

Parent Information

September, 2009

Dear Parents,

I would like to welcome you to Palmer Lake for the 2009-2010 school year. Hopefully, by working together we can make this a great year for your child.

Reading – Our fourth 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 90 minutes per day, will be “Leveled Reading” time. During this time, students will go to one of the fourth 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. They will also 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 20 to 30 minutes daily 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 will be sent home by your child’s teacher.** Please have your child **return the calendar to their classroom teacher at the end of each month.**

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.** The last 5 are challenge words. I have included a list of all the spelling words to keep at home. Spelling is done in your child’s leveled reading group.

Math – Your child is learning math in an innovative program called *Math Expressions*. This program interweaves abstract mathematical concepts with everyday experiences of children. This approach helps children to understand math better. In *Math Expressions* your child will learn math and have fun by:

- Working with objects and making drawings of math situations
- Working with other students and sharing problem-solving strategies with them
- Writing and solving problems and connecting math to daily life
- Helping classmates learn

Your child will have math homework almost every day. He or she needs to complete the work at home and return it to school the next day.

Multiplication facts need to be mastered in fourth grade. I have included some time tests in your folder so they can study at home.

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

| | |
|--------------|---|
| 8:40 | Opening |
| 9:00 | Science/Health (Homeroom) |
| 930 | Reading, Spelling, Language |
| 11:00 | Correct Math Homework |
| 11:15 | Lunch/Recess |
| 12:15 | Math |
| 1:10 | Social Studies (Switch) |
| 1:45 | Focused Intervention Skills Help (F.I.S.H.) (Tues., Wed., Thurs.) Homeroom (Mon. & Fri.) |
| 2:15 | P.E./Music (Day 1,3,5 P.E./Day 2,4,6 Music) |
| 2:45 | Handwriting/Art/Study Hall |
| 3:00 | Closing (Assignment Notebook)/Afternoon Meeting |
| 3:20 | Dismiss |

Homework - Fourth grade students will have some homework. They should be reading each night and doing their math homework. Thirty to forty minutes of study time a night is plenty for a fourth 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 go to noon study hall. This will be during their recess time.

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:

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Oct. 31 st | Fall Party |
| Dec. 18 th | Winter Party |
| Feb. 12 th | Valentine Party |

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

Tuesday, Oct. 13th 3:30 – 7:30

Tuesday, Oct. 20th 3:30 – 7:30

Thursday, Oct. 22nd 3:30 – 7:30

Snacks - Students may bring a **nutritious snack** such as fruit, cheese and crackers, popcorn, applesauce, etc. They can also bring water or juice (100% juice) to drink with their snack. Students are not to keep boxes of snacks in their desks or lockers. Please refer to the list of acceptable snacks that was sent home in the Wednesday envelope. 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, sign it and return it to school within the next week.** This will let me know that the information reached your home. Completed work will be sent home in the students take home folder. Please empty the folder and send it back to school.

VIP - During the year your child will be highlighted in our classroom as the Very Important Pupil (“V.I.P.”). Each student will have a turn to be the special person in our class. **Please watch the weekly calendar for the dates assigned to your child or see the schedule included in your parent packet. I have also included a sheet for them to fill out in the parent packet.** This sheet will be posted on the bulletin board in our room the week that they are “V.I.P.” There is also a sheet in the parent packet with other ideas about what to bring when they are “V.I.P.”.

Assignment Calendar - All students will be filling out an assignment calendar each day. This is a notebook type calendar that you 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 – My students 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:

| | |
|------------|-------|
| 90– 100 | = A |
| 80 – 89 | = B |
| 70 – 79 | = C |
| 69 – below | = D/F |

Computer – We will be reviewing keyboarding in fourth grade. Please remind them to keep their fingers on the home row. Also, students will do a power point presentation during the year.

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. We are asking that you send a nutritious treat such as apples, pretzels, or popcorn. Your child can chose an activity for the class to do instead of bringing a treat. Some activities might be:

- Reading a book to the class
- Play a game selected by the student

Reward System – The reward system we use in fourth grade is receiving “Respect and Responsibility” tickets. Students earn these tickets for following directions, helping others, doing well on a paper and for many other reasons as well.

At the end of each month, I have a reward for those students who have earned the number of tickets set by the teacher.

Palmer Lake Web Page – This information and my weekly 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.

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 fourth 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. If I’m not home please leave a message (make sure you include your phone number and how late I can call you back) and I will return your call.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Capper-Eckstein