

August 19, 2011

Dear 4th Grade Families,

Well, here we are. The placement letters have been sent, August is coming to a close, and it's about time to get started with school.

I hope you've all had a wonderful summer. My summer was filled with plenty of activity – most of it outdoors – and capped off with 17 days in Guatemala. The last 12 days of the trip were spent with our partner school, Nueva Esperanza. This was my third year in a row there. It was another great trip, and everyone in our class has a new pen pal from there. The kids wrote letters on Wednesday (two days ago!) and I have them ready to distribute. I also have some other surprises for our class. We'll be writing back promptly, as they can't wait to hear from their new Winnetka friends! (If you want to learn more about the trip, feel free to check out our blog from the trip: www.mrwartik.com/newhope The final post includes photos and videos of the kids writing their letters!)

In a broad sense, I try to integrate my loves and interests into the classroom and you will see that reflected in many of the things we do this year. I always encourage the students to do the same. Any personal interests and connections that students can weave into their learning makes for a much more rewarding, beneficial and memorable experience.

Now, for a quick look at this year. First and foremost, I'm very excited to start a second year of Writer's Workshop. Last year's WW produced the most amazing writing I've ever seen from 4th graders! I'm also going to attempt to launch a full Reader's Workshop, under the same principles as the Writer's Workshop. Our big social studies units include North American geography and cultures (including the Maya civilization), African-American history, and Immigration. Current events will also be a regular topic.

Math is my favorite subject and we will be doing many fun and interesting things to go along with our curriculum there. In science, our units will include Rocks & Minerals, Sound, Hydroponics and Life Structures. More specific and thorough information on all subjects will follow at Go-To-School Night on Thursday, September 15th (from 8-9 pm).

I will be in constant communication with you through my website, which will feature a daily (or near-daily) blog, homework listings, project information and more. Please see the attached the sheet for more information.

I look forward to seeing you all on the first day of school, August 29th. We're in the newly-dubbed Room 137 (formerly known as Room 19), in the hallway two doors down from the nurse's office, next to Ms. Bulan.

I'll see you soon!

David Wartik

Dear Students,

This is a special letter just for you. I know you may be disappointed that summer is almost over, but I am going to do my best to make sure that your last year at Hubbard Woods is a great one. We're going to learn and do so many interesting things this year.

However, most of that is down the road. We're going to spend the first few days of the school year building our classroom community. We'll get to know each other and talk about how we are going to work together to make this an awesome year.

I would like you to do three things for me to help us get the year started:

1. Think of at least three fun or interesting things you did this summer.
2. Think about the qualities that make someone a good student.
3. Think about the qualities that make someone a good teacher.

You may write these things down or just keep them in your brain. It doesn't matter to me. You won't need these things on the first day of school. That'll be too crazy a day. But make sure you have this stuff ready for Tuesday or Wednesday.

I look forward to seeing you really soon! We're going to have a great year.

Class Website:
<http://www.mrwartik.com>

This will be the location of the daily homework, project listings, and more. Please check it out and bookmark it now. I have a feeling you'll be using it often!

Class blog:
<http://www.mrwartik.com/blog-1112>

Two years ago, I started writing a class blog and posting photos and videos from the day/week. It was a big hit and has become a part of what I do. This also takes the place of a hard-copy Friday newsletter. Instead, there will always be a recap post at the end of the week, with the list of upcoming and important information. You can check out the blog now! Feel free to sign up to be a subscriber, so you can be notified whenever I put up a new post.

The site has a username and password you'll need to enter.

Username: only available in hard copy letter

Password: only available in hard copy letter

My email address:
mrwartik@comcast.net

This will be the easiest way for you to reach me during the school year. You're almost assured of the quickest response time when you email me, although you should feel free to call the school and leave a voicemail if that's easier for you!

Open House:
TBD

I'm not positive whether or not I'll be able to host a "drop-in-and-say-hello" event before the school year begins. If I schedule one, I'll post the info on the website and the blog!