Hello, Parents and Families!

Welcome to Cawson’s Crew for 5th Grade

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to fifth grade! My name is Robert Cawson and I am going to be your child’s fifth grade homeroom teacher this year! I am extremely excited that your child is going to be in my class! I will tell you a few brief things about myself. This is my seventh year of teaching and I am so incredibly excited to be in the East Lansing Public School District at Glencairn Elementary. I earned my bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education from U of M Flint in 2012. While there, I also earned highly qualified status to teach language arts, science and social studies. Two years ago, I earned my master’s degree in public administration and school leadership. Prior to my time here, I spent four years in the Swartz Creek Community School District teaching. I spent my first two years teaching first grade and then the last two years teaching fourth grade. Even before that, I student taught third grade in the Swartz Creek Community School District. Having a chance to teach a little bit of everything has truly helped me to dig deeper into my own instructional practice and understanding. Every day I strive to not only become a better educator, but a better leader both inside and outside of the classroom. Again, I am so thrilled to be in a district that has embraced me with open arms, and specifically a school with such a positive culture of learning and family-like atmosphere. I look forward to working with so many great students and their families!

It is my goal to have EVERY child in our class have a successful year. To do this, I must get to know each of them individually and as a group so that I can see what their needs may be and what unique talents they offer. I want all my students to feel welcome and comfortable within the classroom walls. Fifth grade is an exciting time as children embark upon new adventures in the world of learning and soon prepare to leave for middle school. I am looking forward to a very exciting and productive year working with your child. I will strive each day to make learning an engaging and enriching process for them. However, I need your help in making this year as successful as it can be. I believe that you and I are a team working together to help your child develop emotionally and academically. You are the most important person in your child’s life and you are also a teacher in their life. I know if we work together and communicate, your child will have a very successful year!

I am a firm believer in active communication. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please discuss them with me. Email is the easiest way to do so, but a written note or phone call also works. I will do my best to respond in a timely manner. I also like communicating in person. Sometimes communicating "virtually" can be misleading and more can be achieved with face to face interaction. I truly want you to be informed daily of what your child is doing at school. Thus, my students will be taking home their take home binders/planners and I will have a classroom website for you to explore. When you see these binders/planners, please make sure your child is removing any necessary contents and sending back anything needed to be sent back.

**​Classroom Supply List:**

Thank you for all your generously donated classroom supplies! It is greatly appreciated! I have also gone out and bought many materials that will be sufficient enough to get every child started for the year. I will say to make sure each child has his or her own backpack big enough for their binder to fit and take home daily. I would also appreciate if anyone could ever bring in the following materials as needed for the **WHOLE** class to share.

**​Classroom Wish List:**
1. Kleenex – your child would greatly appreciate store-bought Kleenex as the school kind is not so gentle on their faces!
2. Erasers (pencil tops and jumbo pink)
3. Ziploc bags (all sizes)
4. Paper towel
5. Paper plates and napkins
6. Plastic cups
7. Plastic spoons, forks and knives
8. Ear buds (headphones) – I am allowing each student to have ear buds in class for our technological devices as they will be stored and for individual use only! They must be ear buds – if you do not have any that is fine! I have many extras to supply.
**9. Pencils (#2)**
10. Mechanical Pencils
11. Sticky notes
12. Miniature dry erase markers
13. Pens
14. Highlighters
15. Markers
16. Colored Pencils
**17. Composition Notebooks**18. Spiral Notebooks
19. Address Labels
20. Sharpies
21. Clipboards
22. Printer paper
**23. Lined paper**
24. Graph paper
​25. Pencil case

Anything you can give at various points of the year would be very much appreciated! Of course, nothing is required!

**Daily Mail**: Each student will be assigned a mailbox. Mail will be distributed daily. Absent students will receive assignments in their mailbox as well. However, students may not have mail to bring home every day.

**Snack:** I will allow students to have healthy snack items. I will allow them to eat these during their **independent work time** when they are hungry. If you choose to not send your child with a snack, that is perfectly fine but make sure they understand that this is your choosing. Please, only nutritional foods such as fruit, cheese, crackers, pretzels, or yogurt are allowed. PLEASE DO NOT send in candy, sweets, sandwiches, lunchables, etc for snack time. Also, **I only allow water in the classroom**. Your child will be able to keep their own water bottle in the classroom if they choose.

**Classroom Management** You will be sent another sheet with this letter that has my classroom management system attached. It can also be found on my website. Please sign it and send it back.

**Reading:** Reading is incredibly crucial at every grade level and we want all our students to become good readers. Of course, there will be lots of reading instruction taking place within the classroom every day. This instruction will work on identifying your child’s reading needs so that we can teach different reading strategies to make all our students become better readers. Please notice that reading should not only take place in the classroom. **It should also take place at home**. Students should be reading at home daily if at all possible for on average 20 minutes a night at least; including weekends (200 minutes every two weeks at least). Students who struggle with reading will be provided accommodations such as having a reading log which will stay in their binders until it is time to turn them in every two weeks.

**Dismissal:** All students should be notified of what means of transportation they are getting to and from school with. However, I know this can be chaotic at the beginning of the year, so I will do my best to make sure everyone gets to where they need to be. If your child actively rides the bus and you are picking him up on a specific day, please inform me **and the office** with an email, phone call or note stating this. For those who are picked up, please wait for them at the student pickup location. Again, please communicate with me or the office about any transportation concerns.

**Volunteers:** As I have mentioned, I believe in active communication. However, I also firmly believe in getting as much help inside the classroom as possible. Thus, volunteers are welcomed into our classroom. I would just ask that we discuss a plan and an efficient time slot for you to come in. More information will be coming home later about volunteer opportunities. I love the idea of having parents in the classroom at times, as it not only makes the workload on me easier, but it gives the students a different type of engagement that is critical to their learning and growth as a student. If we work together, this year will be wonderful!

If you have any further questions or concerns, please let me know!
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Sincerely,
Mr. Robert Cawson
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