

Dear Parents,

As we start this year together, I want to take a moment to convey to you some of my plans for helping your children grow in their abilities to spell conventionally. I have been assessing your children's spelling during these first few days of school, and I've come to believe that some children in the class are choosing only "easy" words to write because they are worried about whether they can spell the more advanced words correctly. My first goal, then, will be to make sure that every child is a fearless and inventive writer and that every child is willing to write *enormous* rather than sticking with *big* even if that child cannot spell enormous conventionally. You will see that I do not expect perfect spelling in children's first-draft writing.

The second thing I have noticed is that many children in this class haven't yet learned to spell some of the most important high-frequency words—words like *because*, *said*, *although*—correctly. So, each week, I will directly and explicitly teach children a list of high-frequency words. Children will bring that list home on Mondays, they will be quizzed on those words on Fridays, and more important, they will be expected to incorporate those spellings into their writing whenever they write. I'll help them do this!

Meanwhile, there are a few children who will need extra help with spelling. We all know that there are great thinkers who struggle with spelling (Einstein was one of them). I'll be meeting with a few children to let them know that they will need to put extra time and receive extra help in spelling, and that together, we can make huge progress. Meanwhile, these children need to be reminded that although their progress in spelling matters and merits attention, they need to also work toward other goals as well. Like all children, I'll encourage these youngsters to write a lot and to write with voice and detail. I look forward to supporting and studying your children's progress toward writing more correct and more effective pieces of writing.

Sincerely,