

June 25, 2018

Dear Parents of Rising First Graders,

Welcome to First Grade!

Many of you I have met, but for those of you that I haven't, let me say a warm "Hello!" I want to use this letter to further introduce myself, and to give you your first sneak peek into our year together.

My name is Molly, and I am a San Francisco School alumna. I love teaching in a community that shaped much of who I am, and whose traditions and values I hold dear. It is beyond satisfying to share my passion for learning, gained at the hands of skilled teachers, with a new generation of students.

I also want to introduce Cheaunie Sparks, who is continuing with me in First Grade as our Teaching Assistant. She has a great deal of classroom experience, and brings a warm, patient and calming energy to the classroom. There is a short note from her at the end of this letter.

This summer, I am eager to have some time away from the busy-ness of the school year to go deeper with our new Elementary math curriculum. I began the program this past year with the First Graders, and was impressed and delighted by how the students responded—each individual was met with an appropriate challenge for their mathematical mind, and the entire class was able to grow farther both in their math thinking, and their identities as a community of mathematical investigators than with any other approach I have tried. I am looking forward to working with Maggie Day (in the new position of Math Coordinator) and the other Elementary teachers to implement this program across the Elementary! I encourage you to attend the Math Education Night on September 25th.

The "step up" to First Grade will be a big one for your child. We will help children with this transition at school, and ask that you think about how you can support your child at home. For the first weeks of school (and perhaps all year), plan for earlier bedtimes and consistent routines to facilitate timely arrivals. Preschool and K had a 15 minute arrival window, but the Elementary program does not! Students are expected to be in line to enter the classroom at 8:30am. You are welcome to place your child in the free morning daycare from 8:00 to 8:30am, which is often a nice play time for children to ease them into their school day. Also consider keeping your child's afterschool schedule mellow during the first weeks of school. As your child becomes more accustomed to the busy First Grade day, they will be ready to add new activities to their schedule.

I will send your child a letter a bit later in the summer with two small tasks for them to carry out, but here are some activities for you to consider engaging in with your child:

- Frequently read aloud to your child regardless of their reading level. If they are interested, let them “share the book” with you. However, reading should be joyful—there will be plenty of time this year to work on reading skills!
- Allow ample opportunity for your child to write at whatever level they are able—their spelling does not need to be correct for writing to be beneficial. Not only are they working on handwriting, they are developing an awareness of the sounds in words and the knowledge that they can express themselves in print.
- Play many games with dice, cards and counting—these experiences will help your child build their number sense and early math skills.
- Finally, include your child in the types of literacy activities *you* engage in—share with them a book you love, a favorite recipe you have read over and over or a letter or an email you received—we will start the year getting inspired by how people use reading and writing in their lives, and these memories will surely come into play!

I hope to see you at the Parent/Guardian/Staff Workday on Friday, August 24th (2:00-5:00). The workday is a great opportunity to build our First Grade parent community, to meet the teachers, and to help set up the classroom for the year ahead! And there will be a taco truck!

Between dinosaurs, poetry, reading, math, science experiments, and elves—to mention a few—we have an incredible amount of thinking and learning to do this year. I can’t wait. With that, I will wish you all a happy remainder of your summer. I hope you are finding time to enjoy your soon-to-be First Graders!

Truly,
Molly

Happy summer everyone! I am delighted to continue as the assistant teacher with Molly in First Grade this coming year. I have been working in education for 25+ years now. I have done everything from teaching, to working admissions, to shadowing students with learning differences. I am very passionate about education and cannot wait to work with your children. Writing and art are among my favorite subjects, and with my son’s love of dinosaurs, I have a lot of knowledge that I can finally put to use! Have a fantastic summer, and see you soon.

Warmly,
Cheaunie

School Shopping List:

- A backpack to transport items to and from school
- A lunchbox for Friday lunches (we strive for Zero Waste!)
- A water bottle that will live in the classroom all year. I recommend a bottle with a “sports cap”—one that doesn’t need to be unscrewed each time your child wants a drink.