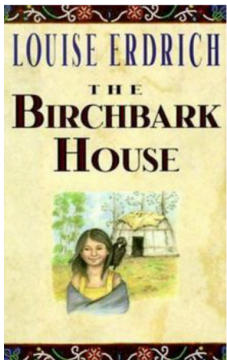


Peek at the Week

Monday, October 19, 2026

From the Classroom

We had a wonderful time exploring the Portland Art Museum! Students had the opportunity to experience art up close, including Indigenous art and exhibits highlighting the Pacific Northwest. It was a great chance to look closely, ask questions, and think about how artists use their work to share stories and express ideas. A big thank-you to our parent chaperones for taking the time to join us and help make this field trip a success. We appreciate your support!

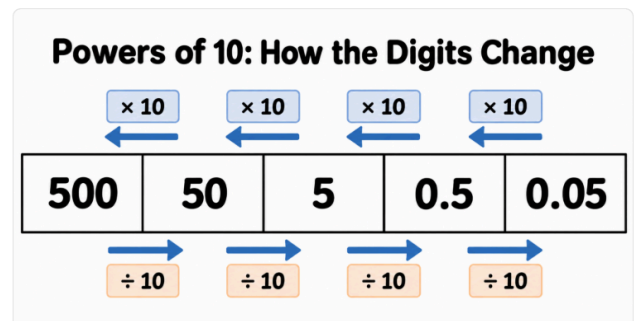


ELA

As we read *The Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich, students are exploring how the Ojibwe people used the natural resources of their homeland to meet their needs for food, clothing, and shelter. Working collaboratively, students gathered evidence from the text, identified important details, and practiced explaining what the evidence reveals about the relationship between people and their environment. Students will use this shared research to support their own informative paragraphs, combining text evidence with their own explanations.

Math: Decimals and Powers of 10

Last week, we began our work with decimals, an important fifth-grade math topic. Students are building their understanding of decimal place value as a foundation for adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing decimals. This week, we will continue exploring place value by working with powers of 10. Students will investigate how multiplying and dividing by powers of 10 affects the value and position of digits in a number. A strong understanding of these patterns will help students build confidence as we move into more complex decimal operations.



Important Dates and Assessments:

Assessments: Monday, October 19 - ELA FTQ 5 writing assignment
Thursday, October 22 - Math quiz on powers of 10

School Dates: Wednesday, October 21 - Early release at 11:50 a.m.
October 29-30 - No school (teacher planning and grading days)

Peek at the Week

Monday, October 12, 2026

Important Dates & Reminders

Book Fair This Week! The Book Fair is happening this week! Our class will visit during our regularly scheduled library time **tomorrow at 9:50 a.m.** This visit is for students only. Families are welcome to shop during the following times:

- **Monday, Oct. 12:** 2:30-3:30 p.m.
- **Tuesday, Oct. 13:** 7:53-8:15 a.m. and 2:30-3:30 p.m.
- **Wednesday, Oct. 14:** 2:30-3:30 p.m. and 5:30-7:30 p.m.
- **Thursday, Oct. 15:** 7:53-8:15 a.m. and 2:30-3:30 p.m.
- **Friday, Oct. 16 (VIP Day):** 2:00-3:15 p.m.

VIP Day is a PTA-hosted event where students can invite friends and family to join them in the classroom and visit the Book Fair! Planning to attend? Please [register your VIP here](#) so PTA knows who to expect and can plan snacks accordingly. For more information, check the Capitol Hill weekly update from October 2.

Field Trip - Friday, Oct. 16

We're heading out on our field trip this Friday! We'll be using public transportation to get to the museum, so we'll review expectations with students ahead of time to help ensure a safe, smooth, and enjoyable day.

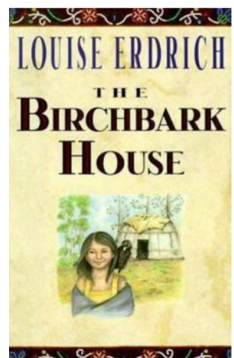
A few reminders for families:

- **Pack a disposable lunch.** The museum does not allow backpacks, so please send a simple lunch in a brown paper bag or other disposable packaging. This will help us travel light and avoid keeping track of lunch boxes throughout the day.
- **Pack light.** Students should bring only what they need for the day.
- **Review field trip expectations.** We'll talk about staying with the group, following directions, being respectful of other museum visitors, and making safe choices while using public transportation.

