

WELCOME TO THIRD GRADE!

Dear Families,

Welcome to Room 16! I am looking forward to working with you this school year as your child's third grade teacher. Third grade is a very important year full of excitement and challenges, through which your child will grow and learn. This is the year that students transition from learning to read, to reading to learn. I am very excited to be part of this vital year in which we will see your child develop academic confidence. My goal, as an educator, is to facilitate learning in an exciting and fun way to see that your child becomes a lifelong learner. As a team, you, your child, and I will work together to ensure that your child is working to his/her potential in a successful and meaningful way at home and at school. We will be emphasizing good work habits, study skills, responsibility, and independence - all of which will allow your child to meet success in their educational journey.

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize you with my educational expectations for the upcoming school year. Please be sure to read all of the papers thoroughly and keep them handy, as they may answer many of the questions that come up throughout the school year.

I strongly encourage and welcome open communication between parents and the teacher. I enjoy calling home with good news so please don't be alarmed if you hear my voice on the phone. Likewise, please don't hesitate to contact me any time if you have questions or concerns about your child. I can be reached via email (**Jessica_miller@pasd.us**) or voicemail (**717-838-1331 option 6**) during the day or you may send in a note. During school hours, you will be put through to my voicemail. If you call before 8:00 a.m. or after 4:00 p.m. you can dial my extension (1216) and reach my voicemail as well. Email works great for little questions, however, if you happen to have a concern that needs to be discussed in depth, then I am always willing to speak over the phone or meet with you before or after school. Depending on my schedule, I may not be able to get back to you right away, but I will make every effort to contact you as soon as possible. Having said that, please do not email regarding urgent issues, as I often don't get to the computer until after the children leave. If you have a matter that needs addressed prior to the end of the day (i.e. change in dismissal) please call the office directly.

Thank you for entrusting your child with me this year. I look forward to working together in a cooperative partnership of support for your child's third grade experience.

Sincerely,
Jessica Miller

Home/School Notebook

We will use a three-ringed binder, which will serve to teach your child preparation, organization, responsibility, and provide communication between home and school. **The binder will go home every day and should be returned every morning.** The binder will contain your child's planner, homework, spelling book, papers going home, and a place for notes/papers you would like to send/return to school. **Please look through the notebook carefully. Papers coming home should be removed on a daily basis and kept at home.** Thank you for your support!

Homework

I believe completing and returning homework helps build independence, a sense of responsibility, good study habits, and prepares him/her for the homework he/she will have to complete in later school years, as well as reinforces the skills taught. Your child should complete this work by him/herself – asking questions as needed – under your supervision, and return it the next school day. Homework should be your child's best work. The homework papers should be placed in the "Homework" section of the three-ringed binder. Any missing work will be made up at recess time. **Please see that your child returns their homework and signed binder daily.** Homework in third grade should not exceed 30 minutes. If it is taking longer than this, please discuss this with me. Homework will be as follows:

Reading:

Each night (Monday-Friday) your child should read for 15 minutes in a book of his/her choice. Weekends are optional – left to parents' choice. This could be a book you have from home, the library, or one your child chooses from our library. Please check to be sure the book they choose is a "Good-Fit" book. This means that if there are more than five words on a page that they do not know, it is too difficult. We will be practicing this in school as well.

Math:

Third grade is a vital year for fact fluency – knowing each fact in three seconds or less. Math fact fluency is just as important as reading fluency. At this point, I want to be sure that they are fluent with their addition and subtraction facts. As we begin to learn multiplication and division, I will want those to eventually be fluent as well. Being fluent in these operations becomes very important as they move on to multi-step problems. Math fluency is being able to automatically know/say the answer without

hesitation (just like sight words – and, of, the, etc.) – within three seconds. Please provide flashcards for your child at home for **5 minutes/night** or have your child complete a session of the online program Xtra Math. Please alternate between addition & subtraction and eventually multiplication & division when taught. **Your signature in the homework planner will be evidence of them doing this.** I will also be sending home math homework (worksheets or workbook pages) most nights, as needed. Your child will have the assignment written in their planners.

