

September 26

Dear 4/5 Families,

We ended our week with some fall running, all to help support our fantastic school. A big thank you to Brandy, Cheryl, Carissa, and Marc for helping mark laps. Thank you to all the parents who showed up today and support Aquarian in all the ways. You. make Aquarian wonderful. You rock! Pictures are [HERE](#).

This week:

- We wrote our third FQT of the year. This first module is challenging, with a lot of writing to help create a scaffold for the writing we do throughout the year and establish the routines of the writing process. We work on a lot of the writing together in class to help build and teach a strong foundation. FQT3 was two paragraphs. It explained the role the two myths we read played in Nez Perce culture and what they taught Nez Perce children.
- We learned about the New England colonies and what was important to them. We also discussed the Salem Witch Trials. Ask your child their thoughts.
- We had a great time picking potatoes with our little buddies. A big thank you to Mr. Jimmy, who invited us to harvest his potatoes, and to Jessica for walking with us. We are going to have friendship fries with our buddies next week. I hope the potatoes that came home were delicious! You can find photos from potato fun [HERE](#).
- Student council elections were yesterday. We are proud of our four classmates who stood up in front of the whole school and made fantastic speeches. Leah, Willow, George, and Aspen did a great job! Congrats to Willow, who is our new Aquarian secretary. Rosie is the new treasure, and Nova Ann is our new president.
- It's Fat Bear Weeks! We voted in the annual Katmai contest and look forward to more next week!

For the good of the order and volunteer opportunities:

- We are so thankful to the families last year who made it possible for fifth graders to go to camp this year. It's time to start planning for next year. We are going to sell cotton candy at Trunk-or-Treat to raise money for outdoor school next year. We'd love some help spinning up some fun. If you are interested and available, click [THIS](#) Trunk-or-Treat is on October 11th.
- It isn't too early to start thinking about the science fair. All 3rd-5th-grade students do their own science fair project. While entry forms aren't due until December, start talking with your child about it now. You can find this year's science fair packet [HERE](#). Mark your calendar for February 5 if you are interested in judging, too. We love parent, friend, and relative judges.
- I need a volunteer. Can't make it into school to volunteer easily? Love pictures and the yearbook? I have a job for you! We need someone to design our class yearbook page. I'll supply pictures; you just have to make them look pretty. Let me know if you are interested.
- Reminder: If your child makes corrections on any FQT, please be sure to let me know through email, remind, or have your child let me know. I don't want to miss anything.

Have a wonderful weekend! Enjoy the colors and beauty of fall. See you Monday! Smiles, Sarah

September 19

Dear 4/5 Families,

Happy Friday! We had another great week. We buckled down and returned to school mode this week. Your children did some great work! This week:

- On Monday, we completed and typed our second FQT about how the homeland sustained the Nez Perce people.
- We listened to master storyteller, J.R. Spencer, tell “Coyote and the Monster,” and we read “How Beaver Stole Fire from the Pines”. Ask your child about them and what lessons these stories taught the Nez Perce children. We will complete our third FQT on those lessons next week.
- We learned more about the tectonic plates and how they create mountains, volcanoes, and earthquakes as they move.
- We began studying the New England Colonies and noticed some of the differences between them and the Southern Colonies.

For the good of the order:

- We are going potato picking with our little buddies on Thursday from 2:00 to 3:00. We will walk down to the Hermit Park area and would love someone to join us as a chaperone. Let me know if you are available.
- We are so thankful to the families last year who made it possible for fifth graders to go to camp this year. It's time to start planning for next year. We are going to sell cotton candy at Trunk-or-Treat to raise money for outdoor school next year. We'd love some help spinning up some fun. If you are interested and available, click [THIS](#) link. Trunk-or-Treat is on October 11th.
- The Healthy Futures activity challenge is in full swing. If your child is getting 60 minutes of exercise for 15+ days per month, you can log in their activity [HERE](#). They will get a small incentive for being active and healthy.
- Please help your child log into Canvas from home. There is an assignment in the “computer things” module for them to open and type a short sentence, so I know they were able to do that. House points and extra credit for students who complete this. Directions for how to get into Canvas/Clever from home are [HERE](#).
- Progress reports went home this week. Check in with your child on how they are feeling. If your child corrects an assignment, especially an FQT, please be sure to remind them to tell me, or you can send me a quick email. I have no other way of being notified that they have made corrections, and I don't want to miss anything.

