

August 20, 2016

Dear Trailblazer Parents and Caregivers,

Here we are, ready to start a new adventure in first and second grade! I can't wait to learn about all you did this summer with your friends and families. Make sure you say hi at the back to school breakfast on Wednesday, August 31, from 7:15-7:45. Right after that we will have a brief all-school meeting, adults will say goodbye to students, and then we will start our first full day of the new school year together.

What do I need?

I have all the essentials that students need in the classroom. If you really want to do back-to-school shopping to get yourself in the mood for the new year, here are four things you can bring. **I have extras of all of these at school, too.** It's fine if you don't have everything on the first day.

- a sturdy backpack that can hold a folder, lunch(if needed), and extra clothes such as shoes and socks.
- a pencil box to keep small items in your desk
- your choice of a "fancy" folder for your take-home folder (please not a binder as these don't fit in our mailboxes)
- two boxes of crackers to share for snack time

There are a lot of fun pencils and things out there that you might want to buy. I would ask that you keep those at home for now and perhaps use them to set up a little homework corner. Also, please do not allow your children to bring toys to school. Our days are jam-packed, and there is plenty to do without them. An exception is that children may bring a "stuffie" for quiet time that stays in a basket in the classroom the rest of the day. Think Beanie Baby size, no larger.

In the Trailblazers' classroom we have community snack, so you do not need to pack a morning snack for your first or second grader. Community snack is more efficient for us as a group and creates considerably less waste than individually-packed snacks. We will continue to get fresh fruits and vegetables plus milk from the kitchen. The fruits and vegetables are free for everyone. Milk is also free for children who receive free lunch. I believe the charge for other children is 50 cents, but that may have changed.

I will send home details about our daily schedule and other classroom happenings as they get settled in the next few weeks. We will be practicing homework at school before it becomes part of the weekly routine. I do encourage everyone to start planning on 10-20 minutes of reading each night (independent or read-aloud or some combination). Children will also have a fun math project to complete every two weeks.

There are two dates to be aware of right away: On Friday, September 2, Sarah Merseal will be substituting for me. I would not normally take a day off the first week of school, but we are driving my oldest daughter to college for the first time that day, and I just can't miss it. Also, I am tentatively planning **Friday, October 14** in the afternoon as the time to harvest the pumpkins that we planted last spring. We will need some drivers for that short field trip—and that means paperwork—so if you can let me know now that you can drive and get your forms into Libbet, that would be great. I'm pretty sure you have to redo them each year (but you DON'T have to get re-fingerprinted).

Finally, one of the first projects we will do this fall is create a class directory of student addresses and phone numbers: being able to state and write these two things is a K-2 social studies expectation. This little booklet will also make it easier for you to contact each other for playdates etc. To help with this, would you please reply to this email with your street address and preferred phone number? That will also confirm for me that I have the right email for you. I understand that some of you may not want to share these details with the class; if this is true, just let me know and when I duplicate the booklet, I'll block that information from your child's page.

On Monday, all teachers will be at a workshop in Woodstock, then we will be in meetings at RES most of Tuesday. I invite you to come by the classroom from 2:30 to 3:30 pm on Tuesday, August 30, in the afternoon if you want to say hello and take a peek at the room before we start.

Any questions? My email is bdrinker@wcsu.net and my phone number at school is 484-7230 x1504. My home number is 885-7173. You can call up to 9pm in the evening. Email is the most reliable way to reach me.

Looking forward to seeing everyone soon!

Beth Ann

p.s. Please check our class website regularly. I post most classroom newsletters there as well as student projects and important dates.