



September 2011 Newsletter

Fourth Grade

Ronald McNair Elementary

Welcome To (or back to) 4th Grade!
New Students and Staff Make this an
Exciting Time.

The year has just begun and it's shaping up to be a great one. Students are learning new routines. The 125 new fourth graders are enthusiastic about their classmates and teachers. And our new fourth grade teachers are excited to begin the new school year at McNair.

Meet our new teachers:

Aisha Bryant – Mrs. Bryant began at McNair last December, working as a long term substitute. This year she returns as a permanent teacher. She previously taught fourth grade in Baltimore, and is now our resident technology expert.

Kerri Hogan – Although she is a McNair veteran, Kerri (Bannon) Hogan is new to the fourth grade. Her years teaching both third and fifth grade gives her insight into where our students have been and where they need to be. We all hope to benefit from her experience.

Jessica Mollard – Ms. Mollard joins our staff from Washington Grove Elementary, an MCPS school in Gaithersburg. There she taught 4th and 5th grade inclusion. Here, she co-teaches the fourth grade inclusion class along with Kerri Hogan. She has already shared some of the lessons and strategies she used at Washington Grove with her McNair colleagues.

And completing the teaching roster are **Cory Anastasi, Caitlin Faunce** and **Stacey Shorter**. All three are veteran fourth grade teachers at McNair.

Science and Social Studies

We will begin our Life Science unit next week. Students will learn about the diversity of living organisms and how identifiable features of plants and animals are used to classify living organisms. **Students will need to bring two 2 or 3 clear 2-liter bottles for experiments by Friday September 9.**

In Social Studies, we will begin with the study of maps and the influences of geographical characteristics upon different cultures.

Reading

This year, fourth graders will increase their understanding of the different **literary genres**. In September, students will be reading books from the **fantasy** genre. We will also begin **nonfiction** reading. A primary goal of our reading instruction will be for students to learn to become more active readers who know how to use reading strategies to **monitor their comprehension**.

Math

Our first unit of math is **place value, data analysis, and geometry**. This month, students will learn to use place value through the millions. Parents can help by having students practice saying and reading large numbers, and by giving children opportunities to **recognize real life application** of large numbers. In data analysis we will cover the use of different graph types and statistical measures. Have children practice reading graphs that they see in their daily life.

In addition...

- Look for **Data Notebooks**, including **Learning Skills** on Fridays
- Students are to bring their **agenda** to school each day.
- Students are to return their signed **Data Notebooks** to school each Monday.

In fourth grade, your child will be taking on more responsibility for homework. Unless completion becomes an issue, your job is to provide:

- A **regular time** for homework (when you will be available for questions)
- A **regular place** for homework (quiet)
- Logical **consequences** for not completing it.

Students will have homework in reading, spelling, and math on Monday through Thursday. Students are also required to **read for at least twenty minutes** each night. Children should be spending **forty-five minutes** completing homework.

A Request from Teachers:

Please have your children refrain from distributing party invitations at school unless they plan to give an invitation to everyone in the class. There is virtually no way to prevent hurt feelings when invitations are given to some and not all. Our goal is to promote unity and teamwork.