Your children worked hard this week, and I'm very proud of their perseverance and all the productive struggle they are doing. You are raising wonderful people. I wish you a lovely weekend.

Smiles, Sarah

September 12

Dear 4/5 Families,

What a fantastic week it was. Smiles, fun, hard work, and persevering through many things made up a lot of the week. This week:

- We became experts on one aspect of the Nez Perce culture. We are building background knowledge to begin our novel in another week or so. We discussed topic sentences, gathered evidence, and explained and elaborated on the evidence for our next focusing question task (FQT). We will type that up on Monday. You have great thinkers!
- We learned about daily life in the Southern Colonies. Ask your children about it and if they would want to be a part of them. We ended the week with a rip-roaring game of Southern Colony Jeopardy.
- Fifth graders braved the Alaskan fall and worked their way through four fun stations at Outdoor School. They listened to the soundscape of nature with the AK museum. They learned to cast with fly rods and casting rods. They planted trees and did some birding, all while braving the liquid sunshine. There were so many smiles and so much fun. There are a ton of photos [HERE](#).
- Fourth graders worked with me to make the most amazing plaster masks. What creative people you have! We will hang them on the wall for a bit before sending them home. They also did some great teambuilding, managing to deliver “toxic” waste to the containment center; actually, just water into a trash can. 😊 It was an impressive feat and again, fun and teamwork were key. You can see photos of the masks and teambuilding [HERE](#).
- I love your kids; it was so much fun to see them shine this week.

For the good of the order:

- Finished t-shirts were passed out and worn today for house hour. They are AMAZING!!! Each of your children captured both themselves and their house in a personal design. I ironed them onto the shirts you sent in (after dying them in house colors). Because they are plastic iron-ons, they have to be washed very carefully. Use COLD water and hang them to dry so the plastic does not melt. A few kids left their shirts here for me to wash and save for them. You can see photos of them all [HERE](#).
- I have a volunteer job if someone can help out. We'll be practicing using a dichotomous rock key (of sorts) in a few weeks, and we'll start with a jellybean dichotomous key. I'd love some help sorting jellybeans. If you are interested, let me know, and I'll get you the jellybeans. If you want to know what's involved, the directions are [HERE](#).
- The Healthy Futures activity challenge is in full swing. If your child is getting 60 minutes of exercise for 15+ days per month, you can log in their activity [HERE](#). They will get a small incentive for being active and healthy if you complete the form.
- Mark your calendars – We have a date for the UAA basketball event, November 7th from about 10:15-2:45(ish). We will need a few volunteers to go with us. (This is another “5th grade” event, but we are working hard to take everyone this year.)

That's it, it was a great week. Have a fantastic weekend! I look forward to seeing you all on Monday.

Smiles, Sarah

Class Photos [Folder](#)

September 5

Dear 4/5 Families,

It was so nice to see so many of you at Open House. We share the best school around and your fantastic children, who bring me so much joy every day. Yehooo for home-school teams. This was a busy week!

- We rocked the MAP reading and math assessments. This is the first fall assessment. It is totally normal to go down from spring scores after a summer of Alaskan fun. Please don't be concerned if your child's scores took a typical summer slump. We will work hard this year, and growth over time is what we want. Your children are working up a storm, and I am proud of their hard work.
- We started a new Focusing Question: How did the Nez Perce's homeland sustain their lifestyle and culture? We read about their homeland in the Oregon, Washington, and Idaho area, and each student will become an expert on a particular part of their culture – food, clothing, transportation, or shelter. Ask your child what they are interested in studying more closely.
- We finished learning about the layers of the Earth and how the currents in the Earth's mantle drives the movement of the tectonic plates.
- We met and hung out with our little buddies. It is a huge delight to watch your children become elders and leaders. And the comments are hilarious!! My favorite was, "Wow, those littles have so much energy! I'm worn out." I love the growing up that happens with buddies.
- Designed our own house t-shirts with the shirts you sent in. They are going to be awesome!
- Finally, we discussed joking, teasing, and using three levels of strong "stop" language to be heard when something isn't fun or funny anymore.

