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## 1. Management Philosophy Paper

I, like the theorist William Purkey, believe that students are more engaged in their work and more successful when they feel comfortable in their environment. The classroom climate is initially the first thing a student critiques when entering a classroom. If that classroom is inviting, then the students will feel safe, therefore, helping the teachers more easily manage their students. Having that inviting welcome feeling in the classroom really is a significant asset in creating an environment with good classroom management.

After establishing a safe environment for the students, another part of management is a concept that is outlined by Fred Jones. He talks about the advantages of different ways of setting up a classroom. The best concepts to consider while doing this, is Mobility and Proximity. I want to set-up my classroom in the most productive way possible. Mobility allows the students and teachers to move about the room in a less distracting manner. Proximity is key because it allows the students to be close to the teacher making sure they are in the Red Zone(helping the problem of those who like to chat). With students in close proximity to the teacher, it helps to manage the students and keeps their learning in progress.

The final idea that I want to incorporate in the management of the classroom is Fisher and Frey's Gradual Release of Responsibility Module. The structure form of successful instruction is done through the "I do it", "We do it", "You do it together", and "You do it alone" theory. Teachers carry this out by starting with a focus lesson, guided instruction, collaborative activities, and finally sending students off independently. This concept is awesome because it gives the students the opportunity to take the responsibility for their learning. If expectations such as this are established at the beginning of the year than students will understand what their responsibilities are. This will help them keep an appreciation for learning, will give them direction, and keep them focused, resulting in a very manageable classroom.

## 2. Building Community

Parent involvement!! Example of a good parent letter:

Dear Team Bunting Parents,

Welcome to fourth grade and another exciting school year! I look forward to getting to know your children and working with them as they face the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

My goal is to help your children become responsible students and to instill in them a lifelong love of learning. I hold high expectations for my students, both in academics and behavior. I work hard at establishing a classroom atmosphere of respect, cooperation, and compassion. I expect my students to come to class each day prepared and ready to learn.

Parents are an integral part of each child's education. I look forward to working together to help your child succeed. Your part may include monitoring, encouraging, supporting and praising. However, being firm and following through with positive and negative consequences as they develop responsible habits may also be necessary.

In my classroom, students are seated in cooperative groups. The seating arrangements will be changed several times throughout the year. Activities throughout the day vary between cooperative group work, partners, and individual work. Individual accountability is always required.

Homework Expectations: Homework consists of math practice, nightly reading and often writing, work that was not completed in class, long-term assignments, such as projects or reports, and studying for tests. Students may have homework in different subjects on any given night. This requires them to become responsible and to organize their time and materials. The development of these skills is essential for success in school and everyday life.

Most students benefit from a designated time and a quiet place which is set aside for homework. If after two to three weeks of school, considerably more than 30 – 40 minutes is being spent on homework nightly, please contact me.

Assignment Books: To help your child have a successful academic school year, our PTA has provided each student with an assignment book/planner. All daily assignments are written on the board and explained orally. Students are required to write their assignments in their planner each morning. I ask that you go over your child's assignments with him/her each night. Students may also call our Homework Hotline to hear the day's homework and upcoming events. Students (and parents!) can call each evening to listen to what we have done that day, what the homework is for that evening, and to receive information about upcoming events. To hear the daily recorded message, you simply call 429-8000 and press extension 4085 when prompted. That should connect you to our classroom hotline.

Absences: After an absence, all assignments must be made up. The students have as much time to make up missed work as the number of school days missed. For example, if a student is

absent for two days, two days are allotted to make up the missed assignments. When students are absent, their work is put into their absent files. When the students return they should check their absent files and then see me with questions. Listening to the Homework Hotline is also a good idea. If you have materials at home, you might be able to get some work caught up before you come back to school.

Tests: Tests are given following each unit. Generally a "Test Alert" and review will be sent home one to two days before each test, so parents can help students study. A signature of a parent confirms that the student has studied for at least 15 minutes. When the students bring back their signed test alerts, they will receive an additional 2 percentage points on the test. When graded, tests or a test grade sheet will be sent home for a signature. Please return the signed test or grade sheet on the next school day

Sign and Return Envelopes: Each Thursday, I will be sending home your child's weekly work and other handouts in an envelope. Please review the work with your child, sign the SIGN and RETURN sheet dated for the week, and return the sheet and the envelope the next day. Students without missing work will receive a sticker and will be eligible for a reward drawing. Students with missing work are expected to complete the missing assignments as soon as possible. Depending on the assignment, students may receive partial credit for late work.

