

Welcome to Mrs. Blake's 4th Grade Class!

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your child to another school year. *I love teaching 4th grade!* We have a fabulous year ahead of us as we explore and question the world around us. I am honored to be your child's teacher and take my job very seriously. For your child to get the most out of this year, I need you to join me in support as we endeavor to give them the tools they will need to live a happy, successful life.

I have been teaching for 23 years. I started teaching 1st and 2nd grades in Pablo, Montana for 7 years. My husband, Glenn, a *now* retired teacher/principal, and I then came to Alaska to teach. I taught a 3rd/4th Grade combo for 3 years in Shaktoolik, AK. Next, I was in Anchorage for 10 years teaching 4th, 5th, and 6th grades. We were ready for another adventure so my husband and I went to Point Hope, AK for two years. I taught 3rd and 4th grade there. We were ready to be back on the road system and so we were excited to get to come to the Kenai Peninsula. Last year, I came to Sterling and taught a 4/5 Combo class. I am so excited to be teaching a straight 4th grade this year.

Homework: To make sure your child has a successful year it is important they have a regular homework time and a quiet place to work. Homework usually consists of: spelling and reading. *I do not give homework over weekends or holidays.* Reading each night for 20 minutes has proven to improve fluency and help your child enjoy success in life; as reading is tied to everything. Assignment notebooks will go home each day to let you know what they need to work on. Please sign it and send it back. *If at any time you do not understand any part of the homework, please write me a note. They will get credit for at least trying.*

Monday Folders:

Weekly papers will come home each Monday. Please sign and send back items in the "Return to School" pocket.

Grading

Grades will be posted on Power School. Information and login information will be sent home so you will be able to easily check your child's progress. We will be using a Standards Referenced reporting system for grades 4-6th, which will closely resemble the 3rd grade reporting system. Below is the scoring guide.

Standards Referenced Scoring Scale	
4	Student exceeds all skills within the standard by demonstrating more complex understanding.
3	Student demonstrates all skills within the standard.
2	Student partially demonstrates skills within the standard.
1	With help, student partially demonstrates skills within the standard.
0	Even with help, skills within the standard are not demonstrated.

Classroom Expectations:

- Be safe
- Be responsible
- Be respectful

Students in my class will brainstorm what these mean and come up with the consequences when they are not followed. I am fair, but it is important for you to know I will not allow another student to keep your child from learning.

Field Trips:

These exciting adventures are an extension of classroom learning. Buses will be used when possible, depending on funding, but I always need parent drivers and chaperones. I will send home field trip information well in advance of an up coming trip. *All* field trips cover core curriculum areas of learning. Field trips are a privilege and school rules apply.

Volunteers and chaperones:

In order to volunteer in the school, for any reason, or chaperone field trips, you must be cleared through the District Office. *Please sign up to be a school volunteer on the KPBSD website. Go to the Volunteer Tab and follow the directions. You are most welcome to come into school and use our computers. Debbie, our secretary, can show you where to fill out the form on line. We covet your help this year. Sterling Elementary is a wonderful place to be and we appreciate all of our volunteers! It takes 2 weeks to get approved to be a volunteer, so please do this ASAP!*

Items needed: Snack

We have snack each day. **Crackers and pretzels** are acceptable snacks. Cheerios or other similar type cereal is also allowed. Please, no pop, candy or cookies! *I count on families to provide bags of snack for the class during the year. Please send in something to share. We will not have fresh fruit for snack from the kitchen this year.*

Recess:

Students go outside UNLESS it is -10° or colder. That means if it's raining- they will go out. Please provide adequate outer wear for your child. This means feet, too. Boots, hats, coats, gloves, and snow pants are very important in Alaska. *If you can't provide for your child, please let me know and I will make sure they have what they need. Please label your child's gear.*

Absences

I can't stress enough how important it is for your child to be at school every day unless ill. In elementary school all absences are counted as unexcused. If you go on vacation, please give me advance warning. I will talk to you about what is expected from your child. *If your child is struggling in an academic area, please try to schedule trips that have the least impact on direct teaching instruction. Your child's well-being is my top priority. When they are upset, it affects their ability to learn. If for any reason your family experiences a change, either good or bad, please send a note. It is very helpful to have a heads up so I can better serve your child.*

If you have questions or concerns about your child, please feel free to call me at school 262-4232 before 8:45 and after 3:45pm. I can not take calls during my teaching time, but you can leave me a voice mail.

Email me at pblake@kpbsd.k12.ak.us. Please send me an email with just a "Hello" so I have you in my address book. It is a great way to stay in touch and let you know right away if there are issues you need to know about.

It is going to be a wonderful year of learning!

Mrs. Blake