

Dear Students and Families,

Hi there! My name is Susannah Penney and I will be working with you and your child this school year.

I think that it is important to learn about each other, as we will be spending a lot of time together. I'm very excited to be at Glacier Peak and with your children. After initially pursuing a psychology degree and working with children through social work I returned to school and I completed my teaching license through the University of Colorado at Denver. I completed my Masters in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis in math and science education in 2008, also through the University of Colorado at Denver. I am currently working on a second Masters degree in educational leadership at Regis University. I believe in being a lifelong learner. I've been a teacher in district 12 since 2008. In the 2011 school year I was honored to receive the Celebrate Literacy Award from the Colorado Council International Reading Association (CCIRA). This award is only given to two Colorado teachers a year.

I love living in Colorado and spend my free time hiking, working in my garden, and enjoying the beautiful, variety of the Colorado weather. I also love cheering on the Denver Broncos. My family is very important to me and I spend a lot of time with my parents and sister. My mom loves to volunteer in our classroom so you may see her around and my sister has been known to drop in to read the students a story or help with an activity.

Throughout the school year we will be learning about many topics across the subject areas. Some topics that we will be studying include: area, volume, place value, fractions, and decimals. During social studies and science we will be learning about colonization, the Revolutionary War and Earth's systems. Students will be challenged with different genres through diverse and interesting reading and writing topics. In reading, students will read and respond to a variety of texts while demonstrating they are using a wide array of reading strategies. Throughout the year students will study an author's craft in order to prepare them for the many writing opportunities they will have during our daily writing workshop.

My goals this school year are to foster lifelong learning and to ensure each child feels loved and welcomed. I am a firm believer in the family and school working together for the success of each student. I believe each student has individual strengths and qualities and as my time with you and your child begins I look forward to meeting all of you and getting to know your families. Let's have some fun learning!

Warmly,
Susannah Penney



WELCOME TO 5TH GRADE

CURRICULUM: We strive to:

- Maintain high academic expectations
- Meet your child's individual learning needs
- Attain a year's growth or more in all subjects

LITERACY

- Reading Workshop
 - Lesson, Small group reading, Independent reading, Conferring, Class share/reflection
- Writing Workshop
 - Mini Lesson, Independent writing, Conferring, Class share
- Spelling/Word Study

MATH- Everyday Math program

- Assessment: on-going through each class lesson, unit assessment
- Lessons focus on objectives, provide on-going practice and address individual needs
- 5th grade math concepts include:
 - Area, volume, place value, operations, fractions, decimals, geometry, and measurement

SOCIAL STUDIES

- Geography of the U.S., Native Americans, North American Exploration, Colonial America, Pre and Post Revolution, Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and Personal Financial Literacy

SCIENCE

- Structures and Functions of Organisms, Properties of Matter, Weather, Earth's Changing Surface and Earth's Resources

EXTRACURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

- Field trips, various clubs announced throughout the year
- Peak Partnership (parent teacher organization)

Behavior Management

Each student will have his or her own classroom checkbook and register. At the beginning of the year I will teach students how to write checks and balance a checkbook. This will also be a skill that supports our personal financial literacy standard. Every student will have a daily class job. At the end of the week when students have completed their weekly job they will be paid with a \$25 classroom check (\$5 each day their job is complete). This money has to be used to pay any “fines” that the children may incur- these fines are part of the consequences to our class agreements, which the children help form at the beginning of the year. If an agreement is broken during the day the child must pay his/her fine by writing a check to the teacher. However, with accumulated money students may make monthly purchases at our class store or occasionally at our class auction. If you’d like to donate items to our class store please contact me (pencils, erasers, sharpeners, markers, highlighters, notebooks, stickers, etc.) Consequences for breaking our class agreements are highlighted in the chart below. Of course at any time if a child’s behavior is severely out of line with our classroom or school expectations they may skip to a more severe consequence. Occasionally students may reside on an individual behavior contract. Should this occur, you will be contacted.

Break ONE responsibility	Pay the fine
Break TWO responsibilities	Pay both fines and conference with the teacher
Break THREE or more responsibilities	Pay all fines, conference with the teacher, complete Bear Trap and note or phone call home
Severe or constant disruptions	Sent to the office (possibly will receive a referral)

Homework

The purpose of homework in our classroom is to give students independent practice with concepts or information we are learning in class. Math homework will be assigned as we finish each lesson, which means students may not have math homework every night. Students will be asked to read 30 or more minutes six days a week. On the Thursday of every week I will send home a note of missing homework and classwork, which requires a parent or guardian’s signature. If the missing work note does not come back signed on Friday your child and I will call you during recess to inform you of the missing assignments. The classroom homework policy is an important piece in ensuring your students success. Please view the policies below.

- Set up an organized place where homework can be completed each day.
- Create a consistent schedule for completing homework. An example is, every day after school you may have a snack, then complete your homework and then play with your friends.
- Encourage, motivate and prompt your child, but do not do the homework for him or her. The purpose of homework is for your child to practice what we have learned in the classroom. If your child consistently struggles with completing the homework please contact me.
- Communicate with your child. Ask your child to share what they are studying. Ask your child what is easy for them, what they struggle with or how he or she will improve. If your child is completing a project ask them to share how they are applying knowledge learned in the classroom to their project. If your child consistently cannot discuss the knowledge they are practicing please contact me.
- Although there may be exceptions, children in 5th grade should spend approximately 50 minutes a day on homework. Reading homework is not included in this time.
- When bedtime comes, please stop your child, even if he or she has not yet completed their homework. Your child needs to be rested for their next day of learning.

