**2009-2010 School Year Syllabus**

**5th Grade: Mr. Moses**

Mr. Steven A. Moses

Room 21

Phone Number (Classroom): 906-4758

E-mail Address: mosessa@milwaukee.k12.wi.us

**Classroom Goals:**

Our goal is to have all students achieve the following as we progress throughout the year:

1. To reach their fullest academic potential
2. To develop a caring sense of community and that of helping others
3. To become effective, critical thinkers
4. To become independent, self-reliant learners
5. To develop the “virtues of success”: personal responsibility, honesty, hard work, self-discipline, and a sense of caring and compassion for others

**Classroom Expectations:**

First, I hold the expectation that our goals will be achieved. It will require hard work on everyone’s part. So, for each expectation I hold for the student I believe the student and family can demand the same of me. I hope to have agreement on the following expectations in our room:

1. To be prepared to learn each and every day of the school year which includes having all necessary supplies and having assignments completed and at school
2. To behave in a mature, respectful manner at all times
3. To adhere and follow all school and classroom rules (**Critically important!**)
4. To give a full and honest effort in all that we do
5. To have a positive attitude about learning and about others

**Curriculum:**

The 5th grade curriculum includes the following core academic subject areas: Reading, Math, Language Arts (English, Spelling, Writing), Science/Health, and Social Studies. In addition the students also have classes in art, music, and gym.

Instruction will be given in each of these subject areas. Special focus will be placed on reading, math, language arts, and writing as these subjects are exclusively covered in the testing that occurs in early November. The writing assessment is administered in the spring.

A brief description of what will be covered in the core academic subject areas follows:

**Reading:** Our reading instruction will be centered around the literary approach known as Book Clubs. The Book Club approach is designed to help students develop critical thinking and comprehension abilities while learning to love both works of fiction and non-fiction. Components of Book Club include specific reading skill instruction, reading various-length passages, responding to higher-level thinking theme questions orally and in writing, having meaningful discussions in small group “book clubs”, and community share opportunities to reflect and share individual literary experiences. Some of works that the students will read include *Old Yeller*, *The Well*, *On My Honor*, *Through My Eyes: The Autobiography of Ruby Bridges*, and *The House on Hackman’s Hill*. Some of the themes include survival, values, race and racism, and responsibility to name just a few.

**Math:** At the heart of our math instruction is the *Math Expressions*.curriculum. It is designed to build a solid conceptual foundation of mathematics and promote reflective and critical thinking when applying to real-life math situations. It encourages students to become resourceful problem solvers and use multiple approaches when faced with complex math problems. This program stresses the use of collaboration among students as they investigate math situations. This promotes communication skills, cooperation and teamwork, respect for others’ ideas and approaches, as well as developing mathematical reasoning in a non-threatening learning environment.

**Language Arts/ Writing:** Language Arts will center around the mastery of English grammar, usage, and mechanics. Students will transfer these skills into their writing which is based upon the school’s 6 Traits approach. Students will be instructed in the various writing genres including descriptive, persuasive, informative, and imaginative writing.

**Science/ Health:** Units and projects will explore many science areas including those in the Life, Earth, Physical, and Environmental sciences. The culminating activity is our spring Science Fair where students design an experiment to answer a scientific problem or question. In Health students learn about the human body and how to properly care for themselves.

**Social Studies:** In 5th grade the curricular focus is on U.S. History and geography. Incorporated into our class is the study of current events. Students will examine current issues affecting our country and the world. Links can be made between the issues of today and their historical roots.

**Homework**

Homework assignments are due on the given due date (usually the following school day). Obviously, sickness and personal family matters may alter that due date. I generally give an assignment each day in reading, math, and the language arts subjects. The other subjects will usually be project-based, so due dates will have to be arranged accordingly. In most cases, students will get time to work on these assignments in class in the event they have questions which I can assist them with. In addition, students should be reading **30 minutes** each day from a book of their own choosing, and they should include a written journal entry summarizing what they read. Students will have a required book report due (other than books from our Book Club or past books read) at the end of each month. Students need to do book reports in order to be considered for an A grade on their report card. They will be provided with a guide to assist them in this writing assignment. A phone call or notice home will take place if a student begins missing assignments.

**Conferences/ Communications**

Formal conferences are held in mid-October and mid-March. You can schedule conferences at other times as well. I will meet with you after school on Mondays when I do not have a staff meeting, Wednesdays, and Fridays between 2:30 and 3:15. Please arrange these conferences by calling 906-4758. I certainly feel that communication between teacher and parents is critical in student success and achievement. You can also communicate to me through e-mail. I can be contacted at mosessa@milwaukee.k12.wi.us