THIRD GRADE EXPECTATIONS

GRADING

All of our schools and teachers will be implementing grading practices that will improve student learning and communication between teachers, students and parents/guardians. After a year and half of research and collaboration with our teachers, principals, district personnel, and visiting other districts throughout the state, we are proud to be piloting tenets of standards-based grading and reporting. Our grading practices are based upon the research of Dr. Robert Marzano, Dr. Doug Reeves, Ken O’Connor, and countless other researchers and educators who have successfully implemented standards-based grading practices and strategies in their schools and classrooms.

According to the research:
1. Grading based upon performance standards increases learning clarity and achievement
2. Involving students in the assessment process enhances student motivation and success
3. Class time feels more purposeful to both students and teachers
4. Grades begin to more accurately represent learning

In the Adams 12 Five Star School District, standards-based grading and reporting is focused on giving feedback to students, about what they know, understand and are able to do. As educators in Colorado, we are responsible for meeting and exceeding the standards that have been adopted by the State of Colorado, and through these standards our students will be assessed. A student’s academic grades will reflect how well he or she can demonstrate their knowledge of the standards through a variety of methods. Grades will only reflect a student’s knowledge of the standards and evidence outcomes.

Standards Based Assessment and Grade Reporting Tenets

1. Grades and assessment scores must be based solely on achievement of standards. Factors such as effort, growth, attendance, behavior, and attitude will be reported.
2. Student learning for the identified educational objective(s) will be evaluated based on district rubrics, proficient/advanced student work samples, and checklists.

3. In order to make valid, reliable judgments, multiple varied assessments will be used to grade on a standard/essential outcome. Written responses, oral responses and performance-based assessments are all considered acceptable forms of assessment.

4. A student’s level of achievement of a standard/essential outcome at any given time is best approximated by trends evident in his/her most recent assessments. In order to determine the student’s current level of proficiency with respect to the standard, teachers use professional judgment based on evidence (Wormeli, 2009). Grades then are not the results of the mean of all assessments.

5. The use of zeroes for missing or incomplete assignments is misleading. In the context of a standards based grading system, a zero indicates the lack of any knowledge or skills. Therefore, a zero for missing or incomplete assessments/assignments does not accurately represent a student’s level of knowledge in regards to the standards. A symbol such as INC or M (missing) should be used instead.

6. Multiple opportunities allow students to demonstrate their level of competence with respect to a standard. This requires additional learning on the part of the student, and possibly additional teaching by the teacher before a re-assessment. In these situations, teachers need to be aware of what needs to be re-assessed right away or if a particular concept can be reassessed later as part of a spiraling learning process. Wherever possible/practical, students should be given multiple opportunities for re-assessment to demonstrate their current level of understanding and mastery of standards.

7. Homework and practice is not calculated into trend data that is used to formulate a student’s grade.

**HOMEWORK**

We believe that homework should be an extension of things the students are working on in the classroom. Our purpose for homework is to give the students an opportunity for extra practice, not for the students to have to spend the bulk of
their evening finishing their homework, or for the parents to have to do the teaching. If you find that your student does not appear to understand the concept in the homework, and you are spending the majority of your time teaching rather than clarifying directions or reviewing a skill, please write us a note. We don’t want the students or their parents to be frustrated with the work that is sent home.

Nightly homework includes and should be completed in this order:

1) Math Home Link - 10-15 minutes
2) Spelling Practice - 10 minutes
3) Nightly Reading and/or Writing 10-15 minutes

Homework should take a total of 30 minutes each night. Therefore, if the math home link only takes five minutes for your student to complete and 10 minutes of spelling practice, then he/she should spend the remaining half hour reading and/or writing. A reading/writing log will be sent home each month for your child to record the number of minutes spent on reading and/or writing each night. If this log is not turned in at the end of the month, she/he might miss Friday Fun (the reward for behavior and completion of homework on a weekly basis).

The third grade teachers understand that you have busy lives, and we try to be very flexible. We appreciate it when parents come directly to us with their concerns and schedule a conference when needed. This enables us work out solutions that benefit each child’s education.

