

August 2026

Dear WHS Families & my *Cubs of Character*!!!



I hope you had a wonderful vacation filled with fun, adventure, and time with family & friends! As summer comes to an end, I am excited to begin a brand new school year together. I cannot wait to see you and create many great memories with you!

We are going to continue with the longstanding tradition of having an annual thematic unit. Each year, we select a book or story, and we study it as a school. We will read, write, and sing about it. Then, we examine the key parts of the story and related concepts in different subject areas, complete projects about it, and create pieces of art. We display our work in the hallways and then come together as a learning community.

This year, we chose the book, *Shrek*, written by William Steig in 1990. If you are not familiar with the story, you will be by the time we finish studying it. I have been working closely with Dr. Bengels and Mr. Schubert. We are planning on hosting our own performance in the Spring, which will be brought to you by our third-grade Drama & Storytelling Clubs.

Throughout the year, we will have fun exploring the *Shrek* storyline and the important messages from it. We will encounter themes such as:

- Being comfortable with who you are
- Finding happiness by being authentic and true to yourself
- Understanding that being different does not mean being wrong
- Celebrating kindness, friendship, and acceptance



We will also explore fairy tales and learn how *Shrek* is a "parody" of classic fairy tales. The story playfully reverses expectations and reminds readers that heroes come in all shapes and sizes. Most importantly, we'll discover that happy endings can look different from what we might expect.

In the meantime, enjoy the remaining days of summer. Remember to be good, keep reading, and help out around the house!

I am looking forward to seeing you on September 2 at Open House.
The first day of school is September 3.

Love,
Dr. DeRosa

