



4th Grade Rocks

Robert H. Down Elementary School

August 10, 2011

Dear Families,

Welcome to Room 2 and to 4th grade! I can hardly believe another school year has begun. This is a wonderful grade to teach and I am very pleased to be your child's teacher. I expect to have 27 bright and energetic students in my class this year. The beginning of school is an exciting time for our children. It means making new friends, taking part in activities, and learning new skills.

Together we have a common goal – to help your child be a successful, well-adjusted learner. As a parent, you know the most about your child. I look to you to help me create a safe and supportive learning environment for your child. Fourth grade is an important year of transition and growth. The curriculum is exciting and I look forward to a wonderful year working together, with you and your children. Please review the information in this newsletter carefully, as it offers insight into our classroom and how the year will proceed.

YOUR TEACHER – My affiliation with P.G.U.S.D. started over 27 years ago. I began teaching at Robert Down in 1988 and have always felt at home here. My teaching career has been focused mainly on the 4th and 5th grades. I took a two year leave of absence from 1993-1995 to teach at the American School of Las Palmas, in Gran Canaria, Spain. It was there I met my husband, Daniel, whom you and your children will have the opportunity to get to know. Daniel is a middle school teacher in Watsonville and enjoys his involvement and support in our P.G. community. These two years abroad (teaching both 3rd and 5th graders) offered a tremendous opportunity for my growth as a teacher and as a person. I bring a wealth of experience and an abundance of enthusiasm. Since my return from Spain, I have been teaching 4th grade at Robert Down. Outside of school I love to read, bike with my family, take long hikes with our dog Cooper, enjoy time at the beach, and share in the joys of my girls' lives.

My two children have attended P.G. Schools; Sophia is in 5th grade now at RHD and Soraya is attending York School as an eighth grader. Having Soraya attend PGMS for her 6th and 7th grade years has helped to shape my educational and social goals for your children. Our family appreciates the high quality of education that PG schools offer, and I will do my best to see that your child gains a solid, standards-based foundation while he or she enjoys fourth grade.

HOMEWORK – In 4th grade I will assign nightly homework, which may be a change for your children. District policy states that fourth graders should have approximately 40 minutes of homework each evening, which includes independent reading. We have wonderful homework calendars/agendas to assist with organization. These agendas are also used in the 5th grade and throughout Middle School. Homework is expected to be handed in on the morning it is due. I encourage you to review your child's binder on a daily basis, as some assignments are due the following day and others are due a week to a month later. One of the skills I want each of my 4th graders to learn is to be responsible for themselves, so students need to hand in their own homework and projects. Remember: The study skills your children develop today will remain with them for a lifetime.

DAILY SCHEDULE –

Mrs. Levy's 4th Grade Daily Schedule

Time	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:45 - 9:05	Daily Language/ Math	Daily Language/ Math	Daily Language/ Math	Daily Language/ Math	Daily Language/ Math
9:25 - 9:55	CA History	CA History	Language Arts	PE	CA History
9:55 - 10:05	<-- Recess -->				
10:05 - 11:05	Language Arts	Language Arts (10:05-11:35)	Library	Science	Language Arts (SpellingTest)
11:05 - 12:05		Music (11:35)	Math		Math
12:05 - 12:50	<-- Lunch Recess -->				
12:50 - 1:55	Math	Math	Computer Lab	Math	Language Arts
1:55 - 2:05	<-- Recess -->			1:55 P.M. Dismissal	Recess
2:05 - 2:40	PE	PE	PE		PE
2:40 - 3:10	Typing ~ Study Skills / Review	Typing ~ Study Skills / Review	Typing ~ Study Skills / Review		Typing ~ Study Skills / Review

BOOK REPORTS – Yes, we assign them in 4th grade. Usually the book report is due at the end of the month, and, most frequently, it is project based. Exact directions are discussed with students and all information regarding the assignment is handed out about three to four weeks before the project/report is due. These assignments are also posted on our class website. Please see our monthly Calendar page. Look in your child’s binder by the end of August for directions on our first book report of the year. Talk to me, our RHD librarian, or to the PG Librarian if your child needs assistance choosing an appropriate book for upcoming reports.