For the good of the order:

- Next week is Outdoor School for 5th graders – Wednesday and Thursday. Please find your child's rain gear and warm things, as they will spend two days outside. They should come prepared for all weather each day. An extra-large lunch and extra snacks are also a good idea.
- I'll be with the 5th graders in the mornings (4th graders will be in special classes) and then with the 4th graders doing some fun teambuilding in the afternoons.
- Jog-a-Thon paperwork went home on Tuesday. It is September 26.
- Students are almost always allowed to make corrections or improve an assignment. To me, this is an important part of the learning process. There is a cut-off towards the end of the quarter, so please try to check Parent Connect and discuss things with your child with enough time if they would like to redo or improve something. The first FQT 1 writing assignment was graded and went home with your child today. Be sure to ask to see it. I provide printed copies of their writing with my feedback/rubric, and I attach it to the journal that we worked on together in class. You can also see it all in Canvas/Google, too. Let me know if you have questions.

Family Homework: Accessing Google and Canvas from home is a plus for making corrections on writing assignments or accessing things if you are away on vacation. Please try to find time to set up a separate profile for your child on your home computer. This will prevent your information from becoming confused with theirs and allows them to access their Google Drive and Canvas from home. Sometimes you can use an incognito window to log them in, but the fail-proof way is to create a profile for them on your computer. There is a tiny assignment in Canvas worth house points for students who can get this done. If this is tricky,

let me know. I can set up some time to help out if you can bring your computer to school. Sometimes, problem-solving in person can make it easier.

Directions for how to get into Canvas/Clever from home are [HERE](#).

I hope you have a great weekend!!

Smiles, Sarah

August 29

Dear Families,

Please forgive me for incorrectly sending my Math newsletters to everyone. There was a change in our email system that I was not aware of, and it went out to everyone by mistake. We had a fantastic, busy week! This week:

- We began language arts. Our first focusing question was: *How did U.S. westward expansion impact Native American cultures in the West?* We read several articles and had some great discussions about them. You have great thinkers.
- We wrote our first FQT (**F**ocusing **Q**uestion **T**ask), answering the focusing question by summarizing an article we read this week.
- In social studies, we discussed colonization and the reasons why people leave their homes to move to a new location, particularly to the 13 original colonies. We also conducted a Jamestown simulation to examine the difficult choices the settlers faced after arriving in Virginia. Ask your child if they “survived”.
- In science, we are digging into the Earth’s layers. We learned about the crust and the lithosphere this week. We will reinforce this knowledge next week and learn more. Learning about these layers will help us understand how the Earth’s crust moves and changes.
- Finally, we began our vocabulary routine. Each week, your child will learn, practice, and work with 6-10 words. Most Friday’s there will be a short open-note quiz on the words. You can see this quarter’s words and help your child work with them at [THIS](#) link. This was week 1, and we took a practice quiz that won’t be graded. Next week, we’ll skip ahead to week 3. 😊
- At the epic Agility Challenge on Monday, Responsabilidad was victorious. Green Team - Living the Dream! Everyone had fun. On Tuesday, your children did an amazing job at the assembly. I am so proud of the hard work they are putting into becoming leaders and everything we are doing in our classroom.
- Thank you so much for all your support at the bake sale on Monday. OMG! It was probably the best I’ve ever had in 20 years at Aquarian. We made \$252 for our classroom. Wow, thank you.

A few important upcoming things/reminders:

- We will be MAP testing next week on Sept 2 & 3 - Tuesday/Wednesday. Please help your child get a good night’s sleep and have some good brain food in their lunches.