Thank you for helping us prepare for a successful field trip! Also a big thank you to our field trip volunteers! We appreciate you giving your time to help make this trip a great experience for our students!

**** A note about Friday:** Our field trip and VIP Day fall on the same day! We are scheduled to return from the field trip at **1:30 p.m.** VIP Day will begin at 1:30 p.m. with a gathering in the cafeteria for those attending, followed by families joining students in the classroom at **1:45 p.m.** It will be a quick transition, so thank you for your flexibility as we move from one exciting event to the next!

ELA - The Birchbark House and the Ojibwe In our next arc of Module I, we begin the novel The Birchbark House, written by noted Native American author Louise Erdrich. The Birchbark House follows Omakayas, a seven-year-old girl, and her Anishinaabe family, through a year marked by challenge, tragedy, and triumph, as they work together to survive on their island home in Lake Superior. As we read, students will be looking for connections between the Ojibwe homeland and their lifestyle.



Assessments:

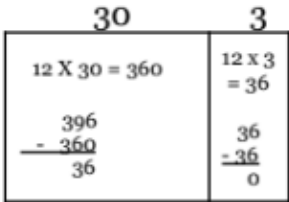
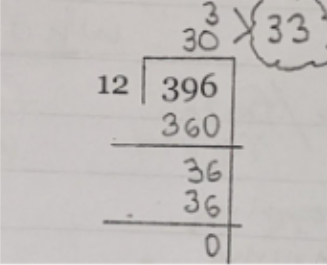
Math - Lesson 6 Decimal Place Value Quiz: Thursday, October 15th

Peek at the Week

Monday, October 5, 2026

From the Classroom

I'm making a small change to the timing of our weekly newsletter! I've been trying to find a schedule that is both useful for families and sustainable for me. Since we also have our larger monthly newsletter, I think sending our weekly Peek at the Week on Mondays will work best. This way, you'll have a quick look at what we're learning and what's coming up at the beginning of each week. For school-wide events and reminders, the PTA newsletter and Ms. Armendariz's school newsletter are the best place to find the most up-to-date information.

396 ÷ 12	
Area Model	Partial Quotients
	

Math: Division with Two-Digit Divisors

This week we will be honing our division skills and moving from dividing by a single-digit divisor (like $135 \div 5$) to dividing by two-digit divisors (like $396 \div 12$). Students are learning to think about division by asking: "How many groups of the divisor are in the dividend?" We can use multiplication to help us estimate and make solving larger division problems more manageable.

For example, when solving $396 \div 12$, a student might begin with $10 \times 12 = 120$ and recognize that $30 \times 12 = 360$. That gets us very close to 396, leaving just 36 more to divide. Students will continue developing strategies for estimating, solving, and checking their division work.

Science: Food Chains & Food Webs

How does energy and matter move through an ecosystem? This week we are learning how food chains and food webs help us understand the relationships between organisms in an ecosystem. Food chains and food webs can help us track how matter moves from green plants to the consumers that eat them. Some of this matter continues through the food web as other animals eat those consumers.

We'll also explore how energy, which begins with the sun, moves through an ecosystem. Students will look at a local ecosystem and consider the important roles of different organisms, including producers, consumers, scavengers, and decomposers.

Ask Me About

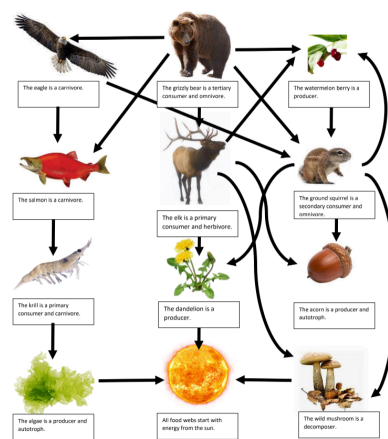
- How do we celebrate birthdays in our classroom? Whose birthdays did we celebrate last week? (All birthdays will be celebrated—even birthdays we missed during the first few weeks of school and summer birthdays!)
- We've been talking a lot about our pickle jar analogy for our classroom community. What is the pickle jar? What did you write as your contribution to the "brine" of our community? (Maybe funny, kind, a good listener, a strong reader, a good friend, or something else you bring to our community.)

Assessments & Reminders

Math – Lesson 5 Division Quiz: Thursday, October 8

Reminder: No school Friday, October 9 – Teacher Planning Day.

