

Fourth Grade

Mr. Nickel



We Learn. We Succeed.

Class Site

<http://www.snggrade4.com>



Welcome to fourth grade at White Eagle School! As part of the curricular areas we study, it is my goal to help your students become lifelong learners, to strive to do the best that they can, and to think outside of the box (higher order thinking skills). I hope to help them become responsible for their work, to be able to respect other students and work well with them, and to increase self-discipline. Your role as parents and partners in their education is vital. Thank you for your support.

Curriculum Focus



- **Reading**-comprehension and fluency is developed through the use of novel studies, Harcourt Reading selections, and Time for Kids.



- **Writing**-various modes of writing are taught through the Six Traits. In addition, Daily Oral Editing and Mountain Language enables students to improve their editing skills.



- **Spelling**-Weekly spelling test (Regular and Alternate) and bonus words.



- **Math**-*Everyday Mathematics*: Through this series students develop number sense, algebra and functions, measurement and geometry, statistics, data analysis, and probability. Also, *Otter Creek* improves students' automaticity of math facts.



- **Science**-Hands-on activities about: environmental factors, rocks and minerals, and the solar system. We will also cover electricity and magnetism, mystery powders, as well as, the circulatory and respiratory systems.

- **Social Studies**-Illinois, U.S. overview of government and economics. Also we will study of five regions of the United States in the text Regions.

Handwriting-D'Nealian Handwriting cursive skills are maintained with weekly spelling tests.

Speaking and Listening: Across all the subjects



Homework

Homework is usually assigned each evening, with the expectation that most nights it will take 30-45 minutes. It provides practice or extension of classroom work. Often there is a math assignment. Spelling lists may require additional home practice, and each child needs to be prepared for Thursday's spelling tests. Unfinished work or assignments needing correction are other tasks. If your child has no specific homework, please keep up this habit by using the homework time for reading or practicing math facts. Students are asked to note assignments in their *Student Planners* and carry these in their Take Home

folder. Study guides, by either student or teacher, will be sent home before a math, science, or social studies test.

In addition, it helps if your student has a good location in your home to study. Your assistance, when necessary, is greatly appreciated; however I would hope that most of the tasks can be completed independently. Finally, please remind your child to pack up their homework and *Student Planner* in their backpack the night before to assure a smooth transition from home to school in the morning.

Students who fail to turn an assignment in on time will receive a green paper called Yikes-O-Gram. This document serves as a reminder that your child needs to complete an assignment promptly.



Absences

If you know in advance that your child will be absent from school, please let me know a few days in advance. I will try to provide work for your child so they will not become too far behind in their studies. However, there will be times when the work cannot be sent home because of the nature of the assignment. If your child is ill, I will send homework with the student noted on the pink information card. Please use your discretion when having the child complete the assignments.



Specials Schedule

Monday	Music 3:00-3:25
Tuesday	PE 2:35-3:00
Wednesday	Music 2:35-3:00
	PE 3:00-3:25
Thursday	PE 3:00-3:25
Friday	Art 2:35-3:25



Computer Lab: Friday 10:55-11:40



Lunch:11:50-12:25



Star of the Week

Each student has a turn to be featured. You will receive a notice inviting your student to share photos, hobbies, souvenirs, artwork, or awards. This will be coordinated with Parent of the Week. If you cannot make your assigned week, it is your responsibility to find someone to switch with. A list is included in this packet.

Classroom Meetings

Each week we will have a class meeting. The students will discuss the good things that they see happening in the classroom, such as good behavior, friendliness, or one of the good character traits, as well, as concerns they might have. Each week the class will have a mayor who runs the classroom meeting, takes notes, and helps talk things out. As a class, we will come up with solutions to possible problems and see that these solutions are carried out.



Organization/Classroom Jobs

Our classroom is organized into five groups. Students will be working with members of their group when we do experiments, as well as, any other hands-on activities. Students will also be doing academic projects together, such as defining words, working on a presentation, or sharing what they have read. Each student is assigned a job each week and it is their responsibility to carry out this job to ensure the success of the class. Some of the classroom jobs include messenger (takes the attendance down to the office), classroom librarian (keeps the bookshelves neat), and mayor (helps lead classroom meetings). By having specific jobs, the students are responsible for doing their part to help the classroom.

When students are in their groups they will be practicing social skills. Learning social skills such as active listening, staying on task, and making sure everyone is contributing will really help students function in groups more effectively. These skills will also carry into the real world as the students get older.

Rules/Discipline

Our classroom is set up as a democracy; the students decided the classroom rules and signed the class rule chart. If a student does not follow the rules they will get a verbal reminder, then a warning which will result in he/she having to fill out the Oops! Book. If it continues they will fill out *The Form*. *The Form* is a way of getting the student to think about their actions and leads into a discussion between the student and myself. If the behavior continues I will call home to discuss the problem.

On the positive side, the students have individual group points they earn each day. The points are used to purchase privileges in the classroom. We will discuss as a class some of these choices from our menu of choices. As a class the students can earn paper fish to be put into a

fish bowl. The class will set a goal so that we can work towards something special. Individual students are rewarded for their good behavior by earning Caught Being Good cards. They can later use these to choose prizes out of the treasure chest. Together we work as team to help create a caring environment that teaches responsibility and life long manners.



