

Ms. LaVenture's Literacy Class

Dear Fourth Grade Families,

Students, welcome to my classroom at Cory Elementary! We have a very busy and exciting year in store. I want to make sure you feel at home in my classroom as we build a community where all kinds of learners can come together. I am looking forward to lots of learning and laughter this year.

In 4th grade, you will have two teachers -- you will begin your day with me, working on literacy and social studies, and then switch classrooms at lunch to work with Mr. Egland for math and science. Some fun facts about me: I've been at Cory for 10 years now. I love to read, bake bread, and go hiking! I have two boys, who are 15 and almost 13, and they keep me busy when I'm not at school. I'm sure you'll hear lots of stories about them this year! If you'd like to learn more about your teachers, please check out the Cory website for our biographies!

Parents, I'm so excited to get to know your child and to partner with you this year. Please plan on joining us for Back-to-School Night this Thursday. I also hope you will take advantage of opportunities provided throughout the year to become more familiar with what your child is learning, and how you can support her/him at home. These events will be posted on the Cory website, and communicated through the Parent Post newsletter, as well as on my Class Dojo page.

After reading through the attached information, feel free to contact me via email to discuss any concerns or questions you might have, or come with questions to Back-To-School Night!

Sincerely,

Rainy LaVenture
4th Grade Literacy / Social Studies Teacher
rainy_laventure@dpsk12.org

Cory office: (720) 424-8380

Room 205 (Literacy) Daily Schedule:	Parent Homework!
8:15 Meet on the playground - first bell	Please write me an email introducing your child! This can be a brief note, a list, or something longer - whatever feels right to you. All I ask is to keep it under a million words! I am looking forward to getting to know your child both in person and through your eyes. I would also love a family photo to hang up outside our classroom -- either a printed or emailed copy is fine!
8:20 Specials (music, art, or gym)	
9:10 Snack and community time	
9:30 Literacy block (see below for details)	
12:00 Lunch and recess, transition to Math	

CURRICULUM:

Literacy is broken into two main sections.

Whole Class (CKLA/Knowledge):

Our interdisciplinary CKLA block is about 90 minutes long, and includes a variety of topics, genres, and content areas, including social studies topics. Students will be reading and writing about real world issues using readers that contain excerpts from historical sources, memoirs, and published novels.

In the fall, 4th grade students will develop their ability to read and understand complex text, as well as create their own writing in a variety of genres, as they consider these topics:

- personal narratives
- ancient civilizations of the Middle Ages
- poetry
- inventors and inventions

These first few modules will be followed by other interdisciplinary modules over the course of the year.

Guided Reading/Independent Work (Workshop):

In this part of the day, which will typically last about 45 minutes, all students will be participating in a variety of literacy activities in order to work on differentiated skills. Activities will include:

- meeting in small groups with a teacher to discuss novels, build vocabulary knowledge, and work on written responses to text
- working in small groups with our reading support partners to strengthen their phonics or comprehension skills, or go in-depth into topics of personal interest
- reading independently (both to prepare for novel study groups and to explore topics or genres of personal interest)
- writing independently (memoirs about personal experiences, creative fiction, poetry, etc)
- discussing their writing and reading with peers
- challenging themselves with extension projects

ORGANIZATION:

Students will be using colored folders this year to manage, store, and organize their materials. We will not be storing anything in desks, since we will share our space with 5th graders, but students will each have a “mailbox” in which they can leave their classwork from day to day. Home folders and other personal materials (pencil pouch, headphones, independent reading book, incomplete work, etc) should come home every night and back to school every day! Please help them keep their belongings organized.

HOMEWORK:

- Independent reading (30 minutes nightly)
 - **Your child should be reading a book of their choice each night at home, for 30 minutes or more.** Ideally, this would be a book that is interesting, at an appropriate level, and that they can stick with, rather than starting and stopping multiple books. I encourage students to bring a book back and forth from home to school, rather than reading multiple books at once! Comic collections do not meet my requirement for homework reading -- however, graphic novels ARE acceptable.
- Spelling practice (as needed)
 - Students will be given lists of content-related words as we progress through our CKLA modules, and will be asked to learn both the spelling and definitions of these words through in-class and at-home activities.
- Incomplete guided reading work (as needed)
 - All students will be working independently on short term assignments related to their guided reading group - generally consisting of several chapters to read and a written response. Students will have time to work on these assignments during the day, and will typically complete them in class, but may occasionally need to bring home their work to finish.

We purposefully keep homework to a minimum to allow for family time and after school activities. If you are noticing that your child is consistently bringing work home to complete, it may be time for a conversation about time management and setting priorities!

Independent work is meant to help your child practice key skills, prepare for class discussions, and make connections between ideas. It will be checked for completeness, accuracy, and thoughtfulness. Repeated missing, late, or incomplete work will affect your child's grades in both the assigned subject matter and their grade for "effort" in that subject. You will receive notifications via ClassDojo from me if assignments are incomplete or missing.

BEHAVIOR:

If a student is having trouble with classroom expectations (disturbing others or unable to complete their work), they may need help to get back on track -- I will remind them of the expectations and provide feedback on improved behavior.

Repeated offenses will result in a Refocus form, which includes a plan for restorative action if needed. You will receive an email notification within 24 hours if your child needed to fill out a Refocus form during the day. A second Refocus form will be accompanied by a phone call from me to discuss possible solutions and/or interventions. Continued infractions, as well as certain more severe behaviors (bullying, harassment, theft, fighting, etc) will be referred immediately to the principal.

SNACKS AND TREATS:

- **Birthday Celebrations:** Cory has a no-food policy for celebrating all birthdays. Students will enjoy their special day at school and will get to visit the office to receive a book to keep for their birthday treat! Please save special food treats for celebrations at home.
- **Snacks:** We will have an opportunity for a small snack every morning. If your child would like to have a snack, please send them to school with something that is healthy and easy to eat (no utensils required, etc). Cheese sticks, granola bars, or small bags of pretzels/goldfish are good options. Please avoid nuts -- we have a student with a severe peanut allergy in our room.
- **Drinks:** Please send your child with a water bottle that closes tightly. No other drinks (gatorade, iced tea, lemonade, etc) will be allowed in the classroom, but students can bring those types of beverages for lunch if they choose!

COMMUNICATION:

This year, I will use **ReachWell** to post important information about upcoming events, curriculum updates, reminders, and other logistics, as well as our class newsletter each Monday. You can also use it to message me for quick questions. More information about how to join will come soon, but please ask me if you need any support! It's new to us all, but we are excited about its potential.

The best way to reach me for specific academic questions or concerns related to literacy is through email (rainy_laventure@dpsk12.org). I check my email before school, at lunch, and in the evening, and I strive to respond within 24 business hours. It may take longer over the weekend. For social-emotional concerns or other issues that may affect your child throughout the day, **please cc both Mr. Egland and myself** so we can work as a team to support your student! For pick-up changes, please call the office.

Each student will be given a **home/school folder**, which should travel between school and home daily in their backpack. Home Folders will contain graded student work as well as school announcements and information. Students will be responsible for bringing it home each night - please build the habit of checking it with them each evening or morning. You can also be on the lookout for information from Cory in the Parent Post, and on our Cory Facebook page: www.facebook.com/coryelementary.

Please make sure your email information is up-to-date and let the office know of any changes. I'm looking forward to a great year!

Rainy LaVenture