Spelling:

Every day your child will bring home a spelling book in their spelling folder. **Please make sure the spelling book stays in the folder when you are finished helping your child practice.** They will be given a pretest containing the 16 words for the cycle on Day 1. They will also be given a paper containing the spelling list, which you may keep at home. Spelling tests will be given (on a separate piece of paper) on Day 6. Each week the list will consist of 10 words from the Waverly Integrated Spelling Program, 3 words from a phonics/spelling pattern, and 3 words taken from our Science, Social Studies, or Math unit. There will be a review test given after every five weeks. I ask that you practice the spelling words that your child missed on the pretest from Days 1-5. I am including a list of suggested activities they could choose from, but will also be sending home additional ideas in their spelling folder. **I will trust that your signature in the planner indicates that they have studied with you at home.** Please plan on giving them a quiz (Read the word. State the word in a sentence. Read the word.) every Day 5 on all of the words to be sure they are ready for the test. I will have spelling/word work opportunities in class to reinforce their words as well.

Suggested activities:

- Go to links on my website
- Write the words in alphabetical order.
- Type the words on a keyboard/computer.
- Under adult supervision write the words in whip cream, sand, peanut butter, shaving cream, sugar, pudding, with sidewalk chalk, wet paintbrush on cement, with pipe cleaners, magnetic letters, use ABC pasta, pull apart Twizzlers, Scrabble tiles, string, letter tiles (Scrabble), etc.
- Write a story or comic strip using all of your spelling words. Underline or highlight your spelling words.
- Draw a picture to represent each word and write the word inside the picture.

- Look through a magazine or newspaper to see how many spelling words you can find. Cut out the words you find and glue them on a piece of paper.

If there is a cycle where we are in school for 3 or less days we will NOT have spelling. I will communicate this to you via newsletter or having your child write it in their planner.

Occasionally, other assignments will be assigned, which will be written down in the planner. This will include upcoming tests, home projects, etc.

Planner:

At the end of each day there will be time for your child to copy down the homework for the day. It is their responsibility to be sure that they have written it down and collected all necessary items needed to go home. **Please be sure to supervise their completion of the homework and sign or initial their planner on a daily basis.** Any unsigned planners will count as missing homework. It is also their responsibility to be sure they completed the homework, put all necessary items back in their book bags to return to school, given you all papers coming home, and had you sign the planner. **I will also be updating the homework on the class website each day for your convenience.**

3rd Grade Curriculum

Reading, Daily 5, & CAFÉ:

In reading we will be learning while utilizing our CAFÉ Menu. Please refer to the attached CAFÉ Menu for strategies taught. The acronym CAFÉ stands for Comprehension, Accuracy, Fluency and Expand Vocabulary – strategies proficient readers use. CAFÉ reflects the belief that different children have different needs as readers, but that all readers, regardless of age, need instruction and support that helps them become more independent and self-reflective in their work. It is a flexible system, which provides a selection of strategy choices for the students. Strategies for each area are taught in a daily 15 minute mini-lesson. These strategies are then displayed on a “Menu-Style” bulletin board. Following the lesson students participate in meaningful and independent reading practice – Daily 5. These include Read to Self, Read to Someone, Work on Writing, Word Work or Listen to Reading. These research based tasks are ones that will have the biggest impact on student reading and writing achievement, as well as help foster children who love to read and write. During Daily 5 time I will be providing focused, intense

instruction to individuals and small groups of students. Students will be responsible for keeping a Reader's Response Notebook (which is neat and organized). The Reader's Response Notebook is a folder where the students will do many activities that may include keeping a log of books read, writing down their thinking while reading, responding to chapters or books through prompts selected or given, completing graphic organizers pertaining to a certain lesson taught, writing summaries of books, keeping a collection of new vocabulary words, setting goals for their learning, identifying (celebrating) what they are doing well, etc.

