

August 19, 2009

Welcome to the 2008-2009 school year! I hope you are all as excited as we are to have your students coming back to the classroom. Our addition is almost complete – it is awesome! The additional space will allow us to spread out a little and welcome our new students, staff, and programs.

On August 20 at 4:00 we will post kindergarten – 5th grade class lists on the front doors. Our bus routes will also be posted.

I would like to invite all our families to join us on Monday, August 24 from 5:00-7:00 for “Preview Homestead”. Students will be able to find their new classrooms and walk around the building. If staff members are able, they will also be here to meet new families and say hi to previous year’s students. Our Homestead PTA will also be available to provide information on all the opportunities parents will have to be involved at Homestead. We will also have several community organizations, such as Scouts, Market Day, etc. to provide information on their programs. Please stop in anytime between 5:00 and 7:00 – we are looking forward to seeing all of our students and their families.

We are excited to welcome the following new staff members this year. Ms. Gretchen O’Shea will be teaching 1st grade. Ms. O’Shea transferred to Homestead from Fox Chase where she also taught 1st grade. Mrs. Jen Adams joins us at 5th grade. She had previously taught 5th grade at East View Elementary. With the additional space we are looking forward to having an Instructional Skills Program (ISP) in the building. This program serves Special Education students in 2nd – 4th grade. Ms. Mary Fondriest will be their teacher. She comes to us with previous experience teaching ISP at Boulder Hill Elementary. Another district employee who has transferred to Homestead is Nick Iovino. Nick will be one of our night custodians. With Ms. Phillips moving from AT Resource teacher to Homestead Assistant Principal, her position was open. Mrs. Amy Maaske, who formerly served as the AT Resource teacher at Long Beach and Boulder Hill will be joining the Homestead staff. And finally, we welcome Carla Dannheim, Kristine Kime, and Janine Anderson as new Teacher Assistants. We are currently interviewing candidates to fill a Reading Specialist vacancy. It will be great to have another full time reading specialist to work with Ms. Gerth and our students. The strengths and areas of expertise these new staff members bring to the Homestead team will support the existing staff as we strive to meet the needs of each and every student.

Our theme this year is “Homestead....Changes in latitudeChanges in attitude”. We are recognizing the changes that will come about with the new addition and then changes we will incorporate in our Character Counts! program to strengthen the emphasis on positive behavior choices. I am very excited to work with the developers of the “Character Always” program to help us promote positive behavior choices. Our staff will be trained on Aug. 25 so we are ready to promote those positive choices on the first day of school. More information will be provided to parents as the year begins.

August 26 is the first day of attendance for 1st – 5th grade. School begins at 8:40. Students may enter the building between 8:25 and 8:40. First grade will line up in the gym, 2nd grade will line up in the hallway into the new addition, 3rd grade will line up in the cafeteria, 4th & 5th grade will line up outside their rooms upstairs. Parents are invited to accompany their children to their designated line-up area for the first 4 days of school. When the bell rings at 8:40, parents will say good-bye and then teachers will escort their classes to their room. Students are dismissed at 3:30. Parents may meet their child outside Door #1 if they are a walker. If you are going to pick up your child through our car/daycare van pick-up line, your child will exit Door #3 as they are called from the building when you pull your car up in the parent pick-up line.

On Thursday, August 27 we invite our kindergarten students and their parents to join us for Kindergarten Round-up. If your child attends morning kindergarten, Round-up is from 9:00-11:00. If your child attends afternoon kindergarten, Round-up is for 1:00-3:00. Parents/guardians must attend with their child. Morning students and families need to enter through the front doors (#2) and you will be directed where to go. Weather permitting afternoon students and their families will line up outside the kindergarten door (#3). If it is raining please enter the building through Door #2. This is a wonderful opportunity for children to have an introduction to their room and classmates before the official start of kindergarten on Friday, August 28.

Have a wonderful week! And remember to take some time to read to or with your child every day and to have fun with math activities!