- Next Friday is the Aquarian Open House and Ice Cream Social from 5-7 pm. I'll have a short chat/presentation right at the start, so come to my room first. :-)
- ASD has a new phone/smart watch policy. All phones and smart watches must be off and in backpacks during the day. If your child has a smart watch or phone, please discuss this with them.
- We had four microwave fires this week. As you pack lunches, please be aware that there is a 30-second limit on microwave use. If something needs longer, students have to get back in line.
- We scheduled a field trip to the museum for December 17th. Mark your calendars. We will need chaperones to help us get there, and I hope you can join us.
- Super thanks to Laura, Marten's mom, and Tapia, Viva's mom, who can help out with 5th-grade Outdoor School. We have room for two more chaperones if anyone else would like to join us. Let me know.

Enjoy the long weekend and sun tonight. I'll see you all on Tuesday!

Smiles, Sarah

August 22

Dear Room 5 Families,

Happy Friday! We had so much fun at the park today, and a busy, wonderful week. This week:

- We worked hard at House Leadership Academy to build our house families, to prepare signs for the incoming Kindies, and to create amazing performances for our house assembly on Tuesday morning. Each house is going into the Kindy classrooms and presenting to them about their houses. I love all this leadership and speaking practice!
- We built our class community playing some fun raccoon circle games (see photos below). We discussed our class norms and wrote a class constitution.
- We created an art piece that captures our hearts in words and watercolor. They are beautiful. You can see them on the walls next week or at our open house.
- We continued talking about the Earth's four spheres and looked at Wegener's theory of continental drift in science. Your children should know the four spheres now!
- Ask your child about their reading goal for 1st quarter and our shrinky dink reading chains. I like to do a choose-your-own-adventure reading challenge. We'll check in on their goals at the end of the quarter.
- Photos from the week [HERE](#)
- The culture homework is due on Monday. I'm impressed with how many people have turned it in already. This assignment is small and is meant to spark a little conversation about your family to relate to our study of the Nimiipuu (or Nez Perce) people and their culture. We will look at their traditions and root it with a glimpse of yours.

Important Upcoming Dates:

- Breakfast Bake Sale this Monday! Sign up below to help or send something in. Everything helps! Thank you so much for making Aquarian and our classroom great!
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0C49A4AD2BA4F94-58034515-45class>
- Wear house colors on Monday and Tuesday! Monday is our house agility challenge; a champion will be crowned. Tuesday is our big house assembly.
- Picture Day is August 27, @ 2:10 pm is photo time for our class. See the information at the end of this email for important order information.
- Math begins on Thursday, August 28th. I told your children who they had for math today. Math teachers should reach out soon.
- Thanks to everyone who has sent in supply money. It's not too late if you haven't yet. You can send a check, cash, or Venmo @Sarah-Fineman (6731 are my last 4 phone number digits). All 4th and 5th-grade teachers ask for \$40.
- Sept 2 – ASAs begin
- Sept 5th – Open House/Ice Cream Social

I love teaching your children. We worked so hard building our routines and community this week. I see your children and all the hard work they are doing. I think the world of them. I feel fortunate to spend my days with them! May there be lots of sleep in the next two days. Have a fantastic weekend.

Smiles, Sarah

August 15

Dear Families,

Happy Friday!! We made it through the first (very short) week with flying colors! It is awesome to begin exploring with your children. I love them already. What wonderful humans they are. We worked hard learning our routines, expectations, and getting to know our new classroom community. We talked about getting along together and grappled with the concepts of respect and dignity. We learned about the Earth's four spheres, and we also began an amazing art/writing project about ourselves. It was a busy and wonderful two days!

Ask your child about their "tree" for our class mobile. See if they can tell you about the four spheres of the Earth (geo-, bio-, hydro-, and atmos-). It is ok if they can't yet. Also ask them about living "ish-fully." I've heard lots of talk about getting to know new people, and it warms my heart. Ms. Noelle, our paraprofessional extraordinaire, is working to create a space at lunch where our class can invite people from other classes to sit with us so we can have time together. [HERE](#) are some photos from our first two days.

