

Miss Findley's 3rd Grade Parent Meeting

Thursday, September 1st, 2016

Dear Parents,

I hope that this information packet will help you in the coming year. Communication between teacher, child and parent is a critical element in academic success.

After reviewing the information, please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions. Email is the best way to reach me. Generally, I will respond within 24 hours.

I am looking forward to a great year!

Sincerely,

Bess Findley
lfindley@houstonisd.org

I. ANCILLARY AND CONFERENCE SCHEDULES

Should the need arise to meet with me, I am happy to schedule a conference time to meet with you. The most convenient time to plan a conference will be during your child's ancillary classes on Monday, Thursday or Friday from 9:50 – 10:40. You can always communicate with me via email. However, per school policy, I cannot reply to parent emails during instructional time with the children. I can reply to e-mails before and after school. I occasionally have a moment during ancillary to check through my emails, but more often than not I am not sitting down at my computer. If there is something you need to communicate with me during the school day, kindly call the school office or send a written note with your child to school.

II. MONDAY FOLDERS & GRADED WORK FOLDERS

Monday folders serve as a means of communication between school, PTO, teacher, and parents. Your child's folder will be sent home on Monday's (unless Monday falls on a holiday). I will include the weekly newsletter along with any permission slips, project details, and any other important classroom information in the Monday folder. Your child's work will be sent home in a green graded work folder on Wednesdays. Please review and discuss the enclosed work with your child. Any work that has a "Parent Signature" stamp at the top needs to be signed promptly and returned. This stamp indicates that your child received a grade of 74 or below. This signature will let me know that you are aware of your child's grade.

III. AGENDAS & HOMEWORK FOLDERS

The agenda book is new in third grade. It is a VITAL part of our day and a key component in student responsibility. We will write assignments and reminders in the agenda each day. The agenda is to be signed by a parent every night. The purple homework folders are another key component in student responsibility. Reading logs and other homework will come home in this folder each night. Both the agenda and homework folder are expected to go home every day and come back to school every morning.

IV. RULES AND CONDUCT

I strive to establish a classroom community that is positive, caring and comfortable.

I believe that a positive learning environment is critical to student success. I encourage my students to work together and build each other up in order to promote pride in their schoolwork as well as their friendships. I am a strong believer in positive reinforcement, so I have created a system that not only acknowledges students for positive behavior, but for actively engaging in learning as well. The following “essential agreements” are established on the first day of school and are enforced throughout the school year:

- a. Good behavior in the hallway (no talking)
- b. Silence while speaker is speaking (teacher or student)
- c. Be kind to everyone, always
- d. Try your best on every assignment!
- e. Ask questions to seek further understanding
- f. Complete assignments on time

Each week your child will receive a conduct grade. This grade will be recorded on the Friday section of the agenda, and will need to be signed each week. This conduct grade will be averaged to determine your child’s report card conduct grade. If there is a problem during the week and it is something that needs to be brought to your attention immediately, I will contact you by email or a note in your child’s agenda that day. The weekly conduct grade will follow the following system

- :
- E = Excellent
 - S = Satisfactory
 - P = Poor
 - U = Unsatisfactory

To keep up with student behavior/responsibility I use an “Oops Book”. The book is signed if a student comes to class unprepared (without homework), repeatedly disrupts class, is unkind/hurtful to another student, is disrespectful to a teacher, or if that student is in violation of any of the guidelines in the HISD student code of conduct book. The weekly conduct grade will be found each Friday in students’ agenda (see attached example).

I do not expect perfection. Satisfactory is certainly acceptable. I will let you know if there is a problem with your child’s conduct.

V. HOMEWORK

Homework is given to reinforce skills taught at school. Homework assignments are recorded in the agenda each day. Students are given ample time to write

down homework assignments in their agendas. Please sign/initial your child's agenda every night. Homework is generally due the following day. Students are required to read 30 minutes a night, four nights a week and record it in their reading log. Homework is not assigned on the weekends or on holidays. Occasionally, projects will be assigned. There is often some parental involvement required. Your child will receive clear instructions and plenty of time to complete these assignments. It is your child's responsibility to come to school prepared each day with his or her homework completed.

VI. SUBJECT AREAS

a. Reading

The reading program is comprised of a Interactive Reading Concept Notebook and a novel study program to reinforce the reading strategies throughout the year. The interactive reading concept notebook is designed to introduce, apply and assess reading objectives. We will focus on concepts such as: vocabulary development, author's purpose, main idea, summarization, etc. Each concept will be assessed in various ways. Our reading concept study and our novel studies actively engage students in critical thinking strategies and application of skills based on the work of Benjamin Bloom. They will cover the third grade state and HISD objectives. One very important thing you can do to support your child for the STAAR test, and as a reader, is to encourage him/her to read, read, read! Third grade classes participate in three programs that foster reading: Bluebonnet Books, AR (Accelerated Reader) and monthly reading logs. You will be receiving information about these programs in the near future if you have not already.

b. Language Arts

We will teach basic language skills in accordance with the third grade TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills). Daily Language Review will address sentence structure punctuation, capitalization and word usage skills. Writing skills will be specifically addressed. West U uses the "Six Traits of Writing" program. You will see writing rubrics that address the six traits of writing. These traits are reinforced in the writing lab ancillary classes. The students will produce various writing pieces including personal narratives, fictional stories, poetry, and research reports. Our program includes weekly lessons

in grammar, spelling, and writing.

c. Spelling and Vocabulary

Spelling curriculum will be handled by way of weekly spelling units with homework packets issued each Monday. These spelling homework packets are due in class on Thursday morning. Spelling tests will be given on Fridays. In the fall semester we will cover one lesson in the 4th grade Wordly Wise workbook every two weeks. Students will be tested on the spelling of the Wordly Wise words on the weekly spelling tests. After winter break we will cover one Wordly Wise lesson per week. Students will be responsible for knowing the definitions and correct spellings in the Wordly Wise Lessons.