*These policies were adapted from Classroom Instruction that Works by Robert J. Marzano, Debra J. Pickering and Jane E. Pollock.

Grading

Grading will be based on what students know and are able to do as measured by various classroom assessments. Assessments are designed to measure knowledge of the Common Core and Colorado State Standards in each subject (math, reading, writing, science and social studies). As a result, I do not offer extra credit opportunities. If a student receives a two this is considered progressing towards the standard and I will not provide reassessment opportunities. However, if a student receives a one they will automatically be re-taught and re-assessed on most assessments (time does not always allow for this). In reading, writing and math many of our standards appear throughout the year. Therefore, students will have multiple opportunities throughout the year to learn and demonstrate their understanding of the standard. Please find additional information regarding the elements of Standards Based Grading on our district's website.

Teamwork

Students are expected to participate in several groups throughout the year. Students are expected to use teamwork strategies such as compromising, taking turns, voting, listening to one another, using a kind tone and thinking before they speak. Students must respect one another and work together in completing the given task. Should this behavior not occur, the teacher will meet privately with the group and role-play problem-solving strategies with the group. Groups will vary throughout the year and subject matter. The teamwork strategies are expected to be implemented during all of the groups.

Classwork

All of your children can meet my expectations and be successful learners. Students are expected to complete high quality work, on time. Students who turn in poor quality or incomplete assignments will be given the opportunity to correct their work and re-submit it. If your child is absent there will be a yellow absent folder with their missing work on their desk when they return. Work from absences is due in accordance with the district policy (one day for each day absent plus one day). Please speak with me regarding their make-up work if you have concerns or if your child needs additional time. It is understandable that students may struggle with material. Please encourage your child to discuss their questions and/or challenges with you and myself.

Bathroom Use

If students need the restroom they need to walk to the bathroom sign out chart by the classroom door and hold up the bathroom pass. Students should not sign out to use the bathroom if the teacher is giving directions or if the student would miss valuable information. Once the student holds up the bathroom pass I will non-verbally signal either yes or no depending on the appropriateness of the timing. If I signal yes, the student signs their departure time on the chart. If I respond no, the student needs to wait until a more appropriate time. If it is an emergency there will be an exception. If bathroom usage becomes excessive then an individual bathroom plan will be implemented. If your child has a special circumstance requiring more frequent bathroom use please speak with me immediately.

Snack

Your child may bring a healthy mid-afternoon snack. Snacks will not be provided. Students may not bring Ramen Noodles, sunflower seeds or Takis (or similar snack) as a snack as they create a large mess in the classroom, thank you for your understanding. I would also appreciate it if you'd refrain from sending your child to school with Starbucks. If your child should forget their snack they will not be permitted to call home.

Birthday Treats

On your child's special day or half birthday (summer birthdays) please feel free to arrange a time with me to bring in a healthy treat or non food item treat for the class.

Class Photos

From time to time we will use your child's photo or a short video featuring your child on our website or PTO Facebook page. If you wish not to have your child's photo or a video with your child in it on our website or the PTO Facebook page please write me a note letting me know.

Ms. Penney's Little School Library Book Exchange

I am pleased to introduce to you, Ms. Penney's Little School Library Book Exchange. The cabinet in our hallway will act as a book exchange for students in our class as well as students in our school. In order to participate all one simply must do is leave a book before taking a book from the cabinet. Since this is a book exchange participants will not receive their book back. I have already stocked our cabinet with several children's books to start us off. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Arrival Time

The first bell of the morning rings at 7:30 a.m. and the final bell rings at 7:35 a.m. To ensure students' safety, students should not arrive before 7:25 a.m.

Tentative Class Schedule

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

7:40-9:10 Writing Workshop

9:10-10:40 Math

10:45-11:05 Recess

11:05-11:25 Lunch

11:25-12:10 Social Studies/Science

12:10-12:55 Specials (Music, PE, Art)

12:55-2:25 Reading Workshop

2:30 Dismiss

Wednesday (Early Release Day)

7:40-8:50 Writing Workshop

8:50-9:55 Math

10:00-10:45 Specials (Music, PE, Art)

10:45-11:05 Recess

11:05-11:25 Lunch

11:25-12:30 Reading Workshop Social Studies/Science

12:30-1:05 Connection Time

1:15 Dismiss

Contact Information

Communication between teachers and families is the key to a successful learner. Please feel free to stop by, write in your child's planner, e-mail or call me. I am at the school between the hours of 7:15 a.m. and 3:15 p.m. My contact information is below. Please note that I will check my voicemail twice a day (once before lunch and once after school). If you have an emergency please contact the office. Watch for class updates and other important information on our class website.

I will also communicate through text using the app Remind. To join our classroom on Remind visit this site to sign up <https://www.remind.com/classes/38gggf/people>

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