

# Welcome to 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Back-To-School Night at Riffenburgh!



Mrs. Romero & Mrs. Kimball

We are thrilled to have your child in our classrooms this year! The following information is provided to help make this a great year of learning for your child. If you have a question at any time during the school year, please do not hesitate to ask. ☺

## Additional Teachers/Assistants

There are several other staff members your child may work with this school year. This would include our literacy teacher, integrated services teacher, speech and language teacher, instructional paraprofessionals, CSU work study students, and parent volunteers. We work with all of these people to best meet the needs of individual students.

## Daily Schedule & Encore/Specials

A daily schedule is available on our website. Students have at least one special each day in the afternoon. Each week, first graders participate in a minimum of 1 hr. Art, 1 hr. P.E., 1 hr. Music,  $\frac{1}{2}$  hr. Spanish,  $\frac{1}{2}$  hr. Library,  $\frac{1}{2}$  hr. Computer. Please help make sure your child wears tennis shoes on PE days (Wednesdays & Thursdays). Make note of your child's library time to help ensure that library books are returned each week, so that your child may check out new books.

## Lunch

Students may choose to bring a lunch from home or to eat hot lunch served at school. There is a daily salad bar which includes fresh fruits and vegetables. If your child chooses to eat hot lunch, you can pay monthly or weekly if you prefer. Each child has an ID number to eat hot lunch. It is very helpful if you can help your child memorize and learn the ID number. Thanks!

## Weather

Please make sure your child comes to school each day dressed for the weather. Colorado weather can change quickly, and it is important for the students to get exercise outside. Your child is welcome to have a water bottle at school to keep at his/her desk. We want students to stay hydrated, especially during hot weather.

## Literacy

A new literacy curriculum, Treasures, was implemented last year. Treasures includes several components: 1. Reading (phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency) 2. Spelling (words that support the phonetic skill in reading) 3. Handwriting 4. Grammar and Punctuation 5. Writing (Personal narrative, narrative story, and expository). Treasures includes whole group instruction, small group instruction, independent practice, and read alouds. There are 10 weekly spelling words and one challenge word, which is optional.

First graders will also be learning "The Daily Five," which is a framework for teaching students to be independent in improving their reading and writing skills. The Daily Five allows for more differentiation of individual students.

Each student will also have a first grade writing journal to write about first grade events. In addition, the class will write The Daily News together each day to practice and reinforce skills. The Daily News will come home nightly in your child's homework book. Please read this with your child and discuss together.

AR (Accelerated Reading) is a school wide reading program at Riffenburgh. When your child is ready to begin AR, a folder and book will be sent home weekly. After your child has mastered the book and written a short book report, he/she will take a 5-question comprehension quiz on the

computer. Students earn points for each passed quiz. The students earn pins from the points. AR winners are announced each Friday afternoon.

### Math

The math curriculum is Everyday Math. Two math journals provide guided practice, independent practice, math game directions, and math tools. First graders use a variety of math manipulatives to assist in understanding (pattern blocks, geometry templates, hundreds charts, geoboards, counters, fraction pieces, calculators, and more).

There is weekly homework which is sent home on Monday, and it is due back on Thursday. There is a parent note on the homework so you can support your child's learning at home.

Fact tests (1 minute timed) will begin in February, so that your child can gain mastery in fact (+, -) power.

### Social Studies

The social studies standards for first grade are integrated into our IB units and literacy. Major topics/skills include National Symbols, Famous People in History, Cultural Celebrations & Holidays, Early Civilizations, Timelines and Sequencing Historical Events, and Map Reading.

### Science

There are three hands-on science units in first grade. The three FOSS kits cover skills in geology, chemistry, and biology. The three units are Pebbles, Sand & Silt, Solids/Liquids, and New Plants. There is more information about each of these, as well as fun activity links for your child, on our website. The New Plants unit has been integrated into an IB planner investigating plants around the world. The Solid/Liquids unit will be integrated into an IB planner investigating change in our world.

### IB

IB stands for International Baccalaureate. IB schools can be found in many countries around the world. IB schools focus on "international mindedness" and inquiry learning for students. A student who learns at an IB school at the elementary level has the choice, but is not required, to attend an IB middle school (Leshar) and/or an IB high school. Riffenburgh is in the process of attaining full IB status. As of fall, 2011, about  $\frac{1}{2}$  of all teachers have had IB training. There are 6 interdisciplinary themes that are taught each school year at each grade. Last year, first graders were excited to be a part of our first IB inquiry, "Plants Around the World." This school year (2011-2012), first graders will have the opportunity to experience inquiry learning in two new IB units, "The Role of Symbols in Cultures" and "Physical Changes in Our World." Due to this exciting direction for Riffenburgh, our school has an IB Coordinator and Spanish teacher this year.

### Friday Folders

Information from school and student work will come home in these every week. Look for our monthly newsletter also. Please return every Monday. Students receive a token upon return.

### Homework Book

The Homework Book is a school/home communication tool. It will be sent home daily (Monday-Thursday) and should be returned each morning. The Homework Book contains our Daily News, student homework, and daily notes. With your child, please check off and sign the Homework Book before returning each morning. The Homework Book also provides an opportunity for parents to communicate questions, concerns, or comments on a daily basis.

Daily homework consists of 1. Sharing the Daily News 2. Reading at least **20 minutes** each night (can include magic box books, library books, and AR) 3. Practicing weekly spelling words 4.

doing weekly math homework (sent home on Monday - Due on Thursday), In February, math fact studying will be added.

#### Book Orders

This is a great way to promote reading at home. They are sent home about each month. Please do not send cash. You can make checks out to Scholastic Books. You can also use a credit card if you order on-line.

#### Birthdays

Students may bring a healthy treat for classmates to celebrate a birthday. Each day, after morning recess (10:25), we have a healthy snack, which each student has contributed to. This is the time we celebrate individual birthdays. The birthday student is featured in the Daily News, has a special song sung to him/her, receives a special gift, and passes out the morning snacks. NO invitations should be handed out at school unless it includes every student in the class.

#### School Discipline

Focus in the classroom is on positive, appropriate behavior. As a part of the IB learning, students are taught to "reflect" and adjust behavior. Riffenburgh uses "PBS" (Positive Behavior Support) and "Time to Teach" to encourage responsible behavior. The Time to Teach Program includes the "redirect" and "refocus." The refocus form is used for minor incidents. The Office Referral is used for major incidents. PBS supports the character traits (ROCKS) by awarding "Gotchas" to students who demonstrate these traits. The "Gotcha" drawings for prizes are held each Friday. In addition, the class collects the "Gotcha" coins to collectively meet a class goal.

#### Toys

Please do not send toys with your child to school. Playground equipment will be provided by the school. Personal toys are easily lost or broken; therefore, they are best left at home.

#### Character Traits

Through the IB program, students will practice and reflect on the 10 traits of the Learner Profile (Principled, Open-Minded, Communicator, Reflective, Caring, Risk Taker, Balanced, Knowledgeable, Thinker, and Inquirer). Monthly assemblies focus on the IB Learner Profile and Riffenburgh character traits (ROCKS - Respect, Optimism, Cooperation, Kindness, Self-Control).

#### Volunteers

Room parents will be contacted by our school volunteer, Kris Cafaro. If you are interested in volunteering for the first grade, your help is welcomed. Specific needs include: 1. Copying 2. Filing 3. Friday Folders 4. Individual work with students during I/E time. Be sure to go through the district registration process.

#### Contact Us

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Thank you for sharing your children with us this year. Our objective is success in learning for every child. Please feel free to call, email, or write a note if you have any questions or concerns at any time!