We are planning a walking field trip to Fish Creek Park next Friday. We'd love a parent or two to join us if you might want to play in hopefully the not-rain. 😊 Let me know if you can hang with us from 12:30-2:45-ish on Friday next week. Technically, we only really need one person, but more are welcome to join us if you'd like. Walking field trip permission slips were sent home yesterday. Please return them by Wednesday. There is also a student info sheet coming home. It is for your child to fill out. It just helps me get to know them a

little better, their likes, etc. There is no due date or pressure for that – whenever they turn it in, I'll learn a bit about them.

Heads Up: Look for a family culture sheet to come home on Monday. We will work with it in class the following Monday, Aug 25. I'm sending it early so there is plenty of time to complete it. Please help your child think about it and jot down the answers. They will be used for a discussion in language arts. They don't have to be perfect. Feel free to send it back early if it is complete.

Our first class bake sale is a morning one! August 25th. Let me know if you can help by either sending in breakfast goodies or if you can help set up and sell. I've never done a morning bake sale, so fingers crossed. A book order went home if you're looking for good books to kick off the new year. No pressure.

Thanks to everyone who has sent in supply money. If you haven't yet, you can send a check, cash, or Venmo @Sarah-Fineman (6731 are my last 4 phone number digits). I ask for \$40 and use this for all our supplies I've purchased and more good things for the year. Check out [my website](#) if you have questions about what we will learn this year and other good stuff. Thanks to all who sent in a t-shirt, too. We are going to make some fun class shirts. If you haven't, please look for a shirt you can send. They don't have to be new, just ones that will fit. We won't do this before Aug 30, so no big rush. 😊

We have so many great photos from you on our digital frame, thank you. If you haven't yet, don't forget to email me 3-4 photos of your family for it. fineman_sarah@asdk12.org

Next week, we will have House Leadership Academy (HLA) every morning. Encourage your children to wear their house colors. We are going to prep them to lead our first house assembly on August 26th. They are the "big kids" now and are going to run the show. I love helping your children become great school leaders. Help your child think about how they will represent their house and bring some fun to the assembly.

Are you interested in a way to connect with other 4/5 families? It is a little more challenging now that we can't create a class contact list. To help with this, a thoughtful parent has set up a WhatsApp group to help you make connections or arrange times to play, etc. If you are interested in joining, you can click the link below. https://chat.whatsapp.com/FY2sKZmQxvyKctFFevyFVk?mode=ac_t

I hope you have a fantastic weekend and that everyone sleeps in tomorrow. Be gentle with your children; they are tired. I love being their teacher already!!! Our class Rocks! Happy Friday and happy weekend!!

Smiles, Sarah

P.S. Whew, that was a LONG one. If you made it this far, thank you!! You are a rock star parent, and your children and I appreciate it.

August 8

Dear Families,

Happy Weekend and welcome (almost) back to school. I sent a letter to your child last week, so hopefully it arrived. Please let me know if it didn't. I am so excited about our year together. I've been working away

putting our classroom back together after summer and getting ready for school to start on Thursday. Ms. Noelle, our paraprofessional, and I can't wait to all be together to kick off the year.

I have a few housekeeping things. Here is the link to my website: bit.ly/SarahMultiage . You can find all sorts of information about our year - school supplies, class information, curriculum (we are on the 5th grade rotation this year, meaning 5th grade curriculum and field trips), expectations, etc. There is also a short optional Back to School Questionnaire to fill out. Taking a minute to do that is very helpful. I'm so impressed with how many people have already been on and sent supply money and photos. Thank you!

On that note, I have a fun digital photo frame that I like to load up with family pictures from you. Please, send me an email (or reply to this) with 3-4 photos of your family that I can add to our digital frame to make us smile. Lastly, I use Q emails to send out my weekly newsletter. Check in with your people. Did everyone you'd like to get my emails, get this? If not, Q/Parent Connect may need the correct email address. We can make that happen, chat with Annie in the office.

Have a great weekend! I look forward to a fantastic year together. See you on Thursday, all decked out in your house colors and ready for a great year!

Smiles,
Sarah