**DAILY PLANNERS and HOMEWORK FOLDERS**

Planners will help students organize their homework assignments. These notebooks will be sent home on a daily basis. Students are responsible for bringing these planners back to school each day. Please feel free to jot us a note in your child’s planner if you have any questions or concerns. Daily communication between home and school is essential to a child’s success!

Third graders also have homework folders. Homework will be sent home in these folders each day. Assignments must be completed and returned the following day. If homework is not completed, students might miss a privilege to make up the missing work. We want to develop responsible third graders, and ask that you do NOT bring your child’s homework to school if it has been forgotten. Please allow
the child to accept the consequences.

**FRIDAY FOLDERS**

Every Friday, your child will bring home his/her Friday Folder. In this folder you will find spelling tests, completed work, monthly curriculum-based newsletters, and informational flyers.

Please send the folder back to school on Monday empty of all papers. The papers are yours to keep.

**ATTENDANCE**

Missing lessons affects your child’s learning. Students need to arrive on time as lessons and learning begin immediately. Also, please avoid scheduling family trips on school days, especially during testing weeks (Dates - TBD).

**SPELLING**

Spelling tests will be given every Friday, except on short weeks. Students receive a spelling list for the next week on Friday and write the words in their planner. The test will include the words from the list, surprise words (misspelled high frequency words), and a dictation sentence.

The dictation sentence often includes words from the list, high frequency words, and sentence composing instruction given during the week. Points will be assigned weekly based on the number of words and instructional teaching focuses.

**EVERYDAY MATH**

District Twelve uses a math program called Everyday Math. This curriculum is closely aligned with state and district standards. “Home Links” (homework) are provided in a workbook for the entire year which parents received at Back to School Open House. Each one of these Home Links activities is vital to the next day’s lesson. The Home Link book should stay at home and Home Links should be torn out and handed in the next day. Also included in the Home Link book are Parent Letters for each unit. This letter will explain important math information for the next unit, as well as vocabulary used and ANSWERS to the Home Links for
each lesson. If the Home Link book is misplaced, parent/student must purchase a new one.

REWARDS/DISCIPLINE

We believe that focusing on positive rather than negative behavior can prevent most discipline problems. Therefore, we will reinforce positive behavior whenever possible, and reward students for cooperation and good choices. Appropriate classroom behavior is necessary in order to provide the best educational experience. The children are expected to be good listeners and participants. Respect toward parents, teachers, and classmates is a necessary ingredient for a safe, positive classroom.

In order to promote this type of environment, the third grade uses a system that specifically encourages good behavior. A student disrupting learning and breaking classroom and school rules receives a warning. If a student makes another poor choice during that SAME day, then the student loses a privilege for the day. During the third occurrence of disruptive behavior within a school day, a phone call home is made to the parents explaining the list of behaviors and all privileges are lost for the day.

On the other hand, as a reward for good behavior, third graders will be able to earn an extra “Fun Friday” learning activity. All students will participate in the “Friday Fun” learning activity only if a child’s parent did not receive a phone call regarding behavior and the student has turned in all homework/class work during that week. If a student has to miss “Friday Fun” because of behavior or missing work, he/she will stay in the classroom with a teacher to receive intervention, study hall, or one-on-one help. This system helps monitor behavior, and maintains a positive and productive classroom.

SNACKS / WATER BOTTLES

There will be a daily snack break during the morning. Students will be allowed, but not required, to bring a HEALTHY snack from home. Please do not send candy, soda, or any other items with high sugar content. Teachers will not be providing snacks for the students. Water bottles will also be allowed, and encouraged, since we do not have drinking fountains in the classroom.

Below are some guidelines for use of water bottles in the classroom.
1. 24 ounce bottle or smaller with a re-closeable lid
2. Please send water bottles sealed in a gallon plastic bag or place in a pocket that is not near books or the writing journal.
3. Water only (NO sugar beverages)
4. Do not freeze water, as it will “sweat” on materials and supplies.
5. Water bottles should return home every day. Bottles left at school are unclean and often a nuisance for custodial staff.
6. ABUSE IT AND LOSE IT!

**BOOK ORDERS**

We will be sending home monthly book orders from various book clubs. Please DO NOT SEND CASH. Send checks made out to the name of the book club (i.e. Scholastic Book Club), not the school. Please write separate checks for each book club order. Also, some teachers will be sending home information on how to order books online through Scholastic.