

Welcome
to the
3rd Grade GT Class



Hulstrom Options K-8
2012-2013

Mrs. Brenda Martin
Ms. Ryanne Van Sciver
Hulstrom Options School
11551 Wyco Drive
Northglenn, CO 80233
School Phone: 720-972-8991
brenda.martin@adams12.org
ryanne.a.vansciver@adams12.org

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Dear Third Grade Families,

We are so excited to help your children learn this year! We have enclosed some information about our classroom and school procedures. We hope you will take a few minutes to read everything. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please let us know!

Communication:

We believe communication between home and school is critical to a successful year. There are several ways we communicate with parents including the daily planner, Wednesday folder, Wiki, Facebook, emails, and occasional phone calls. Phone calls or emails are a means to contact us if you have questions or concerns. Please contact us first if there is an issue or concern you have. We always have an open door policy. The best way to contact us is through your student's planner daily reminders or quick notes or via email at Brenda.martin@adams12.org and ryanne.a.vansciver@adams12.org. We check our email at least once a day and will do our best to reply within 24 hours. Communication is very important so we ask that you please contact both of us with questions and concerns.

Wednesday Folders:

Every week your child will be bringing home a communication folder on Wednesdays. Inside you will find practice papers, graded assignments and additional notes and information. We ask that the folder be reviewed and signed by a parent or guardian, and returned on Thursday.

Technology:

Part of our 21st Century Learning is our use of technology. We will post new information about upcoming events, links to helpful sites, and student work on our Wiki. You will also find a link to our blog on the classroom Wiki. Students will be using this blog in class and at home to respond to their reading and to build a community of readers. You can expect to find daily status updates on our classroom Facebook page to fill you in on our day's events. You can access all of these communication avenues by going to our link on the Hulstrom website at <http://www.hulstrom.adams12.org/>.

School Hours:

7:45 Front Doors Open
7:50 Tardy Bell
3:00 Dismissal (except Wednesday, early dismissal is at 1:45)

Schedule:

Lunch/Recess: 11:45-12:25 (11:30-12:10 on Wednesdays)
Specials: 1:50-2:55 (Wednesday: 8:55-9:55)
21st Century Learning Special will be offered every fourth day from 8:30-9:30 unless it falls on a Wednesday, then it will be from 10:00-11:00.

Attendance:

It is so important that every child is at school every single day of the year. Of course, if a student is extremely ill, then please don't send them to school to spread their germs with others! Call the office 720-972-5400 if your student will be absent. If you would like to request make-up work, please send us an email by 9:30 a.m. Homework will not be ready to pick-up by the front office until 3:00 p.m. **Homework will not be provided ahead of time. If you are planning a vacation during the school year, please be aware that homework will be provided after you return.**

Materials:

Please have your child bring a backpack to school every day. This is the best way for important papers, assignments and planners to make it home each day. Please be sure to check your child's backpack and planner each night in order to stay aware of all that is happening in third grade. Listed below are some other items we would encourage each child to bring:

- ❖ Daily healthy snack item (no candy)
- ❖ Water bottle

Daily Planners:

Every night your child will be bringing home their daily planner. In the planner, you will find the homework for the evening. Please make sure that the planner is signed every night—even Fridays ☺). **This indicates that your child did their nightly reading.** This is the beginning of a daily routine that will continue throughout the school year. Students will earn one classroom dollar for a signed planner. If the planner is not signed, your student will not earn their dollar. Thank you in advance for your diligent effort and support in this continued exercise in study skills and school communication. This is also an excellent place to jot quick notes and/or questions that you have for us, as we check them daily.

Homework:

Homework is given Monday-Thursday nights. Homework assignments are to be recorded by your child in their planner. Students will receive nightly homework in math and reading. Students will also have weekly spelling homework using the website Spelling City. More information will come about this later. Some nights they may have additional review and practice in other subject areas. Throughout the year, we will have ongoing projects that will require additional time at home. Students should spend approximately 35-45 minutes on homework each night (25 minutes reading and 10-20 on other homework).

The purpose of homework is:

1. To give the student additional practice on a skill.
2. To give parent and child the opportunity to work together on an assignment.
3. To teach students responsibility for completing and returning homework.
4. To help the students realize that learning does not just take place in the classroom.

The reading homework consists of reading books at the students' reading level and responding to the classroom blog. We expect students to read for 25 minutes every night. Children can read library books, magazines, or even comics. We want to stress how important and critical it is for your child to read and to be read to, to ensure successful growth for this upcoming year! The math study links and will be sent home on a daily basis and is due the following day. There will be helpful tools, parent letters, and games to reinforce learning on our classroom website under the math tab for each unit. Please refer to the student planner for nightly homework assignments. If homework is not turned in on-time, the natural consequence will be to complete a "Think Sheet" and completion of the homework is still required.

