for the assignment. If an emergency arises and the student cannot complete his/her homework, a note from a parent explaining the situation is the *ONLY* excuse accepted. Together, the student and I will determine when the assignment is due. My intention is to teach the students that they are responsible for completing homework.

Each day students will be given the time to record all their assignments in their planner. Students will be given a grade for correctly writing all of their assignments in their planner and having you check their planner and homework assignments. In your child's planner there is a box on the right side for you to sign after you have checked your child's planner and their completed homework. Please sign with at least your first initial and full last name.

## **Grading Policy**

Most assignments will be graded the day they are due. If a student receives a grade below a 70%, they are expected to correct the paper for a better grade. Students have one week to correct and return the assignment. Sloppy papers will not be accepted. Grades are recorded on the computer and you can access your student's grades on the internet via the Parent Portal. I will print out your student's grades and send home at mid-term. If you would like a progress report sooner than midterm, leave me a voicemail or send me an e-mail and I will print one for you as soon as possible.

## **Grading Scale**

99.5 - 100 and up	A+
91.5 - 99.4	A
89.5 - 91.4	A-
87.5 - 89.4	B+
81.5 - 87.4	B
79.5 - 81.4	B-
77.5 - 79.4	C+
71.5 - 77.4	C
69.5 - 71.4	C-
67.5 - 69.4	D+
61.5 - 67.4	D
59.5 - 61.4	D-
below 59.5	F

## **Illness/Absences**

If a student is ill and does not come to school, assignments will be available for parents or siblings to pick up at the end of the day. Students are allowed one day for every day missed to make up assignments. If this is not possible please send a note with your child and we will make other arrangements. If a student will be out of town he/she may pick up a list of assignments after he/she has returned.

## **Discipline**

The school-wide discipline program is called Time-to-Teach. McKinley Elementary believes in a proactive approach to discipline and classroom management. We will teach the students the behaviors they are expected to know in order to be successful in school.

The Time-to-Teach program is based on the belief that expected behaviors need to be taught. An instructional approach to discipline introduces and maintains essential skills that every student must have in order to be a successful learner and sets the stage for successful classroom management.

Successful classroom management strategies provide structure in our classroom. Classroom management is made up of routines for doing such things as entering the classroom, raising hands, listening, turning in homework, as well as rules to govern relationships. Today we learned the routines for Listening, Raising Hands, Bathroom, and Lining Up.

## Supplies

In order for your child to start off the school year on the right foot please make sure that he/she has all of the supplies needed for the beginning of school. Today your child completed a School Supply Checklist and will bring it home tomorrow so you know what supplies he/she still might need. If your child does not already have a small school box to keep their glue, scissors, pen, eraser, highlighter, and dry erase markers, I would highly recommend purchasing one. A small school box will help your child efficiently organize their desk.

In the near future you should expect a letter about our schedule, the fourth grade curriculum and more specific information on the Time-To-Teach discipline program. Please feel free to call me at McKinley at 276-6034 or 276-6010 or e-mail me at [brayj@canon.k12.co.us](mailto:brayj@canon.k12.co.us) if you have any concerns or questions. I am certainly looking forward to a great school year with your child.

Sincerely,  
Jessica Bray

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### Welcome Letter

Please sign and return this portion after you have read and discussed this letter with your child. Please return by Tuesday, August 19<sup>th</sup>. Thank you.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name

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Parent Signature