d. Handwriting

Students will learn and use the Zaner-Bloser style of cursive handwriting. They will have completed their handwriting workbook practice by the end of the first semester. Some assignments will be required to be completed in cursive beginning in January, including spelling tests.

e. Math

Math will emphasize problem solving, basic facts, and skills and concepts that correlate with the state and district objectives. The Texas GOMath! Curriculum will be utilized and RTI and enrichment assignments are provided to extend, and break down, weekly concepts and skills. Math facts quizzes will be given according to the given schedule. These quizzes are simple computation problems that students are expected to know with automaticity. Multiplication facts (0-12) and basic division facts are to be mastered by the end of 3rd grade.

f. Social Studies and Science

Texas Science Studies Weekly and Texas Social Studies Weekly Newspapers will be used in addition to textbooks. Weekly open-notes tests will be taken every Friday. Students will be able to use their newspapers as well as any other notes or supplements we have completed that week. Before Winter break, we will alternate between social studies and science newspapers each week. After Winter break, we will begin to cover a Social Studies and Science newspaper each week. This allows students to master the format of the newspapers and the tests that go with them. Field trips,

in-class experiments and other supplemental activities will be used to reinforce skills.

g. Ancillary

Our ancillary period is 9:55 – 10:45. We rotate ten different classes, so the weekly schedule varies. I will try to remind the class each afternoon of the following day's ancillary. It is important for students to dress appropriately for the two PE rotations. I will include the weekly ancillary schedule in my weekly newsletter if it is made available to me in time.

VII. GRADING POLICY

Your child will be receiving both numeric and alpha grades on his or her report cards. They will receive a numerical grade for Reading, Language, Math Science and Social Studies. Ancillary teachers will give alpha-grades. The Language grade is computed as 30% spelling grades and 70% Writing/Language grades. The math grade is computed as 30% quiz/daily grades and 70% test grades. HUSD guidelines are as follows:

90-100 = A

80-89 = B

75-79 = C

70-74 = D

69 and below = F

I encourage you to use the computer program GradeSpeed. It is found on the HUSD website. This computer program will allow you to view your child's grades and progress. All students will receive a progress report at the mid point of each nine-week grading period.

VIII. RECESS

Recess is a favorite time for all students. With Houston's warm weather, the students are allowed encouraged to bring a water bottle. Also, birthday treats are permissible at recess. School policy states that birthday treats can be served anytime after lunch, but not in the classroom. Please make sure that any treats brought to school do not have peanut butter or any type of nut due to sensitive food allergies. Recess is the perfect time for birthday treats. You can send treats with your child in the morning. If you need to retrieve your child during recess, remember to first sign your child out in the front office.

SUMMER/HOLIDAY BIRTHDAYS: If your student has a birthday during the summer or during an extended holiday (ie – Winter break/Spring break) I will be assigning a random celebration day so that he or she can feel just as celebrated as the rest of the students in class. I will send out a “mock-birthday” schedule in the near future

IX. ATTENDANCE AND TARDIES

The first bell rings at 7:35. If your child arrives before the first bell, he or she must wait outside in front of the school or in the cafeteria. In case of inclement weather, students must wait for the first bell in the cafeteria. School and instruction begins at 7:45. Please help your child be on time. Tardies will be noted on the report card. Students with three or more tardies will be referred to the office. Dismissal time is 3:00pm. If you need to pick up your child early, please send a note in the morning and remember to sign your child out in the front office before you come to the classroom. This is a safety and school policy. Please provide an excuse note when your child is absent. E-mails suffice as written excuses. Written excuses must be turned in to me within three days of your child's absence. Make up work will be provided when applicable.

X. STATE TESTING

STAAR testing is scheduled for May 8th and 9th

XI. IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- a. Please notify me of any changes in phone numbers (home, cell, work) or address. It is important for the school to have this updated information in case of an emergency.
- b. If you, or any family member, plan to volunteer in a classroom, attend a field trip or other school activity, you must have VPS approval. Just log onto the HISD website and go to the community link. Allow a few weeks for approval.
- c. If your child is supposed to have a play date and you forget to tell them or planned it after your child is already in school, please do not expect me to read your email and tell your child of his or her change for dismissal. Like previously noted, it is rare that I get a chance to sit down and read emails until after school. It is very important to plan ahead for everyone involved.

XII. TECHNOLOGY

I LOVE the use of technology in the classroom. I will be implementing many technology resources over the next few weeks that will help support students' reading, math, spelling, and vocabulary skills. If you are uncomfortable with technology, have no fear! I will provide you and your student with step-by-step instructions for any technology resource that I introduce. I have seen tremendous benefits from using technology in the classroom and I am looking forward to continuing the positive trend.

XIII. HELPFUL RESOURCES

- a. I have attached both the "Reading Strategies" checklist and the "CUBES" problem solving guide that we will be using throughout the year to build problem solving and testing skills. These lists will be a great resource for your student to have at home to complete assignments.
- b. Don't forget to sign up for REMIND. I have used the app in previous years of teaching and it has proved itself as a valuable tool for quick updates, reminders or alerts to parents.
- c. My classroom website – I am excited to introduce my classroom website this year. This website will serve as an excellent source of information for you this year. All newsletters, study supplements, classroom wish list items, technology links, and classroom information will be accessible through this site. www.fearlessin3rdweebly.com

Thank you for sharing your child with me this year. I am looking forward to seeing each of my students grow and learn. It is going to be a fantastic year!