INDEPENDENT READING PROGRAM & BOOK ORDERS – Part of our school-wide curriculum is our recreational Otter Reading Program. The 4th graders are expected to read two fifty-page chapter books each month (or a book of approx. 100 pgs.) and keep an ongoing record of books completed on their Otter Reading Sheet found in their binder. Another great resource for books, other than the library, is the monthly book orders through Scholastic. Most books are paperbacks, and prices are as low as \$1 a book. Students can hardly wait to see the red and white box show up in our classroom for distribution. Even the kids who haven’t ordered are in for a treat because of

the classroom bonus points that are used to build our classroom library. The first book order forms are going home next week and will be due back the following week. Although you may order from more than one catalog, please send in one check, payable to Scholastic. Cash is also accepted. You may also order online and I will forward directions to you with the initial order.

VOLUNTEERS – Parent volunteers are welcome and needed. Our two greatest needs in 4th grade are for field trip chaperones and for helpers on a weekly basis in the classroom. Most trips are either walking or by private vehicle due to cost, and most are 9 or 10 AM to noon. However, we do have a few excursions that last the entire school day. If anyone is interested in being a room parent (or co-room parent), please contact me as soon as possible, as your involvement makes a difference. I will have a sign-up sheet at Back to School Night (August 24) for this and other volunteer opportunities, including: one-on-one assistance with students, art docent, correcting papers, copying papers, field trip chaperone, etc. Please don't be shy! If you wish to begin helping in our room prior to Back to School Night just let me know.

IMPORTANT UPCOMING EVENTS:

LIBRARY FIELD TRIP – Our first field trip of the year will be a walking trip to the public library on Friday, August 27th. Ms. Lisa, the children's librarian, will do a special book talk to motivate our students about reading. We will allow time for the students to check out books. We will not make a return trip until later in the school year, so please remember to return them on your own. Locate your child's library card or fill out an application for a new one. *Please apply for a Library card now so your child will be able to check out books during our visit.* You can renew books by phone by calling 648-5760 (or you can renew online). We will need a few chaperones for this trip. If you can join us from 10:15 until 12:00*, please let us know. This is one of our shortest field trips.

*If our volunteers are available to enjoy a picnic lunch with the class at Jewell Park next to the library, we can stay through lunch and enjoy some fun together.

BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT – Line up your babysitters now! It is on Wednesday, August 24th, starting at 6:30 PM. Teachers will explain the year's program, curriculum, goals, and expectations. I hope all of you are able to attend this important ADULT orientation.

WALK WITH PRIDE – Keep your eyes on the calendar for Pacific Grove's annual Walk with PRIDE fundraiser. This is *THE* fourth grades' major fund-raising event for our field trips and other special needs. Your family's participation and support are greatly appreciated! We all have very busy schedules; in lieu of participating, you may make a direct, tax deductible, donation to PG PRIDE by teacher name. The district/site cutbacks in supplies and monies for field trips (and transportation) are very real; any financial donations you can afford are GREATLY appreciated. More details to follow at Back to School Night.

PICTURE DAY – Picture Day will be Thursday, September 22nd. Smile!

MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM – Room 2 is scheduled to visit the Aquarium, and participate in a lab activity, on the morning of Tuesday, September 20th. We are hoping for a glorious fall day so we can enjoy a walk to and from the Aquarium. We'll bring our lunches as well. Chaperone sign-ups will be on Back to School night.

BUTTERFLY PARADE AND BAZAAR – Saturday, October 1st, is the annual Butterfly Parade and Bazaar. Traditionally, 4th graders dress as pioneers or gold miners in conjunction with our California history studies. Students will need to begin thinking about their appropriate costumes

for this special parade through downtown P. G. I have an abundance of props and costumes which may be borrowed, for use during the parade, if your child is in need of some help putting his/her costume together.

PARENTS' HOMEWORK – (The kids love this one!) There are two homework assignments for you this week. First, please go through all the paperwork that your child brings home today. If you have not already signed our Permission to Publish form, please be sure to return this to me as soon as possible, so that I may begin posting pictures and activities on our website. The second assignment is to locate your child's PG Public Library card or fill out an application for a new one. If you aren't sure about the status of an old card, you can check by phoning the library at 648-5760. Please be sure to send the card to school the day of our field trip to the library.

CLASS WEBSITE – Please check on a regular basis our class website: www.4thgraderocks.org. This is my best source for school-to-home communication aside from e-mail. I post newsletters, a detailed calendar with links to many of the events, assignments, and activities throughout the school year, pictures, and so much more.

With enthusiasm and a warm eye for accomplishment, I look forward an upcoming year rich with learning and academic exploration for your child. I look forward to seeing you all the evening of August 24th for *Back to School Night*. Please feel free to call or drop me a note should you have any questions.

Welcome back to school!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Levy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karen Levy
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Our Class Web Site: www.4thgraderocks.org