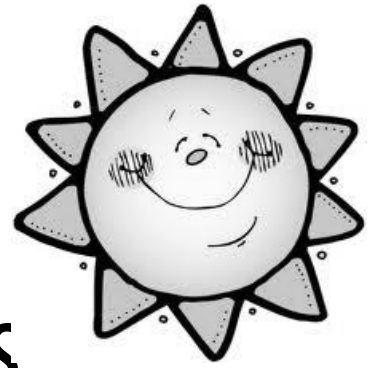


Welcome to
Mrs. Whitaker's
1st Grade Classroom



Holly Whitaker
1st Grade 2022-2023
Room 406
Blue Hall

Welcome to DPES!

First grade will be one of the most exciting years in your child's educational career. Our year will be filled with wonderful experiences and activities. My classroom goal is to provide a safe, nurturing environment that meets individual needs and promotes a foundation for life-long learning. In our classroom, students will be empowered to take initiative and think for themselves.

Meet the Teacher

I am a native of Prattville and a graduate of Prattville High School. I received my Bachelor's degree from AUM and my Master's Degree from UWA. This is my 13th year teaching. This will be my first year at Daniel Pratt Elementary, and I could not be more excited! I have taught 1st grade the past 9 years in Elmore County and am happy to be closer to home.

Language Arts

Language Arts will be taught using the Open Court and Brainspring reading series and this will be a block of time in which reading, spelling, writing, and grammar will be covered. I will teach the class using whole group, small group, and one-on-one settings. We will cover vocabulary words, phonics, comprehension, and high frequency/sight words in whole group and then break into small groups where I can focus on the skills needed in each group. During this time, the students will do "pencil and paper" work, creative writing, Accelerated Reader, centers, and read many books. You will find all reading materials needed for the week (story, homework, high frequency words, and spelling lists) in your child's binder. It is important for you to go over these materials at home each night. This will allow your child to be more successful. We will be focusing on becoming fluent readers and the more you do at home, the better. You can have your child write the high frequency words for the week and keep them on the refrigerator, and flash cards are always great for sight words and CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) words. More information will come about reading.

Math

In our classroom, I will promote mathematical interaction through problem solving, communication, journaling, estimation, connection, and reasoning. Our math program is based in the philosophy that students should develop natural thinking skills and exchange points of view while engaging in hands-on mathematical investigations. I use the Envision math series along with a standards based curriculum to enhance my lessons and we will work in whole group, small group, and one-on-one settings.

Science/Social Studies

We are learning about each other and our world through themes that are interesting to young children. We will cover all objectives in the Alabama Course of Study through hands on activities and projects. We will not cover both subjects in one day. I will alternate throughout the year teaching both subjects and I will always let you know what subject and what skills we are working on. In addition to other resources, I will use the Scott Foresman science series and AMSTI science kits, and the Houghton Mifflin social studies series.

Grading System

One of the biggest differences between first grade and Kindergarten is that the students are given grades on tests and daily assignments. The students will be given a grade for Reading, Language Arts, and Math. The scale is below:

90 – 100 – A

80 – 89 – B

70 – 79 – C

60 – 69 – D

59 and below – F

*Reading and Math grades are composed of Major (tests) and Minor (daily grades) of grades. Major tests are 60% of the grade and Minor grades are 40%. We will give at least 4 major and 7 minor each nine weeks in Reading and in Math.

*Any papers labeled with an "F" will be copied and kept on file and you will be asked to sign these. Daily papers (papers that are not put in the gradebook) will be checked as a class or marked with a smiley face.

*Students must pass READING AND MATH with a yearly average of 60 or higher in order to be promoted to second grade.

*Handwriting, Science, and Social Studies will be given grades of S, N, or U like in Kindergarten.

Homework

Your child will have reading homework materials in his/her binder that will be sent home weekly. The reading materials will contain the high frequency words, spelling words, stories, and homework for each story. Math homework will be sent periodically but addition and subtraction facts will need to be worked on at home as we will begin timed tests the second nine weeks.

Management Plan

*Please see our classroom website for specific information on this. The same information is also on a sheet in the folders from orientation.

Our rules are:

1. Listen the first time.
2. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
3. Respect others and your school.
4. Follow directions quickly.
5. Be safe and be honest.

*We will be using Class Dojo this year and I will send you an invite to login and view your child's behavior. We will still mark colors in the folder each day and if your child moves to yellow, orange, or red, please check Dojo for a note from me.

BEE Binders

Your child will come home with their BEE binder each day. This is a reminder for them to "Bring Everything Everyday." The first thing in the binder will be a zipper pouch that you will use to send any money or notes to me. This way I will be able to see through the pouch. Anytime you send something to school, please remind your child to give it to me. I will do my best to check the zipper pouches, but they can get overlooked. I will label each pocket of the binder with "Leave at Home" and "Bring Right Back." Items in "Leave at Home" will contain graded papers from me, any information coming from me, or information coming from the school. The other pocket will be labeled "Bring Right Back" and I will put anything that needs to be signed or filled out and returned in there. The next thing in the binder is the green folder. I will place page protectors that will contain the reading materials, reading and math homework, and any other resources for your child to use at home. I try to get the new reading homework in on Friday so that the children can get a head start if they want to. The first thing in the binder is the behavior chart. Your child will mark his/her folder each day with the appropriate color. I will always mark on the date if there was a problem that day. If your child does have a problem that day, you can log in to Class Dojo to view why the points were taken away. Please try to look over your child's behavior sheet each night and initial at the bottom of each day. It is so important that you check everything in the BEE binder nightly. Information comes home on a daily basis and it is imperative to check the binder to make sure you are staying up to date on things going on in the room and in the school.

