Dear Parents,

I am looking forward to a great year with your child! This will be my 21st year teaching a combination of first and second grades. I live in Hudsonville with my husband Jeff and my 3 children: Connor, 16, Gabby 13, and Hope 10. My children also attend Hudsonville Public Schools. Connor is at the High School and Tech Center this year. Gabby will be attending 8th grade at Baldwin Street Middle and Hope attends 5th grade here at Alward. I hope this note will answer most questions, but feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. You can call me at 669-6700 ext. 11114, email me at tharmsen@hpseagles.net, or stop in and see me. I desire an open, friendly classroom.

Below you will find a general description of what we will be learning this year.

**READING** - I will be using a literature based approach to reading by using many books, charts, and poems. The 2nd graders will participate in a variety of reading instruction including whole group, small group and individual instruction. We will be engaged in author studies and independent reading. We will be learning different skills and strategies through a reading workshop.

**MATH** - We cover numeration, addition/subtraction, money, time, measurement, fractions, and graphing. We use the Math Expressions math program.

**SCIENCE** - We study plants, earth’s surface features, properties of water, and matter.

**SPELLING** - We will be having weekly spelling lists that focus on spelling patterns.
WRITING - We do daily writing in journals, class books, and daily work. We will also be doing writing workshops that include mini-lessons and time to write. Our focus will be on writing narrative, opinion, and informational pieces.

PENMANSHIP - We will be using the Handwriting Without Tears program. Students will practice and perfect their printing in second grade. Cursive begins in 3rd grade.

CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE - We have one classroom rule: “You can do anything as long as it does not bother anyone else.” I like to focus on the positive behaviors instead of the negative. We have a classroom “Good Behavior Bingo” board. When the class is being positive, good listeners, and hard workers, they can earn a bingo number. When the bingo board is covered they earn a reward of some sort (extra recess, movie, reading party, etc…). If kids display behaviors that are not fitting for our classroom, I will hold private discussions with them at recess and determine the appropriate consequences that might include: missed recess time, a talk with Mrs. Moore, or a phone call home. My goal is to focus on all the good things going on in the room.

Here are a few more things you need to be aware of:

- BIRTHDAYS may be celebrated in class. If a treat is being shared, please make is an easy, prepackaged snack. Summer birthdays may be celebrated on the child’s half birthday or the last week of school. I will make sure everyone is made aware if we have a food allergy.

- RIDES HOME - Your child will be placed on their normal bus and/or routine unless there is a note from home stating something different. This is an enforced school rule for your child’s safety. Any change from the normal routine needs a note.
- **SNACKS** - This year we will be having a break time in the morning and a recess in the afternoon. It will be essential that you send several nutritious and hearty snacks for your child to eat during these breaks. Even if your child is ordering hot lunch, please plan to send a snack with them for break times.

- **PICKING UP YOUR CHILD** - If you will be picking up your child, I ask that you do not wait in the hallway outside the classroom. Please pick up your child in the designated spots; either at the office doors, in the circle drive, or outside the 2nd grade doors. The hallways get very congested at the end of the day and it makes it much easier if parents wait for their children in the designated places. Thanks!

- **NEWSLETTERS/COMMUNICATIONS** - I will be doing ALL of my communications through email and my classroom blog. Weekly updates will be added to the blog on Fridays. I will send emails regarding important information. The quickest way to get ahold of me is through email. I will respond as soon as possible. Please make sure you list the email address or addresses that you would like communications sent to. Thank you!!

**Below are a few important times that you will want to be aware of:**

**Please note that some of these times are tentative. If changes occur, I will let you know.**

- 8:50 - School Starts
- 10:30 (approx) Mid Morning Break
- 11:55 - 12:40 - Recess then Lunch
- 2:00 - 2:20 - Afternoon Recess (as of right now)
- 2:45 - 3:35 - Special Block (Gym, Music, Art)
- 3:45 - Dismissal

**Our Library and Computer times/days will be announced later.**
I am looking forward to having a great year. I am excited about working with all of you. Let’s make it a great year together.

Sincerely,

Tricia Harmsen
2nd Grade Teacher
Alward Elementary