

To the Newest Members of the Cynwyd 5th Grade,

Welcome to the 5K Family!

I hope this letter finds you in the midst of a relaxing and enjoyable summer, and that your batteries are well on their way to being fully charged for an exciting and stimulating school year. The 5th grade team has a lot of fantastic experiences lined up, but before we get into that, I believe a bit of an introduction is in order, though there is a chance that some of you already know a little bit about me.

The 2019/2020 school year marks the beginning of my 19th year of teaching, a career path with its roots in Northern New Jersey. After many summers of working with younger swimmers to perfect their relay starts and flip-turns, I found myself at the University of Maryland, College Park making the realization that I truly enjoyed teaching. This led to an Elementary Education degree in 2001, and my first position as a fourth grade teacher in Westwood, NJ. For the next 7 years I predominantly worked in 4th grade but also taught 3rd grade mathematics, served on curriculum committees for math, science and technology, and ran several clubs ranging from gardening to podcasting.

At the end of the 2008 school year, my wife, a graduate of LM, took a position at the University of Pennsylvania Veterinary hospital and we were Philly bound. I took a position teaching 6th grade in the school district of Philadelphia, but based on what I had heard from my wife and her parents, Lower Merion seemed like the place to be. So shortly thereafter I left my position and began substituting in the district. After several months of covering everything from Kindergarten to 12th grade, I knew that I had made the right choice and was determined to become a full time member of this amazing district.

As positions were posted and interviews began I saw this opening and crossed my fingers. I had only been in Cynwyd once, subbing in 2nd grade, but what I experienced had left an impression. From the soaring atrium, to the staff that went out of their way to make sure I felt welcome and the engaged and excited students, I knew that this was the place for me. Luckily, it appears that the district felt the same way!

Now starting my eleventh year here, things just keep getting better. Mrs. Ash, Dr. Fulmer, and Mr. Tavani are all back again, and Mr. McDermott will be joining the team! There will be field trips. There will be privileges reserved solely for 5th graders. There will be fun...in school...it may not seem possible, but I guarantee it. There will be duct tape. There may robots and various new tech. We may capture wild creatures. The possibilities are endless. If you want to get a sneak peek at what we did last year, get an adult to follow @Cynwyd5thGrade on Twitter. Scroll back through the timeline to see some of last year's experiences. No two years are ever the same, but at least you'll have a feel for what we do.

Enjoy the rest of your summer, and be sure to rest up because you are going to need a lot of energy for what I can assure you will be a very exciting year.

But wait!

There's more...

I do have the two assignments for you. First, we are going to be doing quite a bit of writing this year, and I want to get things rolling right now. So here is assignment number 1:

## Write about the best thing you've ever read.

That's it. I want you to notice that I very purposely didn't say "book" in that prompt. The best thing you've ever read may have been a book or a magazine, but it also may have been a comment on a YouTube video, or a tweet by Joel Embiid. It doesn't matter to me as long as there was some form of reading involved, and you tell me why this thing was "the best". In your supply list you will see that I have asked you to bring several composition books. One of these will be your writing notebook for the year, and this is going to be your first entry. Write in any style you want (poetry, prose, fiction, non-fiction... whatever!) as long as it somehow relates to this idea. The only rules are that it must be in the notebook, it must be in school by the **fourth** day (9/6), and it must be something that you would be willing to share with the class.

Your second assignment is really an assignment for your families. Included with this letter should be a COPPA form and a Google Drive form. The sooner these are turned in, the sooner we can start doing amazing things, so make sure these are filled out, and make sure you bring them in as soon as possible.

I hope you are as excited about being a part of the 5K family as I am. See you in September.

Sincerely,



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