

# Mr. Morkert's Class      2015-2016

**Welcome!** I base what happens in my classroom on the concept of mutual respect. This includes teacher/student interactions and student/student interactions as well. I consider each of you partners in your child's education and extend that respect to each of you.

I have tried to include all information I felt would be relevant and helpful throughout the year. This by no means indicates that I have covered everything. If you have questions/comments/concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. The best way to reach me is via email ([tmorkert@sd25.org](mailto:tmorkert@sd25.org)), but I can still be reached through voicemail (847-506-6999 x7946) if needed. Of course, a good, old-fashioned pencil to paper note works as well!

I will make every effort to respond promptly.

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As fifth graders, new expectations are being put upon your children. They are now the top dogs--the group which all the other students will look to for how they should act and what they should expect when they are in fifth grade. I set high expectations for my students, and hope you do as well. Children can, and will rise to (or conversely lower themselves to) the expectations that we set. At the same time, don't lose sight of the fact that these fifth graders are still 10 and 11 years old. Enjoy these years with your child...they only come once.



# Classroom Information

<b>Specials:</b>	Music	- Monday & Thursday
	Gym	- Monday & Thursday
	Art	- Friday
	LMC	- Tuesday

## Other goings-on:

Band Lessons	- TBD – times will rotate
Whole Band	- Tuesdays before school

**Parent Teacher Conferences:** Nov. 23 & 24, March 17 & 18

## Newsletter/Website:

Important information will be shared via my website. Please let me know if there is any information you'd like included. The site address is: [mrmorkert.weebly.com](http://mrmorkert.weebly.com) .

As well, our class has a Twitter account: @mrmorkert .



This account will be updated several times weekly with photos and details of what we are up to in room 255. Many of these tweets will be student chosen and designed...a daily snapshot!

**Snacks:** The kids can bring in a daily snack from home.



Our new school guidelines call for "fruit or vegetables "in their own skin". Though other snacks may be brought for lunch, the classroom will follow those guidelines. I appreciate your help and understanding. As well, our class is a "nut-free" class, so I've required that students only bring in snacks free of any nut products.

I also allow each child a water bottle (please only water) by their desk. My requirement is that the bottle stays under the desk and not on top, so as not to be a distraction (or a leaky mess!).

## Homework:

Homework is an integral part of fifth grade.

The homework assigned is a reinforcement to classwork and not doing the homework will result in a lesser understanding of that work. As a general rule of thumb, an evening's homework should be able to be completed in 45-60 minutes. This means 45-60 focused, undistracted minutes. Some nights, it may be more, many, it may be less. Please help provide a quiet, well lit place for them to be able to do their best job.

If your child is consistently taking more time than this, then the HW is not serving its purpose, and I'd like you to let me know. Homework is not serving its intended purpose if it is creating constant frustration.

Please, be there to help answer questions when they have them, but let the work reflect their effort. Please ask if you have any questions regarding this.

When homework is not turned in on time, they will attend "Finish It". This is a program designed as a natural consequence, in which students with either a missing or incomplete assignment will stay in during lunch recess. A pattern of not turning in homework can also result in a parent conference.

The assignments are written clearly on the board and reviewed daily, and should be recorded in the assignment notebook. I check these when I can, but ultimately, it is your child's responsibility to write down the homework and bring the notebook to and from school.

Though I don't ask for a reading log to be kept, it is my expectations that each student read *at least* 20 minutes a night.

If for some reason (and being a parent, I do realize this happens!) homework could not be completed, please send in a signed (by the parent) excuse. I will ask the student to still make up the homework if necessary.

# Classroom Expectations and Consequences

We come to school ready to learn.

This, from the Patton handbook, really says it all. Everything really falls under this. On our first day of class, I let the kids know that this classroom will be a safe learning environment for every student in the class. The expectations in the class need to meet that requirement.

As a class, we have discussed and agreed upon the following classroom rules:

- 1) Be kind
- 2) Work hard
- 3) Show responsibility
- 4) Ask questions
- 5) Be aware of your surroundings

Ignoring/not following expectations (after a reminder) will result in a missed recess (which includes an opportunity to reflect on your behavior) and a pattern of missed recesses will result in a parent phone call/conference.

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One of the keys to a successful classroom (as in life!) is flexibility. I know that things come up which may change some of our routines, or your routines! I'll let you know when changes happen here, and please let me know when changes happen for you that may affect your child at school.

I look forward to getting to know each of you and to a wonderful year with your children.

Sincerely,

Tim Morkert

# 2015-2016 Curriculum

## Literacy:

\*Core Curriculum & Guided Reading:

### ***School Wide Reading***

Reading Fundamentals has a central mission to **develop, expand,** and **enhance** the skills, strategies, and tools students can use to make meaning of and interact with text. Reading Fundamentals Units of Study exist inside a balanced literacy framework. Within this framework, there are opportunities to read to students (mentor texts), to read with students (shared texts), and to have students read independently (books and other texts at their independent reading levels).

## Communication:

\*The Writer's Express (WEX)

\*Words Their Way (Word Study)

## Math:

\*University of Chicago *Everyday Math*

Fifth grade will use the district adopted *Everyday Math* program. Mr. Morkert will teach the Advanced Math program while those in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade program will be instructed by either Mrs. Anderle, Mrs. Goumas, or Mr. Reckard. Please ask your child's math teacher for further details regarding math instruction.

The Advanced Math group will be using the *Big Ideas* math curriculum this year.

## Science

### \*Science Companion

In fifth grade, we will cover the following topics:

- \*Human Body Systems
- \*Energy
- \*Ecosystems

## Social Science

### \*History Alive

We will study the history of the United States, covering the events leading to the American Revolution, through Westward Expansion.

## Health

### \*Robert Crown Center

The Robert Crown Center will be presenting topics to all fifth graders on drug awareness, puberty, and "Life Begins". You will be made aware of each of these presentations prior to their happening and will have opportunity for further parent education if desired.