

Dear Fifth Grade Families,

For those who don't know me, my name is Mark McHugh, and I am thrilled to be your child's fifth grade teacher for the 2026-27 school year. This will be my eleventh year at Gate City, tenth as a lead teacher, and third as the fourth/fifth grade humanities teacher. I grew up in Nashua, NH, and graduated from Temple University in 2014. I have a passion for working with kids, community building, character development, and writing. In my spare time I enjoy spending time with my four-year old son, River; learning about history; reading; and writing.

This year, your child will learn about important social issues and life lessons through vibrant literature such as *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan, *Promises to Keep* by Sharon Robinson, and *Holes* by Louis Sachar. They will also learn about NH in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including the Civil War, the Industrial Revolution, and the Great Depression. They will improve their writing skills through daily practice and engaging prompts, and will foster an appreciation for literature and non-fiction. All of their learning will be enriched through arts-integration practices that enhance instruction and deepen students' understanding of the subject matter.

In addition to an engaging academic curriculum, your child will learn to be an active, valued, and tolerant member of a community through Responsive Classroom practices like Morning Meeting and Closing Meeting, as well as Choose Love activities that promote courage, gratitude, forgiveness, and compassion in action.

Open communication between teachers and guardians is crucial to a healthy classroom. I aim to provide weekly updates on what is happening in fifth grade humanities, but you are always welcome to reach out to me via email.

Please feel free to contact me at mchughm@gccs-nh.org this summer if you have any questions or concerns. I am looking forward to seeing your child in the fall!

Sincerely,

Mark McHugh