February 22, 2012

Dear Parents,

 I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you! My name is Melissa Williams and I will be your child’s science teacher for this year. I recently graduated from the University of Florida with a Bachelors degree in Animal Science with a specialization in Biology as well as a science education minor with the UFTeach program.

 I am very excited to begin teaching your child. I believe that students learn better through an inquiring mind where they do the problem solving to understand the topic. I will be having a lot of inquiry based lesson plans as well as a broad range of teaching methods to meet all your child’s needs; whether they are a better audio learner or hands-on individual. The lessons will be introduced to them via PowerPoint presentation and interactive lectures, usually followed by a lab, hands-on activity, or work sheet.

 All I ask from the students is to come with a mindset of wanting to learn in my classroom and never be afraid to ask a question. I’d rather them use their minds and question why things are the way they are, rather than being spoon-fed information. I will assign a small homework assignment each night to make sure they are keeping up with the material. This is expected to be completed and turned in the following day. Each week or new topic will have a hands-on project or laboratory. At the end of every unit, the students will be tested on the subject matter, in which they will always be receiving a study guide for them to fill out in place of their daily homework.

 Rules are simple in the classroom, while following the policy of the school, my only extra rule is to be respectful and treat every individual in the classroom with the same common courtesy you wish to be treated with. If students do not abide by this, I will speak with them and if there is a lack of improvement, I will bring it to your attention.

On that note, I am always open for communication with you! My e-mail, melw8807@ufl.edu, is checked daily; so feel free to contact me at any time with any comments, questions, or concerns. I highly encourage you to come to parent-teacher night at the school so we can put a name with the face. I will be keeping my lesson plans, updates, and general information about the class on my website for you to view <http://411503500790052116.weebly.com/>. Your child’s grades will also be available for you to look at through the school’s online grade book system to keep parents informed on how their child is performing in the classroom.

The students’ goal in my classroom should be eager to learn as well as having fun doing it. I will work with them to make sure they succeed in this course. I will always be available for extra help before and after school as well as during lunch hours, so I encourage you to tell your children to take advantage of this if they are struggling with a concept. Tests are worth 55% of their grade, homework 20%, labs and activities 20%, and participation is 5%. As long as your child participates in the course and does their homework, the tests should not be difficult and your child will do very well in the class. Participation is also based on attendance, seeing as missing days of class can be very difficult for your child to catch back up.

I always encourage parent-student participation, so feel free to be involved with your children in this class. I would love anyone who likes to volunteer or help out with donations to help out! Lab preparation work can always use an extra hand and it will give you the chance to see what your child is doing. Chaperones are always wanted too if we decided to do a field trip that correlates with the learning curriculum. With school funding, extra supplies may be needed at points throughout the year, in which I will ask the students if they can help by bringing something in. Also, if you would like to come in as a guest speaker if your job pertains to the field of science we are studying, we would love you to come in and talk to your child’s peers in order to show them how science not only relates to the real world, but can become a career choice for them!

I look forward to teaching all of your children and seeing them have a fun time learning science!

Sincerely,

Melissa Williams