

Parent Information Packet

Second Grade - Room 23 - Mr. Hill

Welcome! The following information is intended to help you and your child start the school year off with success.

CURRICULUM: LANGUAGE ARTS

Second graders will spend approximately 2 1/2 hours each day on language arts activities. We use Houghton Mifflin Reading: A Legacy of Literacy which is a literature-based reading program with a focus on California content standards built into the daily instruction. The text is organized around 6 themes: Silly Stories; Nature Walk; Around Town; Amazing Animals; Family Time; and Talent Show. Each theme covers various aspects of language arts including phonics, comprehension skills, information and study skills, spelling, vocabulary, writing skills, grammar, listening and speaking skills. These skills will be taught in both whole group and small flexible skill group instruction settings.

Throughout the year, we will practice and reinforce reading comprehension strategies by using a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts from several different genres. The students will experience reading daily in a variety of contexts including whole group, guided process reading groups, and individual sustained silent reading.

The Houghton Mifflin Reading program also includes instruction in grammar. Practice of grammar will be done weekly by using Daily Oral Language. Students will be given sentences to correct that contain various grammatical and spelling errors. We will review the necessary corrections together in class.

Spelling is woven into the reading program. A spelling pretest will be given each Monday. It will be corrected in class. The spelling list will be sent home as part of the weekly homework packet for the students to study. Students who do well on the pretest will receive a "challenge spelling list" to study during the week. During the week students will do various activities in class and for homework to practice the words. A spelling quiz will be given each Friday.

Later in the fall, we will also be implementing an instructional model currently in use across our district that you will hear referred to as RTI (Response to Intervention) or ExCEL. This is a research-based approach that provides the opportunity to differentiate instruction to all levels of student learners by providing early intervention, prevention and accelerated instruction. The ExCEL model utilizes a team teaching approach where students are placed in flexible skill-based groups with students from other 2nd grade classes for about an hour a day. During this time, teachers provide language arts instruction specifically targeted at the skill level of their group of students. Students are frequently assessed to ensure progress toward

meeting or exceeding grade level standards. I will be sending out more information regarding the implementation of RTI later in the fall.

In writing, second grade students focus on narrative writing, writing well-formed paragraphs and writing friendly letters. Students will practice writing skills in a variety of settings including regular entries in their journals, writing to our class pen pals, narratives, reports and other writing projects. Students will experience the complete writing process from planning to final draft.

CURRICULUM: MATH

Scott Foresman-Addison Wesley enVisionMATH is the math curriculum recently adopted by Cambrian School District for grades K-5. enVisionMATH is designed to address the California Content Standards for 2nd grade which include the following strands: Algebra & Functions; Number Sense; Measurement & Geometry; Statistics, Data, Analysis & Probability; Mathematical Reasoning. The daily lessons connect interactive learning using a variety of math manipulatives with skill and problem solving practice. Each lesson also provides a "Visual Learning Bridge" that teaches math concepts step-by-step with purposeful, sequential illustrations. Concepts are reinforced in a variety of ways including computer animations, interactive individual and small group games, hands-on activities using math manipulatives, and guided practice activities. Second graders also practice addition and subtraction facts to increase their speed in automatic recall of these facts.

In addition to enVision, we also practice and reinforce second grade math skills through a variety of activities including solving word problems, math meetings, number talks, and other games and hands-on activities.

CURRICULUM: SOCIAL STUDIES

Neighborhoods by Houghton Mifflin is the district's second grade social studies and history text. Social Science/History standards include history, geography, economics, good citizenship, and current events. Students will differentiate between things that happened long ago and things that happened yesterday; demonstrate map skills; explain governmental institutions and practices in the US and other countries; understand basic economic concepts and their roles in the economy and demonstrate basic economic reasoning skills; explain how heroes from the past have made a difference in others' lives.

CURRICULUM: SCIENCE

The science curriculum is FOSS (Full Option Science System) California Edition from Delta Education. FOSS California Edition is a complete, modular, research-based K-5 science curriculum for teaching science in interesting and engaging ways. FOSS is developed at the Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California at Berkley with

input from California scientists and educators to provide teachers with all the resources they need to teach science effectively and efficiently.

Based on cognitive research about how children think and learn, FOSS uses an active learning teaching approach. Students perform active investigations by making observations, asking questions, making predictions, etc. The active investigations are followed by reading and writing exercises intended to reinforce what they learned in the active investigation.

The FOSS California Edition for second grade is divided into three modules: Balance and Motion, Insects and Plants, and Pebbles, Sand and Silt. These three modules are aligned with the California Content Standards for science in second grade.

Members of the 2nd grade team specialize in specific units for Social Studies and Science. At least once a week, students in room 23 will rotate to another 2nd grade classroom for instruction in Social Science or Science.

CURRICULUM: COMPUTER SOFTWARE

The students will be using the computer software in the classroom on a daily basis. Some of the computer programs we will be using this year are: Accelerated Reader, Classworks, & Star Language & Reading. Accelerated Reader is a program that offers quizzes on thousands of books. After a student reads a book, he or she may take a quiz on that book and earn points based on the results of the quiz. Classworks is a comprehensive set of programs and activities for both language arts and mathematics. Classworks provides leveled activities that are aligned with California Content Standards for second grade in language arts and mathematics. Classworks provides reinforcement for concepts learned in class. The Star Language and Reading program provides a general purpose assessment of a student's reading level.

