

August 2015

Dear 4th Graders and Families,

My name is Mr. Bruff and I'm looking forward to being your 4th grade teacher! This will be my third year at the Bowman School and I am so eager to have a great year. I will ensure that every student continues learns in a safe environment. I will also encourage every student to push themselves to the top of their academic comfort zone and try something new.

This school year will be filled with interesting themes. We will study crayfish, research the many regions of the United States and provinces of Canada. We will read many different genres in our reader's workshop. This year we will build upon what you have previously learned in math to begin studying decimals and algebra. You will also be doing lots of writing in different genres. We will do lots of stories, essays, poems, and personal narratives.

In fourth grade, there will be daily homework Monday-Thursday nights. This work will typically be independent reading, assigned writing in a reader's or writer's notebook, and math practice. Please begin to think now about where and when these 45 minutes of work will take place each night. A quiet, organized space will maximize your child's ability to complete the work independently. This year the expectations is that your child will be learning: to manage time, be more organized, and how to fulfill responsibilities by completing these assignments.

The first assignment you will have this year will be to write a short story about your favorite memory the summer you entered the fourth grade. You will need to bring this to school with you on the first day. You will see my story at the end of the letter. Please be sure to remember to include details that make your story as interesting, unique and exceptional as you are! You can include who you were with, what made the event special, why it was different from everything else you did, and your thoughts and feelings.

If you would like to contact me, my e-mail address is cbruff@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us. I will begin to check this e-mail regularly the week of August 24. Please also check out the class website for more information about the upcoming school year, mrbruffsclassroom.weebly.com. I look forward to meeting you all on the first day of school, Tuesday, September 1st! I hope that you enjoy the rest of your summer!

Sincerely,

Chris Bruff

Please turn over for a list of school supplies and my story.

****School Supplies****

Personal Supplies:

- a pack of colored pencils of the student's choice
- a homework binder of your choosing to keep your homework and academic planner organized
- Healthy (no candy) snacks
- AN INDEPENDENT READING BOOK
- (1) pencil case
- Several #2 pencils or mechanical pencils, and an eraser

The Sore Cut Home

The summer I entered fourth grade seemed like yesterday even though it was a long, long time ago. Both of my parents decided that they would take my older brother, Joshua, myself, and my younger sister, Allison, with them to Jamaica. Spending time in Jamaica may sound wonderful because the beaches are beautiful, people are pleasant, and the food is fantastic. That is exactly what I thought until my mother told me we were going to be going into the mountains where they both grew up and we'd all be in summer school Monday through Thursday.

So that summer my siblings and I woke up in the morning, took the bus to school and walked home in the afternoon. One day while walking home in the blistering sun, my brother suggested we take a shortcut through a cactus field. He suggested that we walk sideways down the rows so we did not get pricked by the sharp points of each cactus. As we began walking through the field we quickly learned that it was going to be a sore cut instead of short cut. The short cut ended up taking longer than walking around because we stopped numerous times to take out the tips of the cactus. I encouraged my brother to keep moving forward with one step. I knew that with each step we took, that would mean we were one step closer to home.

Can you imagine what that looked like? Could you imagine what it felt like? What would you have done if the sun was beating down on you and there was a short cut home? This memory was easily my most favorite memory that summer. That day my brother looked at me when we were halfway through the field and said, "Chris, just keep talking. It is stopping me from quitting." That day I was proud that my big brother looked up to me because I was helping him take small steps forward.