Dear Fourth Grade Dragon Families,

We are thrilled to welcome your child to fourth grade at Elmcrest Elementary School! Fourth grade is an exciting time for students as they continue to grow academically and socially, and we are eager to embark on this journey with them.

Our motto for the 24-25 school year is *“Elmcrest Dragons – we show up: Everyday counts, every dragon matters!”* Consistent attendance lays the foundation for your academic success and future achievements. Every day you spend in school is an investment in your knowledge, skills, and opportunities. Stay committed, stay focused, and watch how each day brings you closer to your goals.

As we prepare for the upcoming school year, we want to share some important information and suggestions to help your child thrive in fourth grade at Elmcrest:

1. **Departmentalized Classes**: In fourth grade, students will have departmentalized classes, meaning they will have one teacher for English and Social Studies, and another teacher for Math and Science. This structure allows for focused instruction and collaboration among teachers. Students will see each teacher every day, providing them with a well-rounded learning experience.
2. **State Testing**: While students will no longer take the MAP test, they will continue to take the SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium) as part of their academic assessment. We will provide support and preparation in class, but you can help your child prepare by encouraging independent reading and writing over the summer.
3. **Independent Reading and Writing**: Require your child to engage in independent reading of chapter books over the summer. Discussing events in books with them will help enhance comprehension skills. Additionally, support your child's writing skills by encouraging creative writing, focusing on correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Fourth grade is a time when students continue to build their writing knowledge into longer essays, so practicing writing stamina and organization will be beneficial. Encourage your child to find a pen pal or engage in journaling as a way to decompress after the day and foster creativity. Journaling is not only a valuable academic exercise but also a therapeutic outlet for self-expression.
4. **Mathematics**: In math, students should ensure they have mastered adding, subtracting, and multiplying before entering fourth grade. They should also begin practicing division, as they will use these skills to manipulate decimals and fractions. Encourage discussions about word problems and introduce concepts of budgeting and financial responsibility to help your child develop practical math skills.
5. **Science:** This year, we'll dive into a variety of topics that will ignite your curiosity and inspire your imagination. Get ready to uncover the marvels of the natural world, from the tiniest atoms to the grandeur of the solar system through hands on experiments and exploration. Students will study ecosystems, the water cycle and properties of matter.
6. **Social Studies:** In fourth grade social studies, we're diving deep into the fascinating history and geography of our great state of Nevada! From the ancient peoples who first called this land home to the pioneers who shaped its future, we'll explore the stories, events, and landmarks that make Nevada unique. We will also be learning about different continents and countries to understanding the importance of global citizenship, get ready to broaden your horizons and gain a deeper appreciation for the world around us.

A huge part of upper elementary school is social development. Social and emotional development becomes increasingly significant during the preteen years, especially in fourth and fifth grade. At this stage, children are navigating more complex social dynamics and experiencing a wider range of emotions. Discussing emotions, feelings, and social interactions can greatly benefit preteens in managing this transitional period in their lives.

Encouraging preteens to share their feelings openly creates a safe and supportive environment where they feel heard and understood. By validating their emotions and teaching them that it's okay to feel a certain way, we help them develop emotional intelligence and resilience. Additionally, practicing ways to stay calm when experiencing frustration equips them with valuable coping skills that they can use throughout their lives.

Here are some strategies to support social and emotional development in fourth and fifth graders:

1. **Open Communication**: Create opportunities for open and honest discussions about emotions and feelings. Encourage your child to express how they are feeling and listen without judgment.
2. **Empathy and Perspective-Taking**: Help your child understand and empathize with the feelings of others. Encourage them to consider different perspectives and practice empathy in their interactions with peers.
3. **Conflict Resolution Skills**: Teach your child effective ways to resolve conflicts and disagreements peacefully. Encourage them to use "I" statements to express their feelings and to actively listen to others' perspectives.
4. **Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques**: Introduce mindfulness and relaxation techniques to help your child manage stress and stay calm when faced with challenging situations. Deep breathing exercises, guided imagery, and progressive muscle relaxation can be effective tools for reducing anxiety and promoting emotional well-being.
5. **Positive Self-Talk**: Encourage your child to practice positive self-talk and challenge negative thoughts. Help them build confidence and resilience by focusing on their strengths and accomplishments.
6. **Building Support Networks**: Encourage your child to cultivate positive relationships with peers and adults who provide support and encouragement. Having a strong support network can help buffer against the challenges of social and emotional development.

By prioritizing social and emotional development, we empower preteens to navigate the ups and downs of adolescence with confidence and resilience. By fostering a supportive and nurturing environment at home and school, we can help them develop the skills and mindset needed to thrive both socially and emotionally.

To support your child's summer learning, we have included practice pages in this packet, as well as a writing journal for them to use. Additionally, there are digital resources available for practice, but we also recommend printing them to enhance handwriting skills.

We are committed to ensuring that your child's fourth-grade experience is a success, and we look forward to partnering with you in their educational journey. Should you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Thank you for your continued support, and we are excited to see the incredible growth and achievements your child will make in fourth grade!

Warm regards,

Mrs. Kelly Brenner & Mrs. Mary Labuda 4th Grade ELA/Social Studies Teachers

Mr. Dan Scurlock & Mrs. Heidi Johnson 4th Grade Math/Science Teachers

Mr. Ryan Linton, Dean of Students

Mrs. Jessica Wilson, Principal