CURRICULUM: ART/PE/MUSIC

Music will begin on a weekly basis with Ms. Barry, our music teacher, in September. The students will meet with Ms. Barry every Monday after lunch for a 30 minute music lesson. A music concert will be held January.

We will have PE every Friday afternoon. Please ensure your child wears clothing and shoes appropriate for PE on Fridays.

Our class will enjoy six Art Vistas lessons this year. Each lesson consists of a portion that reviews art prints and a hands-on project portion. In addition, every Friday afternoon, our class will have the pleasure of visiting Ms. Higa's class for an art lesson!

HOMEWORK

Every Monday a homework folder will be sent home. The folder will contain the homework that is to be completed Monday through Thursday evenings. It will also contain a summary of your child's behavior in class from the previous week. Stapled to

the front of every homework packet will be a homework checklist. As your child completes the assignments throughout the week, he/she should place a check next to the completed assignment. Please return the signed homework packet and behavior summary in the homework folder on the following Friday.

Homework is meant to reinforce skills introduced in the classroom. Homework will include some of these activities each week:

- Reading 15-20 minutes each night. It is very important that your child is reading at home every day. This reading can be done together or alone depending on the student's preferences.
- Math: Work book pages, challenge problems.
- Grammar: Worksheets, Daily Practice
- Writing assignment: Well-formed sentences, paragraphs, narrative prompts.
- Spelling: Students will be given several choices of activities to complete for practice.

Students who complete 10 homework packets and return them on time will receive a homework pass for one week! If your child is absent, he or she may be responsible for making up the missed assignments upon his or her return.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

In Room 23, starting with the first day of school, we establish three "tools" for success:

- Respect
- Caring
- Integrity

We use these "tools" as guidelines for behavior to establish a safe and constructive learning environment.

The behavior reinforcement system we use in Room 23 is based on positive reinforcement and "catching students making good choices." The emphasis is on choice: the students always have a choice when it comes to making decisions about behavior. Students who are demonstrating positive behaviors and making good choices can earn "Good Behavior, Great Choice" tickets making them eligible for a weekly prize drawing. In addition, the class as a whole earns marbles toward a "marble party" when the class cooperates to accomplish some goal. I also look for every opportunity to verbally note occasions when students are making good choices.

For students who need to be supported to make different choices, I ask them to "Give yourself a reminder." A reminder is a popsicle stick that the student places on their desk for the remainder of the day. If a student continues to need reminders regarding their behavior choices, a colored card system (green, yellow, orange, red) is used that provides them with warnings and feedback regarding their behavior. Consequences range from a warning (yellow card), loss of 10 minutes of free time or

privileges (orange card), and a phone call or letter home (red card) that needs to be returned the next day with a parent signature. Students always start the day with a green card and a clean slate! The behavior report that parents receive in the weekly homework folder reflects the status of the student's card at the end of each day. Timeouts to temporarily remove students from a negative situation and allow him/her to "cool off" are also used.

LIBRARY

We visit the library each Thursday afternoon after lunch. Each child will be able to check out two books. Also, if your child does not already have his or her own library card for the San Jose Public Library, second grade is an excellent time to begin!

CONTACTING ME

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. The best way to reach me is to call me or send an email note. Note that if you send me email, be sure to include the phrase "Farnham Parent" in the Subject line the first time you send me email. Otherwise the school district's SPAM filter may file your email away with other SPAM. I will do my best to get back to you within 24 hours. I am available to meet before school by appointment or after school. My contact information is at the end of this document.

THURSDAY ENVELOPES

School notes and information as well as completed class work will come home on Thursdays. Please sign and return the envelopes on Fridays along with the Homework folders. I would like to get the children in the habit of returning everything (Thursday folders and Homework folders) on Friday each week.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are welcome in Room 23! Opportunities include room parent, participating on field trips, and clerical tasks such as filing and copying. Art Vistas is also another great way to volunteer in the class. Please sign up if you would like to help. I will contact you shortly to confirm.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are in November 16-24. I will contact you in early November to arrange a timeslot.

SUPPLIES

Donations of supplies are always appreciated. Here are some common items that we will put to good use as a class:

- paper towels, tissues, baby wipes, Ziploc bags (sandwich, quart, gallon), colored pencils, hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, 8.5x11 white Xerox paper, Expo whiteboard markers (for student lap boards).

Thank you to all of you who have already donated supplies. We are most in need of tissues, disinfectant wipes, and hand sanitizer currently (for the long winter months when cold season hits). :-)

LIFESKILLS

At Farnham, all students are taught the eighteen lifeskills and shown how to use them to become a better citizen and friend. The eighteen lifeskills are Caring, Common Sense, Cooperation, Courage, Curiosity, Effort, Flexibility, Friendship, Initiative, Integrity, Organization, Patience, Perseverance, Pride, Problem Solving, Resourcefulness, Responsibility, and Sense of Humor. Please take the time to discuss these with your child and point out when you see the lifeskills being used at home.

NEWSLETTERS

Newsletters will be sent home monthly describing what we have been working on for the past month in Room 23 and giving you a preview of things to come.

CLASS WEBPAGE

I maintain a class web page that (hopefully) makes it easier to access information regarding your child's second grade class. Links to curriculum, "Back to School" information, newsletters, California Content Standards and other important information are all located on Room 23's webpage. The web page will be updated throughout the year. To access our web page, please use this web address:

www.cambrian.k12.ca.us/farnham/teachers/staffpages/room_23

Thank you for taking the time to read this!

Sincerely -

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