Dear Fifth Grade Dragon Families,

We are delighted to welcome your child to fifth grade at Elmcrest Elementary School! Fifth grade marks the culmination of your child's elementary school journey, and we are excited to support them as they embark on this important year of growth and learning.

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 fifth grade at Elmcrest:

1. **Departmentalized Classes**: In fifth grade, students will have departmentalized classes, similar to fourth grade. 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, providing students 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, and let you know when the testing will be in Spring 2025.
3. **Independent Reading and Writing**: *Require* your child to engage in independent reading of chapter books over the summer. Discussing the books with your students will help enhance comprehension skills. Additionally, support your child's writing skills by encouraging creative writing, focusing on correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Fifth grade is a time when students continue to build their writing knowledge into longer essays. In school, writing stamina and organization will be required. Encourage your child to find a pen pal or engage in journaling to foster creativity as 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, multiplying, and dividing *before* entering fifth grade. They will further their understanding of using operations with whole numbers, fractions, and decimals. They will be introduced to basic algebraic computation problems where they will need to find the missing variable. Pose real-world math problems at home to enhance their learning and understanding of practical math skills.
5. **Social Studies**: Students delve into the rich history of the United States, from early exploration and colonization to the founding of the nation and its development over time. They learn about key events, individuals, and movements that shaped American history, including the American Revolution, westward expansion, the Civil War, and the Industrial Revolution. Students also learn world history and geography, exploring different civilizations, cultures, and regions around the globe. They will learn about the principles of democracy, the structure and function of government, and the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
6. **Science**: Science is a very big topic in 5th grade! The standards cover a diverse range of topics aimed at expanding students' understanding of the natural world and scientific processes. Students will learn about physical science covering matter, energy, light, heat, sound and electricity. They will also learn about life science which covers living organisms and their environments. Earth and Space science will be covered where the students will learn about Earth's layers, geological processes, and the rock cycle. They also investigate the water cycle, weather patterns, and climate. Additionally, students explore the solar system, including the movement of celestial bodies and the Earth's position in space. They learn about the engineering design process, technological innovations, and the role of technology in society. Topics may include simple machines, robotics, and the design of solutions to real-world problems. The culmination of science learning for elementary school happens at The Great Basin Outdoor School science camp for our 5th grade students!
	1. **Science Camp**: One of the highlights of fifth grade is the Great Basin Outdoor School, a three-night, four-day sleep-away science camp in Lake Tahoe. Throughout the year, students will prepare for this exciting experience, which provides hands-on learning opportunities in a natural setting. We will hold multiple meetings throughout the year regarding camp.

A large part of upper elementary school is social development. Social and emotional development becomes increasingly significant during the preteen years. 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.

1. **Self-Awareness**: Encourage students to develop self-awareness by helping them identify and understand their emotions, strengths, and areas for growth. Activities may include journaling, reflection exercises, and mindfulness practices. Teach students strategies for managing their emotions, behavior, and impulses effectively. This may involve teaching relaxation techniques, conflict resolution skills, and goal-setting strategies.
2. **Social Awareness**: Help students develop empathy and an understanding of others' perspectives and experiences. Encourage them to recognize and appreciate diversity, practice active listening, and demonstrate kindness and compassion towards others.
3. **Relationship Skills**: Teach students how to build and maintain healthy relationships with their peers, family members, and other adults. This may involve teaching communication skills, teamwork, cooperation, and problem-solving strategies.
4. **Responsible Decision-Making**: Equip students with the skills to make responsible and ethical decisions in various situations. This may involve teaching critical thinking skills, considering the consequences of their actions, and understanding the impact of their choices on themselves and others.
5. **Emotional Regulation**: Provide students with strategies for regulating their emotions and coping with stress and adversity. This may involve teaching deep breathing exercises, positive self-talk, and mindfulness techniques.
6. **Resilience**: Help students develop resilience and perseverance in the face of challenges and setbacks. Encourage a growth mindset, where students understand that mistakes are opportunities for learning and growth.

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 fifth-grade experience is a success, and we look forward to partnering with you in their educational journey. We are excited to see the incredible growth and achievements your child will make in fifth grade!

Mrs. Kelly Brenner & Mrs. Mary Labuda 5th Grade ELA/Social Studies Teachers, Mr. Ryan Linton, Dean of Students

Mr. Dan Scurlock & Mrs. Heidi Johnson 5th Grade Math/Science Teachers, & Mrs. Jessica Wilson, Principal