Timely Tips for the First Week

1. You may walk your child in on the first day of school. There is a schedule posted on the school's website. You may park in the front parking lot, but please be careful as there will be buses running. You may come in the front hallway doors of our yellow hall between 8:00-8:15 to walk with your child. Please walk your child in and then exit the building to eliminate the amount of people in the building.
2. Bus Tags: The students will need to wear bus tags pinned on their bookbags the first 2 weeks of school. Please be sure to indicate whether they are a walker, car rider, 1st load or 2nd load bus rider, or day care van rider. You will receive the bus tag at orientation. Bus questions should be directed to the Transportation Office.
3. Car rider doors open for off in the morning at 7:10. The front doors for the walkers will open at 7:15.
4. Drop off – you can use the McQueen Smith loop or Jay Street. Car rider pickup is only from Jay Street.
5. **Written notification is required for ANY transportation change.**

Miscellaneous Information

1. Please send all money to school in an envelope with your child's name, my name, and purpose of the money. Please send separate envelopes for lunch money, snack money, field trips, etc. All checks should be made payable to DPES. On the memo line, please write *Holly Whitaker* and the purpose of the check. Envelopes and notes should be placed in the zipper pouch in your child's binder. Labeled envelopes prevent first graders from losing money and they allow individuals who find lost money to direct it to the correct teacher.

Example: *Jane Doe*

Mrs. Holly Whitaker

Snack \$1.00

2. Juice and snack may be brought from home or purchased from the school. We will go to the "Snack Shack" everyday and the students will have the opportunity to purchase a juice and a snack. \$1.50 will buy a juice and a snack and if you do send snack from home, please do not send carbonated beverages.
3. Students can bring a water bottle to school. I would suggest a Thermos type with a lid that they can pop open easily. I would prefer them to not have a screw top, plastic water bottle as those are harder for the kids to open and close properly. We will have refilling stations if the kids need more water.
4. Please label all of your child's personal items with his/her name.
5. Fill out a medication consent form when your child needs to take medication at school. You can find these at the nurses' office.
6. Please notify me and the office in writing when you have a change in address or phone number.
7. Attendance is very important to your child's success in school. Being ten to fifteen minutes late can cause a child to miss important announcements and directions. Our school day is very structured to maximize learning time, and each day builds on the one before. Illness will always occur, and I will do my best to reteach concepts and allow students to make up work. However, please help by making sure that your child attends school regularly and on time. Try to schedule doctor appointments for after school and take out of town trips that don't interfere with school days. Mrs. Finch will need to approve absences prior to any trip. Death or family illnesses are exceptions, but a note must be turned in upon return. Your child will be marked tardy if they are not in class at 8:00. If your child is absent, please send a note on the following day.
8. **Birthdays** – It is the school's policy not to celebrate birthdays during instructional time. Parents who wish to celebrate their child's birthday at school are asked to do so in an alternative manner. You may send in store bought, individually wrapped snacks for the students or mini cupcakes and I will pass them out during snack time. Please mail or deliver all party invitations to your child's friends at their homes. I will not hand these out unless there is one for each child. I also cannot give out addresses.
9. **Field Trips** – Parents are always welcome to accompany us on trips. No siblings or young children can attend field trips.
10. **Lunch** – All food for breakfast will be free again this year. LUNCH WILL NOT BE FREE THIS YEAR. Student lunch - \$2.75 and Visitor Lunch - \$4.25. If you need to fill out a free/reduced lunch form, please go to dpeseagles.com and click on "Parents" and find "Lunchroom" and you will find the information that you

need. Parents will have one day per nine weeks to come and eat with your child and the dates are: October 28, January 13, and March 27. If you send a lunch from home, please do not send carbonated beverages.

Parental Communication

I am your partner in education. I believe very strongly that parents and teachers have to work together and have good communication. If you ever have questions or concerns, I will be available to conference with you. The best way to get me is through email. You may call and leave a message with the secretary in the office and I will do my best to get back to you during PE or after school. You may also send notes in your child's zipper pouch.

**Please connect to Class Dojo using this link: <https://www.classdojo.com/invite/?c=CJED3JT>

Contact information: holly.whitaker@acboe.net
361-6400 (school)

*You can always message me on Class Dojo as well. Just remember that I may not see it until the end of the day.

*I will send a newsletter home every Monday or Tuesday. This will give an overview of what is going on for the week.

“I promise you that every day your child will learn something. Some days they will bring it home in their hands. Some days they will bring it home in their heads. And some days they will bring it home in their hearts.”

Valerie Welk

Parent/Teacher Open House Checklist

- I am available for phone and in-person conferences during PE (1:10 – 1:50).
- If you send a message on Dojo, I will do my best to answer by that afternoon. Please don't send transportation messages through Dojo, as I may not see it until the end of the day.
- I will not read or answer Dojo messages after 4:30 unless I am sending something out to you!
- Please check the DPES webpage anytime you have a question. The answer is most likely there!
- Please send in an excuse when your child is absent so I can give make-up work.
- To receive Mrs. Finch's weekly call out, the phone number in Power School must be correct.
- Anytime we take up money, all deadlines are final.
- Please do not let students bring fidget poppers, spinners, toys, etc. to school. We will have show and tell days and other fun days that the kids can bring things in, but if it is not a special day, these things need to stay at home.
- If your child is a walker, there are signs for you to wait at for your child. Please do not wait under the breezeway.
- The front parking lot will be closed until 7:55 each morning due to the buses running. No drop offs are allowed in the front loop. You must park and walk in with your child to check them in.
- The front parking lot will close from 2:30 – 3:15 due to the buses running.
- Check the parent section of the school website – there is SO much information there!