Pacific Northwest Food Web



Peek at the Week

Friday, September 25, 2026

Math: Multiplication

This week we continued to polish up our multiplication skills - using models taught in previous grades. In fifth grade we introduce students to the standard algorithm of multiplication. The standard algorithm allows students to solve larger problems (like 3 digit X 2 digit problems) more efficiently than other models like the area model ("box method") or partial products models.

Common Models for Solving Multiplication Problems

145 X 23														
Area Model/ “Box Method”	Partial Products	Standard Algorithm												
<table><tr><td></td><td>100</td><td>40</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>20</td><td>100 x 20 = 2,000</td><td>40 x 20 = 800</td><td>5 x 20 = 100</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3 x 100 = 300</td><td>3 x 40 = 120</td><td>3 x 5 = 15</td></tr></table> Add all partial products = 3,335		100	40	5	20	100 x 20 = 2,000	40 x 20 = 800	5 x 20 = 100	3	3 x 100 = 300	3 x 40 = 120	3 x 5 = 15	1 4 5 X 2 3 15 (3 x 5) 120 (3 x 4) 300 (3 x 100) 100 (20 x 5) 800 (20 x 40) + 2000 (100 x 20) 3,335	1 4 5 X 2 3 435 + 2900 3,335
	100	40	5											
20	100 x 20 = 2,000	40 x 20 = 800	5 x 20 = 100											
3	3 x 100 = 300	3 x 40 = 120	3 x 5 = 15											

ELA: Chief Joseph's Lincoln Hall Speech

We've used informational texts and traditional stories to help us learn about the Nez Perce people - their beliefs and values. Next week we focus on Chief Joseph's famous and poignant Lincoln Hall speech. Delivered to government officials in Washington DC in 1890, the speech came in the context of Joseph's band of Nez Perce people being removed to a bleak and disease-ridden reservation in Oklahoma. In the speech, Joseph reveals the values and beliefs by which the Nez Perce live - and appeals to the government to let them return to their homeland. In reading the speech we learn how figurative language and repetition can help the listener better understand the big ideas being conveyed.

Ask Me About: Here are a couple of questions you can use to get your student talking about their week at school.

- Who was the "Spotlight Student" this week? What did you learn about them?
- We read *Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson. What is the main idea of the story and how we can show kindness to others?
- What was your classroom job this week? What job do you look forward to and why?

Assessments:

Math - Lesson 4 Quiz - Multiplication: **Tuesday, September 29**

ELA - Focusing Question Task 4 - What beliefs and values of the Nez Perce does Chief Joseph convey in his speech? Use evidence from the speech to explain your thinking. - **Thursday, October 1**

Peek at the Week

September - October

A Deeper Look at Our Learning

Dear Families,

Our regular **Peak at the Week** newsletter provides a quick look at what we're doing each week. **Beyond the Peak** is a little different. This newsletter provides a more in-depth look at our current learning, upcoming units, assessment routines, and important dates for the coming weeks.



Important Dates

- **Friday, September 11** - Volunteer Training
- **Wednesday, September 16** - Early Release at **11:50 a.m.**
- **Thursday, September 24** - Back to School Night
- **Friday, October 9** - No School: Teacher Training Day
- **Wednesday, October 21** - Early Release at **11:50 a.m.**
- **Thursday, October 29 & Friday, October 30** - No School: Teacher Planning Day and Grading



English Language Arts

Cultures in Conflict

Our next Wit & Wisdom module is ***Cultures in Conflict***. Throughout this unit, students will explore the essential question:

How do cultural beliefs and values guide people's actions?

Students will learn about the histories and cultures of two Native American communities—the **Nez Perce (Nimiipuu)** of the Pacific Northwest and the **Ojibwe (Anishinaabe)** of the Great Lakes region. We will examine how a community's homeland, traditions, stories, and experiences shape its beliefs and way of life.

Students will read a variety of informational and literary texts, including ***The Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich**, which follows a young Ojibwe girl and her family living on an island in Lake Superior. Students will also explore traditional storytelling and examine how stories can communicate important cultural beliefs and values.

As we move through the module, students will practice **summarizing, identifying main ideas, analyzing characters and stories, comparing texts, and using evidence from texts to support their thinking**. We will also learn about the impact of westward expansion and European settlement on Native American communities and consider the ways Native cultures and traditions continue into the present.