Writing:

We use the Write Steps writing program. In writing we will be working on improving the six traits: Content, Organization, Style, Focus and Conventions. We will also focus on Writing Presentation. We will be studying the art of writing fiction and nonfiction pieces (narrative, informative, persuasive, opinion). During writing workshop, students gather for a 15 minute mini-lesson and then have time to apply what they have learned through various writing experiences. This will include writing independently in a writing journal - prompts & free choice, collaborating with partners for shared stories, completing assigned writing projects, working on seasonal writing projects, etc. During this time I will be conferencing one-on-one or in small groups.

Handwriting:

Your child will be learning cursive handwriting this year. We use the Handwriting Without Tears program.

Science & Social Studies:

Science Units:

- Objects in the Sky
- Simple Machines
- Sound
- Animal Adaptations
- Water

Social Studies Units:

- Economics
- Civics & Government
- Geography
- Early History or Our Region

Math:

We use the Singapore Math Program (www.singaporemath.com, www.singaporemathforum.com), which emphasizes the development of strong number sense, excellent mental math skills, and a deep understanding of place value. The curriculum is based on a progression from concrete experience – using manipulatives – to a pictorial stage and finally to the abstract level or algorithm. This sequence gives students a solid understanding of basic mathematical concepts and relationships before they start working at the abstract level. Singapore Math includes a strong emphasis on model drawing, a visual approach to solving word problems that helps students organize information and solve problems in a step-by-step manner. The Singapore approach focuses on developing students who are problem solvers. You can have your child practice on the following websites:

- <http://thesingaporemaths.com/> – Model Drawing Practice
- <http://www.hoodamath.com/games/addition.php> – Addition # Bond Practice
- <http://www.hoodamath.com/games/subtraction.php> – Subtraction # Bond Practice
- <http://www.amblesideprimary.com/ambleweb/mentalmaths/numberbond.html> – # Bond Practice to 5, 10, and 100.
- Xtrmath.com – fluency practice
- coolmath.com – Math Games

Additional math resources can be found on the class website.

Math Units:

- Place Value
- Addition & Subtraction
- Multiplication & Division
- Data Analysis
- Length
- Weight
- Capacity
- Money
- Fractions
- Time
- Geometry
- Area & Perimeter & Volume

Assessments

Students will be assessed formally and informally throughout the year to monitor progress. Students will receive the following assessments:

- Study Island Benchmark (Math & Reading) – Fall, Winter, Spring
- PSSA's (Math and Reading) – Spring
- DRA assessments to determine reading levels
- District Writing Prompts
- Curricular Tests at the end of units
- Spelling Test – Day 6

Report Cards

Due to the rigorous nature of the Common Core Standards (CCS), your child will be assessed & receive report cards at three times instead of four to allow for more time for instruction, growth, & assessment. Report cards will be given at conferences (after 1st & 2nd trimesters) and sent home after the 3rd trimester. The CCS are a set of skills that each child is expected to achieve in each grade level in various content areas. Students receive an overall grade (A = Advanced 90%-100%, P = Proficient 80%-89%, B = Basic 70%-79% & BB = Below Basic 69% & below) for each of the main subjects and numbers (4-Exceeds, 3-Meets, 2-Progressing Toward, 1-Beginning to Develop, X-Not Assessed/Observed) for each of the sub-skills as well as letters (O-Consistent, S-Meets, & N-Needs Improvement) for Learning Behaviors.

Water Bottles

I do allow students to bring water bottles to class. If you wish for your child to have one please make sure the bottle is labeled with their name. Water only please.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special. **PLEASE NOTE that food is not permitted in regulation with the School Wellness Policy.** However, you can send in pencils, stickers, a classroom library book dedicated to your child, bookmarks, etc. If you are planning a birthday party for your child outside of school, please mail the invitations to your child's classmates. I realize it is hard to include everyone in your child's class in a birthday party, but as a teacher, I need to protect the feelings of those who have not been invited. When invitations are presented to only a few in school, the others are hurt by the exclusion. By keeping the invitation process out of school, everyone is happier. Thank you for your cooperation!