Authentic Assessment Tasks

Throughout the year, students will complete authentic tasks that will test their comprehension of the material they have learned. In authentic assessment, students are asked to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills (Mueller, 2004). Students will be presented with a task in each subject at various times throughout the year. These tasks are student structured and to complete them students need to process, analyze, and sort information they have acquired. An example of an authentic task that will be done this year is the designing of a miniature golf course hole. Students will use the knowledge that they have learned in math to successfully plan, as well as design, a hole. These tasks provide the teacher with the opportunity to view students' learning and to note academic changes (improvements/areas of concern). The most important thing about these tasks is that there is not one correct answer. Students can be creative and truly show what they know. Rubrics will be attached to each task when it is presented and they will be used to assess the task when it is turned in.



Grading

District Scale

91-100	A
81-90	B
71-80	C
65-70	D
<65	F



On any major tests that have scores lower than 70%, I will stamp on a parent signature line. Please review this test with your student, sign it, and return it the following day. **Yikes-o-grams** are sent home if work is late. Likewise, please sign the **Yikes-o-gram** and encourage your

child to complete the assignment as soon as possible.

Reading: daily work, journals, projects, independent reading, conferences, assessment tasks

Math: daily work, math journal, study links, quizzes, unit tests, assessment tasks

Writing: final drafts, shorter pieces, editing, assessment tasks

Spelling: weekly tests (Thursdays), daily work, final drafts, contracts, assessment tasks

Science/Social Studies: daily work, projects, quizzes, tests, assessment tasks

Speaking/Listening: daily work, assessments



Books

Each child should always have a book available in his/her desk for independent reading. They can read books from the classroom library, their own books, or books checked out from the LMC. Please keep an eye out for books that are labeled "Nickel," and please return them to our classroom library when they are done being used.

Book club order forms will be sent home monthly. You are under no obligation to order. We add to our interest in reading and help our classroom library grow by this program. It takes about three weeks for the books to arrive after the orders are placed. Please make checks out to the company listed on the book order that you receive.

Enrichment

The Prairie, Expert Files, Environmental Education, Story Telling, and State Fair are enrichment units within our curriculum. Some students will have an opportunity to work on a variety of special enrichment projects. The topics offered, as well as the student groups, will change throughout the year.



Field Trips/Special Field Trips/ Special Programs

Fermilab Prairie	September 13
Naper Settlement	December 1
Raptor Program	TBD
Expert Files	March
State Fair	May 9

Supplies

Please replenish notebook paper, notebooks, and pencils as needed; they run out quickly.

Absences

If you know ahead of time that your child will be absent, (say for an appointment with the dentist, etc.) please send a note with the dates as soon as possible. Make-up work only covers parts of the class work done, but it will help the student stay on track with the rest of his/her classmates. Thank you.



Contact Information

If you ever have a concern or a question, please feel free to call me at 375-3635. I will try to call you back after 3:35 P.M..



4N's Schedule 2011-2012



	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:50-9:10	Morning Work—Mountain Language				
9:10-9:40	Guided Reading	Guided Reading	Guided Reading	Guided Reading	Guided Reading
9:40-10:40	Reading	Reading	Reading	Reading Spelling Test	Reading Spelling Pretest
	Otter Creek Snack	Otter Creek Snack	Otter Creek Snack	Otter Creek Snack	Otter Creek Snack
10:40-11:40	Writing	Writing	Writing	Writing	Writing
11:50-12:25	Lunch/ Recess	Lunch/ Recess	Lunch/ Recess	Lunch/ Recess	Lunch/ Recess
12:25-12:35	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud
12:35-1:35	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
1:35-2:35	Science/ Social Studies	Science/ Social Studies	Science/ Social Studies	Science/ Social Studies	Science/ Social Studies
2:35-3:00	Class Meeting	PE	Music	Word Wizard/Dr. Lightyear	Art
3:00-3:25	Music	Star of the Week	PE	PE	Art
3:25-3:35	Afternoon Dismissal—Check assignment notebooks, put up chairs, get ready to go home. Clean up the floor				



Star of the Week



August 22-26	Mr. Nickel
August 29-September 2	Emily K.
September 12-16	Donna L.
September 19-23	Gavin M.
September 26-30	Shelby N.
October 3-7	Priya P.
October 17-21	Christopher P.
October 24-28	Muskan S.
October 31-Nov. 4	Abigail S.
November 14-18	Lucia T.
November 28- December 2	Sarah T.
December 5-9	Joshua T.
December 12-16	Matt W.
December 19-22	Sriya A.
January 9-12	Antonio A.
January 17-20	Danielle C.
January 23-27	Hannah C.
January 30-Feb. 3	Dominic C.
February 6-10	Melanie D.
February 27-March 1	Daniel F.
March 12-16	Erik J.
April 2-5	Krishan K.
April 9-13	Adil K.
April 16-20	Shiyeon K.
April 23-27	
April 30-May 4	
May 7-11	