If you have any questions or a concern arises, please do not hesitate to call (429-8000 ext. 3446), send an email to ([buntingt@saline.k12.mi.us](mailto:buntingt@saline.k12.mi.us)) or write a note to me on your child's Sign and Return sheet. Good home/school communication is essential for a successful fourth grade year. I'm looking forward to working with you!

~ Mrs. Teri Bunting

### 3. Classroom Set-up

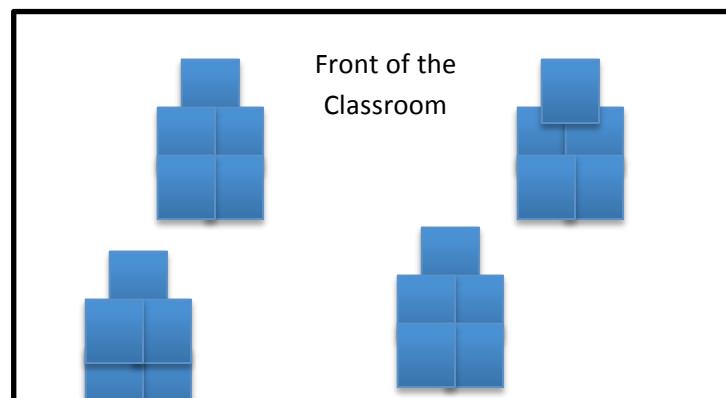
When deciding how to set-up my classroom there were a few factors that I had to consider if I wanted it to have an environment that was conducive to learning. I had to ask myself, "How are the kids going to stay focused and captivated in the lessons?" What I found was that most of it is the actual teaching and the strategies the teacher uses to engage their students, but, part of the classroom management can be solved by the way a teacher sets up his or her classroom.

The desks are arranged into groups. As a student I always preferred to be in tables because it helped me to learn when I could communicate and ask questions to my peers easily. As a teacher it not only provides an easy way to group students together and collaborates on different activities, but also provides safety and friendship for the students by creating team unity.

There are two key concepts that I used when designing my classroom and they are mobility and proximity. These two things are crucial in planning for a successful classroom. One of the main things that keep a class engaged in the classroom is the proximity of the teacher. There are three different zones that in the classroom; the Red zone, the Yellow zone, and the Green zone. The Red zone consists of the students that are seated close to where the teacher is standing or teaching. The Green zone are the students that are in the furthest distance away from the teacher. The Yellow zone are the students that are between the Red and Green zones. Students in the Red zone are usually actively listening to the teacher, whereas in the Green zone students tend to be off task, and in Yellow there are both things going on.

The teacher's proximity greatly impacts whether or not the students will pay attention so teachers have to be mobile when they teach. The set-up that I've arranged has made it easy for the teacher to move around and teach, not only in the front of the classroom, but also around and within the students. It also has all the students' desks really upfront and close to the board so it limits the space between teacher and student.

I think this set-up will be very beneficial because not only will the students be able to be involved in groups and teams in which they can help each other and be unified, but through proximity and mobility It also provides the educator a way to help keep the students actively engaged in the lessons that the teacher provides.



#### 4. Letter of Introduction

The Sweet life of Kindergarten!!

Dear Student and families,


Welcome to Kindergarten this year! My name is Ms. Natalie Belka and I have the pleasure of teaching your child this year. A little about me: I'm from West Valley City, Utah and attended Dixie State University. This is going to be my first year teaching and I am just thrilled to finally be in the classroom with all the students! They are the reason why I've worked to become a teacher.

My belief is that all students can succeed. I also believe that their success is based on a cooperative parent/teacher relationship. What we expect of these intelligent children is who they will become. I'll be looking forward to working with you throughout the year. Kindergarten is a growing time for these children. They grow socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually. Your involvement, interest, and enthusiasm will play a major role in the growth of your child. There is so much joy in learning!

**Times:** PM Kindergarten is held from 12:45-3:30 Mon-Thurs and 11:35-1:15 Friday. Your child should arrive no sooner than 5 minutes before school starts. They will need to enter through the front doors by the office. Pick up your child outside the fence by the Kindergarten playground. Please be on time. If you need to check your child out early, please do so at the office first. If your child is tardy, they will need to get a slip from the office before coming to class.