Scholastic Book Club

I will send home a Scholastic book order flyer about once each month. This is a wonderful relatively inexpensive way to build your child's home library and help our class at the same time. Our class earns Bonus Points with each child's order that I will use to buy more books and reading materials for the classroom. Books can also be bought as gifts. Just attach a note and we can make alternate arrangements for you to pick the order up. Book orders are an optional addition to your child's education. There is never any obligation to order. There are two ways to order – send in to me or place an order online, which gives you a coupon to get free books.

If you choose send me the order, please follow these guidelines:

- **Make sure your child's name is clearly marked on the order form.**
- **Make checks payable to the appropriate book club. Cash cannot be accepted.**
- **Enclose order form and the check in a sealed envelope, clearly marked with your child's name, Mrs. Miller - Room 16.**
- **Please send the envelope to school by the date indicated on the letter.**

Ordering online is fast and easy & you get a free book coupon:

- **REGISTER** at www.scholastic.com/bookclubs
- **ENTER** the Class Activation Code: **L7HM3**
- **CHOOSE** from thousands of titles
- **SUBMIT** the order to me online

Newsletter

Our class newsletter will be sent home every other Friday. It will contain important information about what is happening in class as well as any reminders or upcoming important dates. **This is my primary form of communication so please be sure to read them to see what we are learning.**

Attendance and Absences

A successful school experience is the responsibility of the child, the parent, and the school. Your child's progress, both academically and socially, is influenced to a great extent by daily participation. Regular attendance without tardiness is a key. If your child is sick or has an appointment, please call the office and let us know why your child is not in school. Then send in a note the next day. In the note, please include your child's first and last name, reason and date of absence.

Missed Work

If your child is absent and you want classwork/homework sent home with a sibling or another student in the building, please let me know. I will give the materials to the student you designate or leave them at the front office. Otherwise, the work will be made up or sent home on the returning day. Also, if you are planning a trip and would like work to take work with you please just let me know in advance. Thank you for your cooperation!

School Hours

School begins at 8:55 a.m. and dismissal begins at 3:30 p.m.. Children arriving after 9:00 are marked tardy. Please stop in at the office to sign your child into school if you arrive after then. Thanks for your cooperation!

Dismissal

If your child is going home a different way than his/her normal routine, please send in a note stating this at the beginning of the day. Please refer to the Student Handbook (www.pasd.us) for additional information.

Parent Involvement

Your support of school activities makes your child feel important and sends the message that you value school. I am always happy to have your help for special activities in the classroom & will be asking for volunteers at various points in the year. **For the safety of all students, it is asked that anyone entering the school go directly to the office, sign in, and wear a visitor's badge.** Thank you for your cooperation!

Classroom Expectations & Consequences

Please see the attached Room 16 Behavior Plan, & Cougar Celebration. My expectation for classroom behavior is that each student behaves in a way that does not cause problems for themselves or others. In order to ensure that this takes place we will discuss our class rules, consequences, and rewards during the first week and throughout the year. Students in our classroom community are encouraged and expected to treat all members of the class with kindness and respect. Bothering others, bullying and interrupting learning will not be tolerated. Should your child receive anything other than a "green" day I will communicate with you directly by writing in their planner or by calling you.

Thank you for your cooperation and support. I consider it a privilege to be your child's teacher. I'm look forward to an exciting and rewarding year with both you and your child. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have any questions and concerns.

Sincerely,
Jessica Miller

jessica_miller@pasd.us
717-838-1331 (option 6)

Thank you for taking the time to read through this handbook. Please contact me if you need further explanation, clarification, or have any questions. Please return the next page signed and dated. Thank you!

*Please visit the classroom website (<http://mrsmliller3.weebly.com/>) for updates and additional resources.

Please sign and return to school. Thank you!

We have read, discussed, and understand the handbook.

Student Signature

Parent Signature

Date