

Dear Parents:

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome our new and returning students and parents to the 2011-2012 school year. I truly hope your summer has been relaxing and enjoyable. We all are looking forward to meet each and every one for the start of the year on **Tuesday, August 2nd**.

Every school year brings new projects and initiatives. This year, we are continuing our focus on the Reading Program. This initiative is anchored on a "Balanced Literacy" approach to reading. "Balanced Literacy" is a theory based on the idea that there are many different learning styles for children who are learning to read therefore a variety of methods and strategies will be applied to teach a greater range of students more effectively. We will also focus on Writer's Workshop and encourage our students to create wonderful stories to publish. Another implementation that continues this year is our math program called Math in Focus. This program is based on the Singapore Math method which has a consistent and strong emphasis on problem solving and model drawing, with a focus on in-depth understanding. Parents will have an opportunity to learn more about these and other projects during open house and through information sent home via the "Bi-Weekly newsletter", e-mail or through our webpage. Below you will find some important beginning of the year information:

Calendar: Make sure you review our school calendar posted on the [ANS webpage](#). There are a number of early dismissal days and holidays as well as other important dates, such as open house and report card days. The calendar can be accessed in the following link: http://www.ans.edu.ni/ANS_Random_Pages/ANS_Calendar.htm

Class Lists and Teacher Assignment: Class lists are developed during the summer months and will be ready on the first day of school. All elementary class lists will be posted on bulletin boards next to the school's main entrance and next to the gate nearest the elementary office. Class lists will also be posted outside each classroom. Teachers have spent a great deal of time creating balanced class groupings taking into consideration factors such as academic ability, social skills, behavior, gender balance, and class size. Please understand that with more than 350 families in the Elementary School, parent preferences for class groupings and/or teacher cannot be taken into consideration.

First Day of Class: On Tuesday morning when your child arrives to school, there will be chaperones stationed at each one of the gates and in the hallways to show students where their classroom is located. Parents are welcome to accompany their child to the classroom on this first day of school. Be sure to tell your child and your child's teacher about dismissal, who is picking up your child. Please be aware that the first few days, and until everyone gets used to the traffic and parking, you may encounter some delays dropping off and picking up your children.

School Supplies: A list of school supplies is available in the elementary office and a copy has also been posted on the elementary school website. You can access the list directly from this link <https://sites.google.com/a/ans.edu.ni/elementary/supply-lists-2011-2012> .

All these items can be purchased at local bookstores. The ANS homework agenda, folders, and double lined notebooks may be purchased at the cashier's office.

Elementary Snack & Lunch Only 4th & 5th grade students are allowed to purchase items in the Food Court during lunch; Kinder to Gr. 3 students can only purchase items from the Elementary Food Stand "The Hungry Tiger". We have a new vendor who will provide more nutritious food items to our students this year. Students may also bring a home lunch rather than purchase food items at school.

New Teachers and staff: Our new teachers are already working to get acquainted with the school. We are very happy to have teachers, specialists and assistants who bring their expertise, experience, enthusiasm and abilities to the positions they have been assigned. Please join me in welcoming:

- **Elementary Vice Principal: Mrs. Jennifer Jun.** Mrs. Jun has been a teacher in ANS for the past 6 years. Before that she was a teacher in New Heaven Public Schools. She is a certified teacher in the state of Connecticut and

has a Master's degree from Framingham State College. She is currently pursuing a certification in school administration.

- **K5: Alejandra Arguello:** Mrs. Alejandra comes to us from the State of Virginia where she has worked for several years with pre-school students. She is currently working on her Master's degree in Early Childhood Education which she will complete by 2012.
- **Grade 3rd:**
Anna VanHorn: Ms. Anna VanHorn lived in Iowa where she received her Masters of Education in Special Education with certification for Mild and Moderate Disabilities. As a graduate of the University of San Diego, she has also obtained her K-6 California Multiple Subject Teaching Credential and Bachelor's degree in Liberal Studies, with an emphasis in Multi-Cultural Studies. Ms. Vanhorn has experience in schools in California as well as Iowa.
Tamara Quandt: Ms. Tamara Quandt has a Master's in Education from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon where she worked as a student teacher in a 3rd grade classroom. After graduation, she taught kindergarten in Oregon before spending the past year teaching grade in a bilingual school in Honduras. She is certified in the state of Oregon in Early Childhood and Elementary Education.
Julie Falbo: Ms. Falbo comes from Minneapolis, Minnesota, and has worked in the field of education for the past 6 years. She graduated with a Bachelor's degree from Augsburg College in International Relations. She went back to school for her Master's Degree in Elementary Education and graduated from Delta State University, in Cleveland Mississippi. Ms. Falbo taught 4th grade for two years in Mississippi, and taught 5th grade in Brooklyn, New York for the past 3 years. She is certified from the state of New York for grades K-8.
- **Grade 4th: Lisana Narvaez:** This is Ms. Lisana's 6th year teaching. Her teaching experience consists of two years of Dual-Language 7-8 Language Arts, two years of 4th grade, and one year of 5th grade. She received her BAE in Elementary Education from Arizona State University. She also has her K-8 Bilingual Endorsement, and is certified to teacher 7-8 Language Arts.
- **Grade 5th: Quinn Priehs:** Ms. Priehs is from the Detroit area in Michigan. She graduated with an elementary education degree, with minors in mathematics and Spanish from Michigan State University. She spent the entirety of the past school year student teaching at the World Cultures Academy in Southfield, Michigan, in a fifth grade classroom. She has also previously worked in Kindergarten, 1st and 4th grade classrooms
- **Grade 5th:** Mr. Jed Brien: Mr. Brien is Australian and has taught in Latin America for three years. He has three degrees through the University of Canberra and the University of Technology Sydney with cross-institutional studies at the University of New South Wales and the State University of New York.
- **Music: Denis Aguirre:** Mr. Aguirre has taught eight years in Music. He studied at UNAN Pedagogical Music and has worked for Terre des Hommes, Italy, Academia Nicaraguense de la musica, and others. Classical guitar is his specialty.
- **Teachers with new assignments:** Mrs. Susan Rodinsky will be teaching this year in the 5th grade team.

I realize that teaching your child is a privilege, as well as a great responsibility. Everyone in the elementary school will do our best to ensure that each student has a motivating and safe learning experience in the classroom. However, we cannot do this alone: we need your help. Parents and school need to be partners in the learning process. I urge you to continue encouraging your child at home by ensuring that they have completed their assignments, and help them study and be ready for school every day. Teachers will keep you informed of assignments and subjects that are covered in class in each grade's webpage. Finally, please feel free to contact the elementary office should you have questions or concerns regarding the academic year.

Best wishes for a great 2011-2012 school year.

Sincerely,

Fredy Ramirez, ANS Elementary Principal