

Parent Information

September 10, 2008

Dear Parents,

I would like to welcome you to Palmer Lake for the 2008-2009 school year. Hopefully, by working together we can make this a great year for your child.

Reading – Our third grade team has developed a plan for a comprehensive language arts program to meet the needs of all students. One part of language arts, about 50 minutes per day, will be “Leveled Reading” time. During this time, students will go to one of the third grade rooms for skill development at their instructional level. This will include phonics as well as comprehension skills and strategies. Students will be reading literature at an appropriate level of challenge.

Another part of reading will be in our homeroom. There we will do shared reading. The students may read the story as a whole group, partner read, listen to the story on tape, or I may read the story to the class. The students will respond to the stories by answering comprehension questions, predicting what might happen next, or by writing in response to what was read. Spelling grammar, usage and mechanics will be correlated to these materials.

To further enhance your child’s reading skills, **your child is required to read 600 minutes monthly outside of school.** Books read during this time are mostly self-selected books at their independent reading level. **Students are required to record their daily minutes on the monthly calendars that I will send home at the end of the month.** Please have your child **return the calendar to me at the end of each month.** **This will start in October.**

In addition to reading monthly the students are also **required to earn 5 accelerated reader points each trimester.** Students will read an accelerated reader book and after completing the book will take a computerized comprehension test on the book that they have just read.

Monthly Calendars - A monthly calendar will be sent home at the beginning of each month. This calendar has the dates for the special things we are doing for the month, things students need to bring to school, VIP’s for the month, and what spelling unit we are on. A parent letter will also be included letting you know what we will be doing for the month.

Spelling – Our spelling program is part of the Harcourt reading program. The spelling program is a combination of words grouped phonetically and by frequency of use in reading and writing. **The first 15 words on the list are the core words that everyone will do.** The last 5 are challenge words that not all students will do. **Students will do all of the words until we talk at conferences in October.** We have a pretest on Monday and our posttest on Thursday. Watch the monthly calendar for what spelling unit we are on. I have included a list of all the spelling words to keep at home.

This year your child will also be participating in an “at-home” spelling program. The purpose of the “at-home” program is to help your child learn the weekly spelling words and to promote retention of the spelling words. It also starts teaching study skills by setting aside a small amount of time to do homework each night. **Students are to do the first 15 words on the list.** If they do all 20 words they will get extra credit points. The activities for the week are:

Monday – Write your words in alphabetical order, due on Tuesday.

Tuesday – Use your words in a complete sentence, due on Wednesday.

(Try to have at least 7 words in each sentence.)

Wednesday – Study your words for your test on Thursday.

Unit 6 is always a reading test and their won’t be any spelling that week.

Math –

Daily Schedule - I have listed our daily schedule below. I hope this will help in planning doctor and dentist appointments.

8:50 Opening / Morning Meeting
9:15 Math
10:15 Reading, Language and Spelling
11:15 Lunch/Recess
12:15 Handwriting/Storytime
12:45 Physical Education/Music
1:15 Science/Health Snack Time
1:50 Leveled Reading
2:45 Social Studies
3:05 Closing
3:20 Dismissal

Homework - Third grade students will not have a lot of homework, if they use their time wisely at school. They should be doing their at-home spelling assignments and also reading each night. Thirty to forty minutes of study time a night is plenty for a third grader. Please call or talk to me at conferences in October if they are spending more time on homework.

Late Work - Work that is not done on time will require the students to fill out a late work slip. Late work will be sent home that night with the late work slip. Late work slips are to be signed by you and returned to school the next day with the completed work.

Special Activities - We have planned many fun activities this year. More information on these activities will be coming at a later date. I have listed our activities and their date below:

Third grade has the following celebrations planned for this year:

October 31st Halloween Party

February 14th Valentine’s Day Party

June 5th End of the Year Picnic (Rain date June 6th)

Please mark your calendars as we will need a lot of parent help with these activities.

Conferences – I have included my conference dates so you can plan ahead. They are:

Monday, Oct. 16th 7:20 – 8:20 & 3:30 – 6:00
Tuesday, Oct. 17th 3:30 – 8:00 Family Night
Monday, Oct. 23rd 3:30 – 8:00 Family Night

Snacks - Students may bring a **nutritious snack** such as fruit, cheese and crackers, popcorn, applesauce, etc. They can also bring water or juice to drink with their snack. Please don't send boxes of snacks to keep in their desks. Please refer to the list of acceptable snacks that was sent home with the newsletter. Remember **no chips, cookies, cakes, donuts or candy.**

Home-School Envelope – School information will be sent home in the home-school envelope. This envelope will be coming home every **Wednesday**. The envelope should contain school information and flyers sent through the school office. **Please empty the folder and return it to school within the next week.** This will let me know that the information reached your home. Completed work for the week will be sent home in the students take home folder on Wednesday. Please empty the folder and send it back to school.

VIP - During the year your child will be highlighted in our classroom as the “V.I.P.” (Very Important Pupil). Each student will have a turn to be the special person in our class. Please watch the monthly calendars for the dates assigned to your child or see the schedule included in the parent packet.

Assignment Notebook - Each student will be filling out an assignment calendar each day. This is a notebook type calendar that was purchased for them. **The notebook should be brought home each night for you to initial.** The purpose of this is to keep the students organized about what work they have to do, and also help keep you informed. If an assignment isn't completed it will be circled and should be completed at home and sent back to school the next day. If an assignment is complete there will be a ✓ in the completed box. **If you have any messages for me please write them in the message section of the assignment notebook.** I check these each day. Students can earn a chance ticket if the notebook has your signature, a date at the top and the assignments written in.

Standard Heading – Students in Room 21 are required to use a standard heading on all of their assignment. This is on the right side of their paper and should include the following:

First name, Last name and student number
Day of the week, Month, Day, Year
Subject
Assignment

Testing - Students will have chapter tests after finishing a chapter or unit. **Study guides will be sent home for them to review about a week before a test.**

Grades – Our grading scale is listed below:

99 – 100	= 4
90 – 98	= 3
70 – 89	= 2
69 – below	= 1

Computer – We will be teaching keyboarding in third grade. I will send more information on this when we start. Students are allowed to do their spelling homework on the computer after we have finished teaching the keys. Please remind them to keep their fingers on the home row.

Birthday Treats – Students may bring a birthday treat. If your child’s birthday is in the summer you can pick a date and send a treat if you wish. Please refer to the list of suggested birthday treats sent home.

Palmer Lake Web Page – This information and my monthly parent letter and calendar can be found on the Palmer Lake web page. We have all of this information and more at www.district279.org and follow the prompts to Palmer Lake.

Gifts - I do not accept gifts for any occasion. I do enjoy homemade cards from my students. If you feel you must give me a gift, **PLEASE** make a donation to your favorite charity in my name.

Please feel free to call me if you have any questions or concerns. My number is 763 561-1930. If it is an emergency (your third grader is going to have a sleepless night or you are) don’t hesitate to call me at home. My home number is 763 494-6993. I have included my business card in the parent packet.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Capper-Eckstein