Dear Parents,

As fourth graders move into the upper elementary grades, it is important for the students to solidify not only their spelling skills, but also the underlying phonics skills. A child who knows and understands the basic phonics rules of English is able to apply these rules to spelling new and unfamiliar words. Therefore, our goal this year is to make sure all students have a solid base in their knowledge of phonics rules. We also want to give them opportunities to practice and apply these skills to spelling new words.

Each week, our class will learn a phonics concept or rule. Most skills will be based on the six syllable types. The attached handout explains the syllable types, gives examples of each type, and also provides exceptions. Please refer to this handout throughout the year as your child practices spelling and phonics.

Our spelling routine this year will be:

* On Mondays, the class will learn and practice a phonics rule in school.
* That night, each child will bring home the week’s spelling packet. The front page of the packet will contain the week’s list of 15 spelling words. All the words will follow the phonics rule explained at the top of the page.
* Students should practice these words throughout the week, and complete the activities in the packet. The completed practice packets will be due back at school on Fridays.
* On Fridays, students will take a spelling test. This test will consist of ten randomly selected words from the week’s list of fifteen, as well as five additional bonus words. The bonus words will NOT be from the list, but will contain the same phonics rule/pattern. This is the students’ chance to apply the skills they’ve learned. They will be able to earn bonus points (beyond 100%) for these five bonus words.

We want students to become confident and independent spellers by learning and applying phonics rules, rather than memorizing lists of specific words. Thus, our spelling program this year will represent a change from last year’s spelling program. Although it may be a bit of an adjustment for your child at first, we are confident that this method will produce more accurate spellers by the year’s end.

We very much appreciate your cooperation and participation in our spelling program! Please let us know if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. Thank you, and happy spelling!

Sincerely,

                         The Fourth Grade Team