Writing Focus

Our major writing project for this unit will be an **informative/explanatory essay**. Students will use evidence from *The Birchbark House* to explain how **Ojibwe beliefs and values are reflected in Omakaayas's relationship with an animal**.

Peek at the Week

Students will work through the writing process, including planning, drafting, revising, and editing. Along the way, they will practice organizing ideas, incorporating evidence, and explaining how their evidence supports their thinking.



ELA Assessments & Writing Checkpoints

Students will have several opportunities to demonstrate their reading, writing, and discussion skills throughout the module.

- **Reading assessments** will ask students to demonstrate their understanding of traditional stories and *The Birchbark House*.
- Students will participate in **Socratic Seminars** where they compare stories and discuss how traditional stories communicate cultural beliefs and values.
- Students will complete shorter written responses using **textual evidence** to explain their thinking.
- Students will complete **vocabulary assessments** focusing on important academic and content-specific words from the module.
- The module will culminate in the **End-of-Module (EOM) informative essay** described above.



Assessment Dates: Specific assessment dates will be shared as we get closer. Please watch our weekly classroom updates for reminders about upcoming assessments and important due dates.



Math

Whole Number Operations, Volume & Decimals

We are beginning our math year by building a strong foundation with **volume, multiplication, division, and decimals**. Students will learn new strategies, practice applying them to problems, and work on explaining their mathematical thinking.

Over the next several weeks, students will:

- Explore **volume** and find the volume of rectangular prisms using unit cubes and formulas.
- Strengthen their skills with **multiplication and division of whole numbers**.
- Apply these skills to **word problems and real-world situations**.
- Develop an understanding of **place value and powers of 10**.
- Read, write, compare, and **round decimals**.

For this newsletter, our learning will take us through **Lesson 9**, which focuses on comparing and rounding decimals. We will continue with the next portion of the unit in our following newsletter.



Our Math Assessment Routine

Math lessons typically follow a Monday-Friday cycle. We introduce and practice a new concept throughout the week, with an **assessment or quiz at the end of the lesson/week** to check students' understanding.

This is our general routine, but our schedule may shift by a day or two depending on student needs and how much practice we need with a particular concept.



Health

Peek at the Week

Social, Emotional & Mental Health

Our first Health unit focused on **Social, Emotional, and Mental Health**. Students developed skills to better understand their emotions, recognize stress and anxiety, and identify people they can turn to when they need support.

Throughout the unit, students explored:

- Recognizing **stress and anxiety** and understanding some factors that can contribute to these feelings.
- Practicing **healthy coping strategies** for managing difficult emotions.
- Identifying **trusted adults** and understanding how these adults can provide support and help keep us safe.
- Exploring how **relationships and interactions with others can affect our emotions and well-being**.
- Practicing ways to **communicate feelings, concerns, and needs** with trusted adults.

Much of our learning took place through **class discussions, role-playing, reflection activities, and collaborative practice**.

Our goal was for students to leave the unit with practical strategies they can use when experiencing stress or challenging emotions, as well as an understanding that **asking a trusted adult for help is an important part of taking care of ourselves**.



Science

Ecosystem Restoration

Science, Social Studies, and Health are taught on a rotation throughout the year. This allows us to give each subject focused instructional time while continuing to cover all of our grade-level learning.

We have completed our first Health unit and are now beginning our first Science unit, ***Ecosystem Restoration***.

In this unit, students will think like **scientists and ecologists** as they investigate how living things and their environments are connected. Students will explore an ecosystem in a Costa Rican rainforest and investigate why some organisms are not thriving as expected.

Students will investigate:

- How **plants and animals get the matter and energy** they need to grow.
- How **matter moves through an ecosystem**.
- The relationships between plants, animals, soil, and other parts of an ecosystem.
- The important role of **decomposers and soil**.
- How changes to one part of an ecosystem can affect other organisms.
- How people can use scientific evidence to **help restore an ecosystem**.

Rather than simply memorizing information about ecosystems, students will have opportunities to **investigate problems, collect evidence, build models, analyze data, and develop explanations based on what they discover**.

The unit will culminate in students using their evidence and understanding to develop ideas for **restoring the rainforest ecosystem**.

Peek at the Week

A Note About Science, Social Studies & Health

Because these subjects operate on a rotation, you may notice that our focus changes throughout the year. We have completed our first Health unit and are now moving into **Science: Ecosystem Restoration**. Social Studies will return later in the rotation.

