

Dear First Grade Families,

I hope that you all had wonderful summers filled with joy, adventure, and relaxation! My summer has been fantastic. I have spent sweet time with family, exploring the outdoors, and soaking up as much time as I can with my two-year old, Ryder. We braved a family trip to Florida and Disneyworld, and made it while having fun—whew! We have read, played, and snuggled all summer long!

This school year will be wonderful as well! The buzz has been incredible the last few weeks as staff and faculty work in excitement to make our campus and facilities even more warm, welcoming, and beautiful than ever. We have a fabulous playground that first grade finally gets to experience, and we have made some huge changes to our Lower Campus, including a new movement, music, and art room! Big kudos to all who worked tirelessly to make that happen!

As for first grade in the classroom, we will be exploring an exciting and engaging curriculum. The first month or so of school will focus on learning how to be first grade students. We will get to know one another, create classroom expectations, and learn routines that will help everyone to be successful students and friends. We will dive right into reading, and I will meet students at their level. Learning to read should be a happy and cherished experience, not a stressful, anxiety-filled one. I will be teaching literacy using the Orton-Gillingham methodology, which utilized multisensory education and explicit direct instruction in order for students to develop a concrete understanding of language. We will learn various strategies to help us grow as readers and develop a love for reading, stories, and literature. Our class will explore and research different birds, mammals, reptiles, and insects. We will join together with Ms. Coral's class in many activities and field trips. Ms. Samantha will guide our class in creating unbelievable artwork this year. Ms. Heather will enchant and engage your kids through rhyme and music. Slowly but surely, your students will become readers, writers, scientists, artists, musicians, and mathematicians.

While there is, of course, a strong academic focus, we also know that developing a strong social-emotional well-being is incredibly important. Here at NCSA, we place a huge emphasis on our social-emotional curriculum, as we use Passageworks, and the Mindful Schools curriculum, to support NCSA students to become their best selves. I have a strong belief that using mindfulness to be present, engaged, and aware of emotions and expectations will help our class to be a strong, sweet, and positive group. We will gather in circles, class meetings, take class hikes/walks, spend time in nature, and express ourselves creatively in order to create a safe, nurturing, and loving learning environment for all. We will learn to be compassionate, caring humans that respect and love one another.

I am so excited for this group of students. Linda and Holly have been raving about the how kind, capable, and smart they are. I know that we will have fun, learn, discover, work hard, and have a great year together.

Last, I'd love to have a welcome board with photos of each child from our class. Please email or text a photo of your child with their (preferred) name so that everyone is represented on the first day of school. The sooner, the better!

Please enjoy your summer, I know I am (I'm at the beach right now!). Don't hesitate to call, email, or text me with any questions, concerns, or happy thoughts!

Love,  
Brittani Brackett

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