

~ Hello from MR. Gulka ~
September - 2014

I am very excited for the 2014 - 2015 school year - my eleventh year at Gilham Elementary, and my seventh year teaching 5th grade. I look forward to getting to know you and your child.

Please drop by, call, or e-mail to introduce yourself or just to say hello. Although I am confident that we'll get off to a great start there are always many details that must be worked out in the first few weeks. I appreciate your patience in this regard.

My goal is to work in partnership with you to ensure a successful year. I love teaching and work extremely hard to make your child's experience in 5th grade positive, challenging and fun. As partners in your child's education I'd like to hear from you early and often if there are questions or concerns. Also, if you would just like to tell me, "Good job!" or "That activity was great." This helps me continue to do the things that are working. I will keep you informed about what we're doing this year through letters, emails, texts and phone calls. I pride myself on communicating through email & text alerts (sign up for **Remind**) making sure that you are informed about all things happening in my class. Many times the answers to questions are already in these emails. Please be sure that you are receiving emails from me at least once a week. Please be sure to sign up for Remind and make sure your contact information is up to date with Linda and Patti in the office. I am available by phone, e-mail, or in person after school.

My goal is to never do for a student what he/she can do for themselves. I have high expectations regarding your child's effort, work completion and respectful behavior. And finally, my goal is to help pass on a *Growth Mindset* to all the students (based on [Mindset: The New Psychology of Success](#) by Carol Dweck). A growth mindset, in a nutshell, is a belief that abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work. Mistakes and failure serve as opportunities to learn. Check out my website under *Parent Information* for linked articles.

Your child will work towards developing skills in the following areas:

- 1) Develop written expression skills that facilitate communication in narrative, creative, and expository styles.
- 2) Master all multiplication and division facts and be able to use those facts accurately when doing computations and problem solving. Multiplication facts must be mastered by end of November!!
- 3) Learn to work cooperatively in groups and sometimes take the leadership role.
- 4) Learn to plan long range projects and bring them to completion.
- 5) Learn to speak in front of peers with confidence and style. Students will do weekly poem recitals in addition to formal speeches.
- 6) Learn to work independently, stay focused on work, and be responsible for bringing schoolwork to completion.

Mr. Gulka's Short Personal Bio: My wife, Emily, and I have two kids - Quinn, age 10, and Merra, 8. Last year we adopted a gently used eight year old dog, Buggy. He is a mix between a Pug and Boston Terrier.

I grew up outside of Portland, attended the University of Oregon and am a big DUCK fan. I received my Masters in Teaching from Pacific University and then began teaching at the middle school level before teaching 4th grade at Yujin Gakuen for 5 years. I taught 3rd grade here at Gilham before moving 5th grade, my favorite. My hobbies are Gracie Jiu Jitsu (currently a blue belt), Jeet Kune Do, mountain biking, jogging, photography, fishing and woodworking. I also love coffee, reading, Cafe Yumm, and trips to Jerry's Home Improvement!

Please bookmark my website: <http://mrgulka.weebly.com>

The homepage has lots of useful quick links (Scholastic book order info, IXL, Spelling City, XtraMath, etc). The *parent information* under *Parents* has lots of great information)

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Sincerely,

Brian Gulka