A Note About Assessments

Throughout the year, students will participate in a variety of assessments. Some are **short, lesson-level checks for understanding**, while others are larger assessments connected to an entire unit.

Assessment dates can occasionally change based on the pace of instruction and student needs. **Weekly Peak at the Week newsletters will include reminders about upcoming assessments and important due dates**, while *Beyond the Peak* provides the larger picture of what students will be learning.

Family Feedback

I value your feedback and want to make sure our communication is helpful, informative, and easy to navigate.

Please use the link below to share any feedback, questions, or suggestions about our classroom communication.

FEEDBACK LINK

Thank you for partnering with me as we navigate fifth grade together!

Warmly,

Ms, Anderson

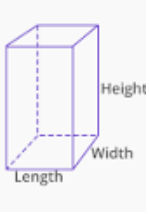
Peek at the Week

September 4, 2026

From the Classroom:

Math: Understanding Volume

We're kicking off our first math unit of the year by exploring the concept of **volume**. Students are beginning with hands-on activities that help them understand volume as the amount of space inside a three-dimensional object.



As we continue, students will build their understanding of how to determine the volume of **rectangular prisms** and use what they know about multiplication and measurement to develop a formula for finding volume.

English Language Arts: Cultures in Conflict

Students are exploring the reasons for westward expansion following the Lewis and Clark Expedition and learning about the different groups of people who moved west, as well as the Native peoples and cultures whose lives were impacted by this expansion. As we work with increasingly complex informational texts, students are practicing strategies for identifying **main ideas, important details, and key information**. We are also learning how to use those ideas to write clear, concise summaries of what we read.

Ask Me About:

- * What did you put on your personal Pennant that let the class know more about you?
- * What were some reasons for the western expansion that happened after the Lewis and Clark expedition?
- * What strategies do you use for finding volume?

Teacher's Note

What a great start to the school year! It has been such a joy getting to know your students and learning more about the unique personalities, interests, and strengths they bring to our classroom each day. We are already seeing what a thoughtful, kind, and capable group of students they are. I'm especially excited to watch them grow into the strong leaders they have the potential to be not only in our classroom, but throughout our school community. Thank you for sharing them with me!

A Note About Our Newsletters

Next week, families will receive a more in-depth monthly newsletter with important information about upcoming assessment dates, learning targets, academic calendars, classroom happenings, and more. Our school is asking teachers to provide a monthly newsletter as a more comprehensive way to keep families informed about what is happening at school. I also hope to continue sending these shorter weekly classroom updates because I enjoy sharing a glimpse of what we are learning and celebrating each week. I'll keep you posted if that changes and we need to move to the monthly newsletter only. My goal is to keep communication helpful, manageable, and useful for our classroom community!

Reminders for next week:

Monday, September 7 - No School, Holiday
Tuesday, September 8 - Start Fall iReady Diagnostic (Math and Reading)

Peek at the Week

August 25, 2026

Dear 5th Grade Families,

I'm so excited to meet the students tomorrow and officially get the school year started! I know the first day can bring a mix of excitement and nerves, so I wanted to share a few helpful details to help everyone feel prepared and know what to expect.

A Little About Me

Hi, I'm Katharine Anderson (she/her), and I'm excited to join the Capitol Hill community this year! This will be my fifth year teaching 5th grade. Most recently, I taught at Maplewood Elementary just down the road, and before that, I spent several years at Opal Charter School. I've been teaching elementary students for more than a decade and have especially come to love the curiosity, humor, and growing independence that make 5th grade such a special year.

Outside of school, I enjoy exploring the Pacific Northwest, camping, spending time with family and friends, and roller skating whenever I can. I'm looking forward to getting to know my students and families and becoming part of the Capitol Hill community!

Our Daily Schedule

Here's a look at our daily schedule so students and families know what to expect:

Anderson's Class Schedule				
M	T	W	Th	F
7:53 Arrival Routine				
8:05-8:50 Art	8:05-8:50 PE	8:05-8:50 SEL	8:05-8:50 Music	8:05-8:50 PE
8:50-9:10 SEL	8:50-9:40 Library	8:50-9:10 SEL/Lit	8:50-9:10 SEL	8:50-9:10 SEL
9:10-10:30 Reading & Writing				
10:30-11:25 Content Rotations				
11:25-11:45 Recess				
11:50-12:10 Lunch				
12:10-1:20 Math				
1:20-1:35 Recess				
1:35-2:20 WIN				
2:20-2:30 Reading & Writing				
2:30 Dismissal Routine				

Peek at the Week

Important Info for Fifth Grade

- **Our school day is from 7:53 am - 2:30 pm.** The doors to our school open at 7:53. Our classroom is **room 202**, which is the last classroom on the 2nd floor, accessible by stairs.

