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**Welcome to a New Year of FOCUS Resource!**

I am excited to have the opportunity to work with 4th and 5th graders for this school year. I have lots of exciting things planned for the students. In addition, I will be expanding the ways in which I keep parents updated and informed about what is going on in our class and how your child is performing. Check out the information below to learn more about these communication tools. Please sign and return the bottom portion to verify that you have received this information and have been given the opportunity to participate.

***Weebly:***

*Weebly* is the name of the program used for the Starling Elementary Gifted Department web site. This web site is the same one we have used the past several years. It contains a link to a gifted education pamphlet that provides information about the county’s gifted program, as well as, specific course offerings available at Starling. Katrina Ferebee, Shannon Mcmillen and I have designated pages for each grade level of FOCUS Resource. I update the pages weekly for the grade levels I serve (4th and 5th grades for the 2013-14 school year) with a summary of what we did in class, details about any projects/assignments given along with their assessment rubrics, information about the gifted curriculum implemented, etc..

This is the “go to” place to learn about what is happening in the FOCUS program! The web site is easily accessed from Starling’s *Faculty and Staff* page. Just click on the symbol beside the FOCUS grade level. If you prefer, you may bookmark the web address on your home computer: http://starlingesfocus.weebly.com/.

***Remind 101:***

*Remind 101* is a safe way for teachers to text messages directly to parent cell phones. Teachers never see the parent phone numbers (only the names of those who have signed up) and parents and students never see the teacher’s phone number. It is a one way broadcast system; there is no option to respond to the text messages sent. I plan to use the program to communicate project/assignment due dates, alert parents when important updates have been added to our Weebly site, etc… I hope you will take advantage of this exciting communication tool. Directions for signing up to receive *Reminder 101* messages are attached to this letter.

***Class DoJo:***

*Class DoJo* was designed as a classroom management tool. The students and I will decide together the behavior traits that are highly valued in our resource classroom. These may include: asking higher level/thought-filled questions, making connections to prior learning, active participation in discussions, demonstrating one of the 7 Habits or characteristics of intelligent beings (posted on our classroom wall), etc.. Our purpose for using this program is for the students to notice, reflect on and become more mindful of patterns they see or don’t see in their own behaviors.

Students will receive a carnival style ticket in class as a behavior is noted. He or she will record his/her name along with the trait “category” and drop it in the class collection bucket. At the end of the class period, I will draw one name from the bucket. That student will earn a prize from the treasure box, much like we did last year. At the end of the school day, I will access the program and assign the points earned.

Each student is assigned an individual code that allows access to his/her personal avatar which reflects how any points that student has received in FOCUS Resource class. These points will accumulate throughout the school year to enable the students to track their characteristics and growth. We will be determining our highly valued collection of traits during our first week of class (week of August 12th). The *Class DoJo* web site (http://www.classdojo.com/) has a tab specifically designed for teachers, parents, and students (including how they can create their own design for their avatars). Your child’s individual access code is attached to this letter.

I am looking forward to a great school year and to seeing each of you at this year’s Open House to be held on the PTA/Curriculum night later this month. I will send a reminder with the date and details on *Reminder 101* and will post the same information on our web site.

Darlene Bartik

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I have received, read, and understand the communication options available to keep me informed about my child’s (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) FOCUS Resource program. *Child’s Name*

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 *Parent Signature Date*