

Dear Parents,

 Welcome to second grade! I hope it will be a learning filled and enjoyable year for both you and your child. I wanted to provide you and your child with some helpful information about the first days of school and our upcoming year together.

 Thankfully, we have learned a lot from the previous school year that will help us all as we enter the new school year. Regardless of the unprecedented circumstances we have all been through, my love of teaching and learning alongside my students, your precious children has enabled me to adjust and embrace a new sense of normal here at McGinn School. We are in this together, as a partnership to provide the best possible learning environment for the students.

While the past years provided us with an opportunity to add a virtual component that enabled the students to technologically advance their skills at a much earlier age, please know the joys and activities of the physical class room encompasses so much more to engage and challenge your children. It also serves as an important reminder that in order for a student to succeed academically, each one must feel a sense of belonging and safety, even if it is a little out of all of our comfort zones. It is my primary mission to develop a satisfying social and emotional learning environment that encourages academic excellence for every student.

 I continue to learn about the new and improved tools at my disposal and look forward to sharing them with the students. Although each student will have an assigned I-pad, it is my intention to be teaching a proven second grade curriculum that successfully guides the students to grow as learners throughout the year.

*Now about me:*

I am delighted to be starting my twenty-second year teaching at McGinn School. I truly LOVE teaching second grade. I am looking forward to enhancing my teaching practice this year based on the combination of my experience teaching second grade, my graduate coursework regarding student learning styles, differentiated instruction and Cognitive Behavior Therapy, as well my application of Multi-sensory Reading Instruction for all levels of learners. Additionally, as a former McGinn parent, I am privileged to know firsthand about the wonderful learning journey your child is experiencing at McGinn.

* I am Dual Certified as an Elementary Education Teacher K-8 and Teacher of Students with Disabilities K-12, additionally I possess a Supervisor Certificate.
* I earned my Orton- Gillingham Dyslexic Therapist Multi-sensory Reading Teacher Certification from Farleigh Dickenson University.
* I completed my Master of Arts Degree in Special Education at Kean University in May 2011. My graduate thesis paper titled: *The Impact of Teacher’s Attitudes and Perceptions of Inclusion Students with Asperger’s Syndrome and the Effect on the Level of Achievement and Acceptance of Students with Asperger’s Syndrome* was accepted by the University.
* In the 2015-2016 school year, I was chosen to participate in a joint grant opportunity with Kean University, Plainfield and Scotch Plains Fanwood School Districts to study Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Building Mentoring Capacity. This opportunity has grown throughout the years to include mentoring pre-service teachers in our classroom, enabling me to continue growing in my skills working with my colleagues, new teachers and the students I serve in my classroom.
* Additionally, I have had multiple opportunities to present to my colleagues at In-District Workshops, The Annual Kean University Thought Leaders Conference and NJ Department of Education Equity in Action Conference.
* During the 2017-18 I was honored as Governor’s Educator of the Year for McGinn School. I am so very proud to have been recognized for working with students, colleagues and in the community for a job that I consider myself fortunate to able to do. I look forward to continue pursuing my passion for teaching with my new class this year!
* I am especially proud that in January 2020 I began teaching as an Early Childhood Education Adjunct Professor at Kean University, working with seniors in an Emergent Literacy class.
* I am pleased to be a partner with Kean University to mentor preservice teachers as they complete hours in their clinical studies on their journey to becoming educators.

Second graders will have snack every day. We will be following snack procedures that ensure safety for all of the students. Weather permitting, we will eat snack outside and all students will wash and sanitize their hands frequently throughout the day including prior to eating snack and lunch. Expectations regarding health and safety will be shared, modeled and reinforced to assist the students in their adjustment to these procedures. You can assist by providing a snack and lunch that your child can easily manage.

 While back to school shopping please pick up the items indicated on the second grade supply list. The students will be keeping their supplies in school inside of their hard pencil box. More information will follow. Additionally, please collect the following coins; send 8 quarters, 10 dimes, 10 nickels and 20 pennies in in a small ziploc bag that is easily accessible for your child as we will use them regularly with our math program.

 Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation. If you have any questions or concerns now or throughout the year, please feel free to email: Dorothy Lusk <*dlusk@spfk12.org**>,* leave a message on my voice mail or arrange a conference. I am very pleased to be sharing the second grade experience with your child and I am looking forward to a positive school experience as we work together.



 Sincerely,

 Mrs. Dorothy Lusk