Arrival: 5th graders will enter through the main entrance or from the bus area.

Dismissal: Students being picked up or walking home will be dismissed through the doors in the back parking lot. Students riding the bus or attending after-school care will head to those locations.

Please complete an [After-School Transportation Plan](#). **If your child is riding the bus, it would be helpful if you could send me your child's afternoon bus number on ParentSquare.**

If there is a change in your child's dismissal at any point, please be sure to call or send a ParentSquare message to BOTH Cilicia Hatch in the office and me, preferably before 11am.

- Each student must bring their **backpack, water bottle, and a healthy snack to school every day.** Breakfast and lunch are free in the cafeteria this year. Our 3rd-5th grade **lunchtime is from 11:50-12:10pm** with recess right before. Recess is always outside rain or shine so dress appropriately for all weather.
- **Lockers:** Students will have lockers! Most of the lockers used by my class are lock-less, "unlockers" if you will. Students will have a locker partner, and may *lightly* decorate their locker with removable items.
- **Personal Electronic Devices:** PPS has adopted an updated Personal Electronic Device Policy. To put it simply, all buildings now have an "off and away" policy. **This policy applies to cell phones as well as smartwatches** and anything that is "capable of electronically communicating, sending, receiving, storing, recording, reproducing and/or displaying information, depictions, and/or data." For more information, please see the new PPS [Cell phone Policy](#) and [SRR Handbook](#). Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions or concerns.
- **ParentSquare App** - Our school district now uses ParentSquare as the main method of communication between families and teachers. If you have not signed up for ParentSquare, please go to <https://www.parentsquare.com> or download the ParentSquare app using a smart device. If you are having trouble, please send both Melissa Light (mlight@pps.net) and me an email.
- **Library Book Checkout** is every Tuesday. Students are given the option of keeping their books here at school or taking them home. **Please have your child return their library books by Tuesday morning.**
- **Homework:** Our work is primarily done at school. While **we will not have required homework in the traditional sense**, there will be a weekly home share activity at the beginning of the week for our SEL Community Curriculum which needs to be returned by the last day of the week, as well as some intermittent activities or extensions to build certain habits and skills at home - such as a nightly reading routine, home experiences related to math, reflecting on tech use and sleep schedules, etc. Any tasks sent home to be completed will be shared in the weekly Peek at the Week.
- **Newsletter:** I will update and share a newsletter each Friday. Students will bring home a paper version and you can find a digital copy here [know what we've been up to and what is coming up!](#) This will have class info, digital copies of what we're working on, event information, etc.
- Please leave personal electronics at home. PPS policy is, **"Off, Away, and Invisible All Day."**
- **Volunteering:** Volunteering opportunities will be announced at a later date. If you would like to volunteer, please read this: [PPS Volunteers](#).

Peek at the Week

Staying Connected with Capitol Hill

We believe strong family-school connections help our students thrive! School newsletters are sent every Friday with news, reminders, and upcoming events. Families are also invited to join Principal Armendariz for coffee and donuts at our monthly Principal Coffee to hear school updates, learn more about how our school works, ask questions, and connect with our community. Our first Principal Coffee is Friday, September 4 at 8:15 a.m. We hope to see you there!

Looking Ahead

The beginning of a new school year is always an exciting time. There will be new routines to learn, new relationships to build, and plenty of opportunities for students to discover what they are capable of. My goal is to create a classroom where students feel known, supported, challenged, and excited to learn.

Also, I'm always happy to say hello and love those quick moments of connection at arrival and dismissal! My morning focus, though, is on greeting students and helping them get settled, and at dismissal I am focused on getting kids to where they need to be in a quick and safe manner, so I'm not able to have extended conversations during those times—but I'm always happy to schedule a time to talk.

Please feel free to reach out to me by email if you have any questions or need anything as we get started. I'm always happy to help! **kaanderson@pps.net**

Thank you for sharing your students with me. I'm looking forward to a wonderful year together!

Warmly,

Katharine Anderson
5th Grade Teacher
Capitol Hill Elementary