

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

On behalf of the community at Sunnydale Elementary, I would like to welcome you and your child to the 2014-2015 school year! I am looking forward to partnering with you in order to ensure all pupils reach their highest potential. I'm excited to meet the students of my 4th grade English class, just as I am excited to communicate with you about what should be expected this year! In fourth grade, we can anticipate the adoption of routines, the use of models for abstract ideas, constructive teamwork, and preparation for end of cycle exams.

I'm delighted to be part of the Sunnydale team for my first year of teaching, and I will do my best to make it a dynamic experience for all. As for my own education, I received my teaching license from McGill University, where I had the chance to gain teaching experience in various schools. Outside of the classroom, one of my passions is reading, which is a passion I hope to instill in my pupils. I will also work hard to create a safe space where students feel comfortable enough to share their own concerns and feelings with me, as well as with their classmates. In my opinion, the first step in establishing a strong classroom setting is to foster healthy relationships between members of the school community. The school principal and other teachers can also serve as an excellent support system for your child and for myself. Apart from my own assessments, I plan to get students involved in their evaluations by conducting small interviews and by using self-assessments. As long as students have a chance to monitor their progress, I believe they will be more engaged in their learning. I expect that my students will learn in very different ways, which is why I am dedicated to creating an inclusive classroom, thus supporting individualized education plans.

By using adapted teaching models that can better address the needs of all students, I want to avoid practices that exclude those who cannot follow generalized methods of instruction. Seeing as how our school welcomes all forms of diversity, I plan to recognize these differences in my teaching. As I mentioned, I want to create a safe classroom community, which I hope to accomplish by starting the year with icebreaker activities. As a classroom teacher, I am responsible for challenging stereotypes and for emphasizing values of acceptance and kindness, which will serve as the building blocks for our class. In addition, I believe the best way to operate is to offer every child the same learning opportunities and to adapt activities to individual needs. For example, one of the reading activities we will be completing includes teamwork, where the teams will not be ability-based, but rather diverse. Teams will be given grade-appropriate short stories that represent different cultures, genders, etc., and they must take turns reading sections to their team. Students who have special needs will have access to resources, such as childcare workers, or braille writing. We will also be discussing different reading strategies in order to make reading more accessible. Group members must work *together* to explain to the class what their story was about. Once again, oral responses can be modified to fit the student. Such modifications help students feel comfortable with reading, which will increase their confidence in their reading skills.

I hope this upcoming year will offer unique experiences for your child as well as for myself! Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions, comments, or concerns.

Sincerely,

Ms. Giulia Lato