

August 2010

Dear Parents,

Hello! My name is Mrs. Reed and I will be your child's third grade teacher this year. I am very excited to start a new year and to get to know you and your child. My husband Peter and I have two children, a five-year old daughter named Hayley who will be in kindergarten this fall! In addition, we have a daughter, McKinley who will be starting fourth grade. Our third and fourth child is really a rat terrier dog, named Cayla and Jules, a black lab puppy. Only the human children will be attending Field. Our summer has been busy, with a family trip out west and conferences for me. I hope that you have had an enjoyable summer too.

I would like to give you a brief background of my teaching career. I will be going on my fourteenth year with Jefferson County Public Schools, and I LOVE being a public school teacher. I hold a B.A. in history and Spanish from Coe College (Cedar Rapids, Ia) and a teacher's certification in grades K-5 from the University of Louisville and a M.A. in Elementary Education from University of Indiana, Southeast. As a classroom teacher I have worked with grades second, third and fourth. I have worked at JCPS eSchool (the district online virtual school), wrote curriculum for the district, have been an instructional coach and a redesign elementary resource teacher.

My teaching philosophy revolves around the belief that teachers and parents are in a cooperative venture to do what is best for each child. I view my teaching job as a serious responsibility and will work hard at bringing out the best in your son/daughter. If there is anything that you feel that I should know about your child, please drop me a note at school, or give me a call at 502-485-8252. I have an "open door" policy, so please do not hesitate to contact me throughout the year with any questions or concerns.

The school supply list is included in this take home folder. When your child returns his/her supplies back to the classroom, please clearly mark these supplies, so that they can be easily identified. One item that was not on the list that I encourage you to purchase is post it's. Keep in mind that third graders have many materials in their desks and they can easily misplace materials. Thank you in advance for your cooperation regarding this matter.

The following information is to acquaint you with some general information regarding our classroom. I hope this section will answer many of your questions. I suggest keeping this letter somewhere familiar and accessible throughout the year.

Every week you will receive a newsletter either authored by myself or by some of your children! In this newsletter there will be notes about upcoming field trips, information about what your child is learning in the classroom, notifications about upcoming

assessments, and of course other information that will help to keep you informed of what is taking place in our classroom community.

ORGANIZATION, CLASSWORK, HOMEWORK:

One major goal that your children will be undertaking this year is to improve their organizational skills. Each student has an agenda notebook to help with this. The agenda will also help to keep you informed of assignments, tests, and up-coming projects. I usually give a week's notice for tests, and a study guide. Homework in third grade should take approximately 30 minutes each day. Monday through Thursday the following subjects will be a current homework assigned theme: Math Investigations 2 and Reading. Writing will included as 1/3 to 1/2 of the nightly assignments. If your child misses assignments, they will need to make up these assignments. All agendas must be signed nightly on the line indicated by a parent or guardian. This is each student's responsibility to have their parent sign the agenda.

GRADING

1. Please go to www.jefferson.kyschools.us
2. Click on PARENTS tab
3. Scroll all the way to the bottom till the Policies and Information subtitle.
4. Click on the grading Student progression, promotion, and grading procedures link.

MONTHLY MATH FLUENCY FACT PRACTICE:

This year in math, we will continue to use the district's adopted mathematics program, Math Investigations 2. Students will be required to learn and memorize all math facts (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) on a rotating basis until they are at fluency. To help students gain proficiency in this area they will be using flashcards and learning math songs. There will be more information about this at our parent night. Please let me know if you have any questions about this topic.

BOOK CLUB ORDERS

Periodically I will be sending book and/or software club order forms home with the children. This is a wonderful way to encourage reading and build your child's library at bargain prices! Please note the due date on the form, and send in all orders with a check made out to the appropriate book club. Thank you.

CURRICULUM

Your child will be learning in a rich language, engaging and critical thinking environment. There will be a strong emphasis in organization, goal setting, and developing independence. Learning is balanced in all the academic areas, focusing on shared, small group, partner/buddy, and independent learning. Cooperative learning, oral discussion, writing to learn, mnemonics, graphic organizers, technology and hands-on learning are the norm. Students' background and individual learning styles are explored and instruction is differentiated to meet each child's individual learning needs.

This year will be the school's second in using "Math Investigations 2". Investigations 2 is a program that focuses on conceptual understanding. Students are encouraged to think creatively, and to develop and articulate their own problem-solving strategies. They will participate in engaging games that reinforce their understanding of important mathematical concepts and skills.

I am excited teaching reading. Rigby is a researched based, developmental reading program. The students will also be exposed to the 5 block literacy model and will be exposed to a wide variety of genres including realistic fiction, biographies, historical fiction, poetry and plays. This is the time in which they will also learn social studies, by reading in the content area of social studies. Differentiation will be utilized to accommodate different learning styles and the levels of the students. Flexible grouping, center activities, direct instruction, read aloud, writing to learn, and word work, reading strategies, open ended questions, and word work will be the core elements of my reading instruction. A focus strategy or focus core content skill will be taught each week with each passage and/or theme. The strategies your child will learn will help to promote their comprehension, independence, and fluency. Assessment includes classroom tests, district benchmarks and the CATS test in the spring. Scores for these tests will be reported on the report card and sent home.

Science will be learned through developing science notebooks and using "FOSS Modules". This program incorporates an investigative, inquiry-based approach. Students are encouraged to develop curiosity, aptitude for evidence, critical analysis and reflection, sensitivity to the world around them, and a love for learning about the world around them. Students will take tests and quizzes. Study guides for all science tests will be provided prior to these tests.

Writer's Workshop. In writing, students will practice and continue to develop their skills of the writing process: planting seeds, prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. Each day, students will be exposed to a writing strategy, engage in writing time, and share their work during author's chair. We will focus on one genre at a time. They are: Literary (poetry); Transactive (persuasive); and Reflective. The students will also work on responding to reading, writing letters, and writing answers to open ended questions.

Chinese: Students will continue to receive Chinese instruction once a week.

Technology: The classroom has three computers for student use. Third graders will have the opportunity to work with programs such as Microsoft Word, Powerpoint, and Excel. They will also be enrolled in a JCPS online course to receive individualized coursework and projects.

For each of these curriculum areas, you will receive a notice prior to each unit providing you with information about that unit. This information will be found in the weekly newsletter.

Classroom Behavior

This year Field Elementary has adopted the district Care for Kids program. This program helps students to build discipline from within themselves, from a feeling a growth and self confidence. Our class will be developing rules and norms from which we will have meetings to discuss whether or not we're working towards these standards or whether or not we have to revise. Our class norms are:

- Respect and support the ideas, thoughts, rights and property of yourself and others
- Solve problems peacefully and using your "I feel" language
- Commit yourself to learning and being accountable
- Work at your best level and do your best job

Prior to sending students down to the office for a referral, the following steps will be taken:

- First violation: teacher – warning
- Second violation: teacher and student problem solving conversation with communication being made to parent
- Third violation: minutes taken away during outside time and communication being made to parent
- Fourth violation: referral to office with a phone call or letter sent home to parent

Other things we do in 3rd grade:

- Have 3 parties: Fall, Holiday, and Valentines
- Have popcorn or educational –yet- fun activities for good Care for Kids Behavior and compliments from teachers and other students
- Take the CATS test in reading and math
- Attend choice classes
- Field Trips to educational places like the Louisville Library and Plays
- Have fun...learn...dance...sing...laugh...celebrate...understand...become a family!

I hope that this information has been beneficial to you and ask for your continued support in making this a successful year for your child. Again, please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or concerns.

Here's to a great and successful year!

Mrs. Reed