Dear Parents,

I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you. My name is Melissa Nikolai and I am your son or daughter's English teacher this year.

I just moved to Park City this summer, from a small town outside of Lake Tahoe called Gardnerville. There I taught middle school and high school Literacy, Advanced English, Remediation and Senior English Literature. This is my fifteenth year as an educator and I have to admit I am as excited as I was my first year.

During my second year of teaching I went back to graduate school and earned my Master's in Education with an emphasis in Secondary Literacy. Since then, in addition to my day job with the kids, I've been a regional trainer for teachers in Northern Nevada, a district-wide trainer for the teachers in my county, and a mentor to various teachers in my school. I love teaching and am constantly looking for new ways to challenge the students. I have so many ideas for this year at Park City High, I really can't wait for this year to begin. I just wanted to tell you a little bit about myself and share with you my expectations as well as my excitement for this upcoming school year.

Please know that I understand the importance of preparing our students for the rigors of college. It is my goal to provide engaging instruction that challenges critical thinking skills, fosters intelligent discussion, and develops logical writing skills for every student, college bound or not.

I have very high expectations and standards that I will express clearly to each student, and I am absolutely committed to providing my students with the best education of their lives. I also believe that communication with parents is crucial to a successful year, and that honest communication can head off issues before they develop. Know that I am here with an open mind and a willingness to listen to any concerns that might arise throughout the year. If you don't understand a grade that was given, or an expectation stated, call or email me, I'd be happy to talk with you . Below is my school email address, as well as the school number. And please know you are welcomed to drop in to observe at any time, no need to arrange an appointment, just stop by and see what we are doing.

My content is literature based; we'll be focusing on several class novels as well as a variety of classic and contemporary short stories. My curriculum has a heavy emphasis on developing logical discussion, analyzing literature, and applying its themes, metaphors and implications to personal experience and modern life. Thoughtful discussion will be graded in my class, and the various forms of essay will be perfected.

I expect my students to be on time, and to be prepared for the day's activities and discussions. I want you to realize I am pretty strict about late work. My policy is to accept all assignments one class day late, for 50% credit. That's it. I want my students to understand that deadlines matter, and what it means to sacrifice to complete a deadline. That's a skill that will serve them well in college.

Students will have a book list of literature for the college-bound that they will be expected to choose from as an independent reading project. They will choose one book off the list per quarter to read outside of school, and will do projects for in-class sharing. I will send one home with your son/daughter the first day of class. Please send me an email with your contact information so I can easily email you with specific concerns about your child if any should arise. Speaking of concerns, do you have any considerations about your child that you think would be helpful for me to know? Please communicate with me your thoughts, questions and concerns. I am in your child's life every day; it's my goal to make a powerful and positive impact, so let's work together to make that happen.

I can promise you the best of myself for your son or daughter, each and every day. I look forward to meeting you at parent/teacher conferences.

Sincerely,

Melissa Nikolai

school phone: 435-645-5650

school email:mnikolai@pcschools.us