**Classroom Management:** I believe that my job as a teacher is to help provide a fun, uplifting learning environment. The system I've decided to use will produce this. I'm a huge advocate of positive reinforcement and children are as well. This year my class theme is revolved around sweets. As the class is doing well as a whole they will be able put a Gumball on our Gumball machine to fill it. The class will also be divided in teams. As team members, each team who earns 25 pts. for productive behavior will receive and Ice Cream scoop as they Scoop their way to a special day, in which they will have 20 minutes of preferred activity time. Then for individual accountability each student can earn "Brownie points" for following directions or for doing an act of service for a classmate. At the end of the week I will pull 3 names out of the brownie jar and they will receive a prize.

**Homework:** Homework folders will come home every Monday with a packet inside. Please read the cover sheet because it is full of information you need to know. Return the coversheet and the completed homework back in the homework folder each Friday. Do not send back the fold book. Keep



these at home in a special place where you can read often. Students will be bringing their work each day, so please send them to school with a backpack and check it after school.

**Reading:** We have 32 sight words that students need to learn to read and write. Please focus on sight word of the week that goes with the homework and review the ones learned often. Part of the homework cover sheet is reading to your child 5 nights a week, or they can read to you. Color in one picture for each night you read on the homework coversheet. Take home books will start in November. You must initial that your child can read the book or they will not be given a new one. Help make reading a fun special time for you and your children.

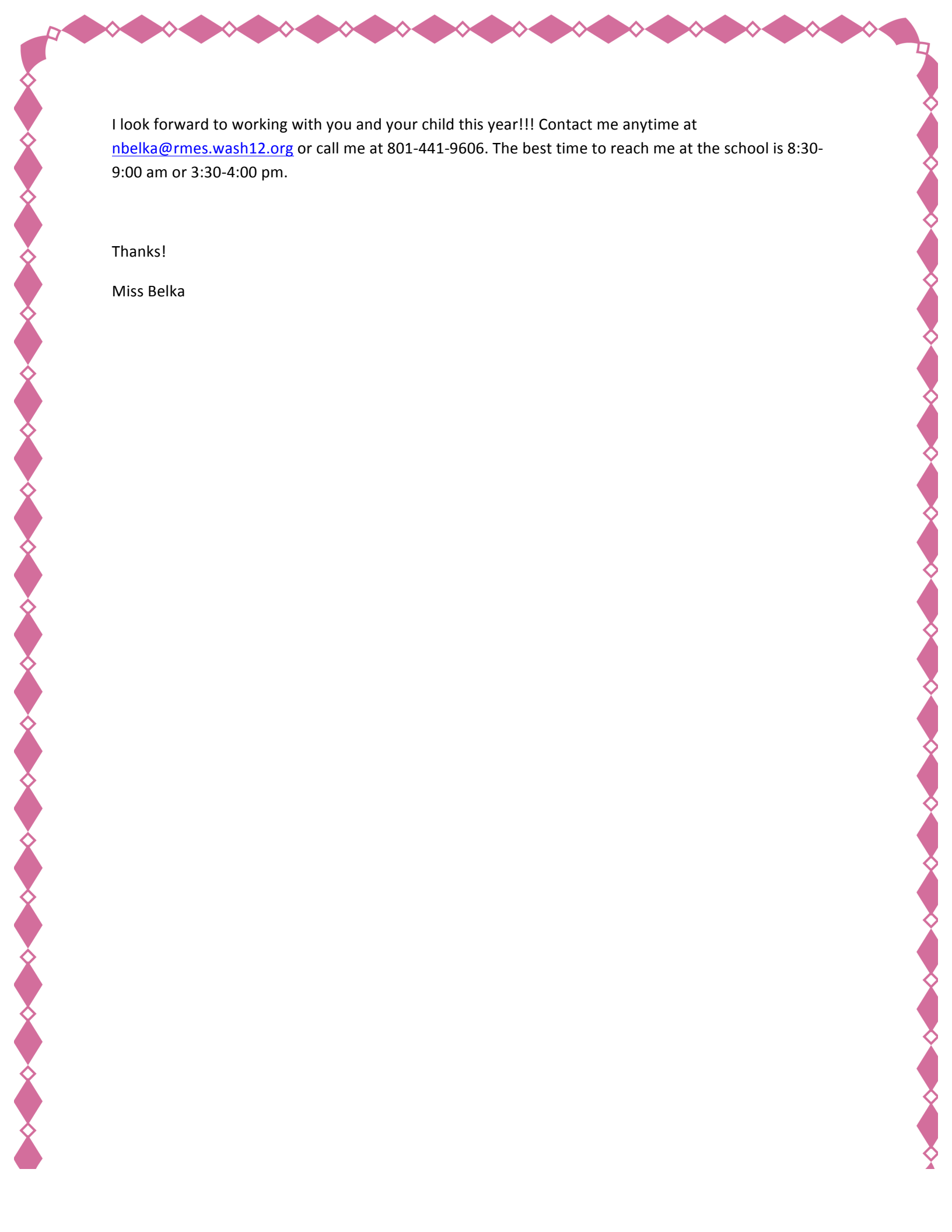
**Writing:** Students will have a lot of writing experiences this year. As part of your homework, please make sure they can spell the sight word(s) of the week. I also encourage you to get your child a journal (you can staple pages together) and have them write short sentences such as...I can \_\_\_\_\_ or I like \_\_\_\_\_ to start off. When writing unknown words, have them stretch out the sounds and write what they can hear.

**Math:** We have a new program this year called My Math. We will be talking about shapes, patterns, sorting, counting to 45, writing numbers to 30, simple addition, subtraction, etc... Please work on writing their numbers 0-30 correctly.

**Super Scientist:** This year each student will have the opportunity to be a Super Scientist. I will send home a book of experiments a week or two before their assigned Friday. Please choose an experiment to come and do with or in front of the class. Your child will do the experiment, and also be the class helper for the week.

**Birthdays:** If you would like to bring a treat for your child's birthday you are welcome too. Inform me beforehand and we will share during our recess time for our class snack.

**Book orders:** I will be sending home book orders form Scholastic. All orders this year will need to be placed and paid for online. This is a great resource for high quality books that are reasonably priced.



I look forward to working with you and your child this year!!! Contact me anytime at [nbelka@rmes.wash12.org](mailto:nbelka@rmes.wash12.org) or call me at 801-441-9606. The best time to reach me at the school is 8:30-9:00 am or 3:30-4:00 pm.

Thanks!

Miss Belka



## 5. Welcome Back Letter

# WELCOME BACK!

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome to 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade!! I'm so excited for the opportunity to meet and get to know all of you! A little bit about me is, my name is Natalie Belka and I was born in Salt Lake City, Utah. I grew up there and then moved down to St. George where I attended Dixie State College and graduated with my Associates in Science and Bachelors in Elementary Education(with and ESL endorsement). Although, I'm even more excited to get to know where you're from and all about YOU.

There are many things that are expected in this class, but that's what makes it so fun. I try to help the students find the Joy in learning. I want them to even at a young age have a passion and a desire to be educated. Most importantly though I want all my students to learn one specific thing from me, and that is they can accomplish anything they want if they believe in themselves. I want all my students to reach their potential and become whoever they want to become. Eleanor Roosevelt said it best when she said," The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." I stand by this quote and want to be the teacher to help students establish goals and to discover their dreams.

There are three key factors that aid in the students success in the classroom. These consist of hard work from the Teacher, Students, and Parents. For this to work we all have to work together. Every day I'll send each student home with a folder one side of the folder with say things that stay at home(this is usually notes and informational papers for parents), then on the other side it will say things to return to school(This usually will be homework or notes that parents need to have signed and returned). Communication is key and so I will also be sending out weekly letters so that we are always on the same page. I have an open door policy for both parents and students so feel free to contact me anytime, both day and night. This will also be the best way we can monitor each student's progress.

### ***Supplies to bring in the first day of school:***

- Notebook with paper in it.
- Pencil box with pencils, glue, and scissors.
- Signed note attached to assure that parents have read this through with their student.

### ***Upcoming events for the school:*** (All events will be in the newsletters each week)

- Math Night: Sept. 10, 2010
- Literacy Fair: Oct. 5, 2010
- Field trip; Pumpkin Patch: Oct 19, 2010
- Student Parent Conference: Nov. 3, 2010

Once again welcome to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Let's work together to make the best year ever!

Sincerely,

Ms. Natalie Belka  
nbelka@dixie.edu  
801-608-4404