Grading, Assessments, and Feedback

Students will receive most of their feedback in the classroom directly with the teachers, peers, and on self-evaluations. A major component of standards-based grading states that students are involved in the grading and assessment process and that their grades reflect the learning of a specific standard.

Positive Behavior Support (PBS):

Hulstrom has adopted a school wide positive behavior system. PBS is a proactive system designed to enhance learning through the instruction of clear expectations for all students in all school settings, especially students with challenging social behaviors, by establishing clearly defined outcomes that (a) relate to academics and social behavior, (b) support staff efforts, (c) support student success, and (d) use data to guide decision making. Listed below you will see our school wide rules. These rules will be expected and recognized at all times throughout the ENTIRE school. Our classroom rules will be modeled after the PBS rules. Students will be given a Shining Star award for displaying above and beyond behavior. Students will be given a Think Sheet to fill out and reflect upon when they have not met the behavioral expectations.

All Hulstrom Students are...

Successful Students who

Together with Teamwork

Achieve Excellence, while being

Respectful, Responsible,

Safe and Prepared

Allergies:

Every year we have students who have allergies. They can be allergies to peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, milk, eggs, soy, etc. Please be sensitive when sending snacks or birthday treats to school as some students may be at risk with a possible life-threatening situation.

Snacks:

You may send a snack to school with your child on a daily basis. Please send healthy items, such as fruits and veggies. Please do not send candy as a snack.

Birthdays:

Children are welcome to bring self-serving items in individual wrappers to handout at the end of the day. Please call or send a note with your student prior to the birthday if you plan on sending in birthday treats. The district policy encourages bringing alternative birthday treats; such as pencils, bookmarks, fancy stickers, bouncy balls, or healthy (non-sugary) treats. Birthday treats will be sent home, so that the decision to eat/not eat can be made with a parent. We also request that students distribute birthday party invitations after school to avoid hurt feelings.

Book Orders:

Students will have the opportunity to order books from school book clubs once a month throughout the year. Book orders will be available online through scholastic.com. Book orders will end the last Wednesday of the month. This is an optional activity. **For directions on how to order your books online please see the homepage on our classroom website.**

ACADEMICS:

Language Arts

This area is taught using a Balanced Literacy Program. The students work towards a goal to develop thinking and reading strategies known to be used by proficient readers. These strategies allow readers to read and understand different reading materials, so they can create memorable interpretations of what they have read. They also learn to read with passion and purpose. A combination of teaching children to use these reading strategies, read critically, and to ask questions promotes independent readers, which succeed in ever more challenging texts. We will be using *Junior Great Books*, novel sets and "just right" texts for daily reading instruction.

Students will be read to, as reading aloud is part of the daily routine in third grade. Students will read with others in a variety of ways. They will read with the teacher and other classmates. They will have an opportunity to select their own reading material from the classroom library and read to themselves or others as part of our Reading Workshop. Students will also have the opportunity to check out books from the Hulstrom Options K-8 library. A shared book is a fantastic experience. Family enthusiasm and enjoyment of a book creates a growing environment for young readers.

Each student is required to read a minimum of 25 minutes each day at home and complete any literacy homework. Students are encouraged to, but not required to, participate in Reading Counts and the Caldecott/ Newberry challenges.

In Writing Workshop, your child will learn how to develop a story by using a plan, drafting a story, revising for content, editing for mechanics and finally publishing a final draft. They will learn mechanics used in writing to make the flow of the story a smoother one for the reader. Peer editing and workshop groups will also be incorporated. Student Writing Rubrics will be provided for you and your child to look at together. Please be involved in your child's writing to help him/her become a proficient writer.

Mathematics

Our school district uses the *Everyday Math* program. Students are taught with a hands-on approach by "doing" math. We believe in using a math workshop approach where students work together in groups to learn a skill to ensure all students are challenged at their appropriate level for each standard. There are daily problems to solve and students show their solutions through written/oral language and pictures. Students are encouraged to talk and use written language in math so they can see that there are several ways to solve a problem. This math series also encourages parent involvement through "Home/ Study links" (homework). "Home/ Study Links" are a way for you to help your child practice math skills he/she is learning at school. Please practice multiplication and division facts with your child so your child will succeed in the classroom. Math instruction will be 1 year ahead of grade level.

Science and Social Studies

The curriculum is integrated in a manner so that students can develop a deep, well-rounded understanding of concepts that were introduced in the second grade and will be expanded upon in third grade. The topics that will be studied include:
Social Studies: timelines, community, economics, government, and geography;
Science: Earth's Movements, Insects (this is a new Colorado standard for third grade this year), and Matter/Energy.

We use History Alive for social studies and Delta and FOSS for science.

We are very excited about getting to know your child and having the opportunity to teach them! Let's have an amazing year!!!

Volunteers:

Our classroom is a child-centered environment. Using this approach takes many child/adult interactions. Children benefit from both peer interaction and child/adult interaction. Therefore, we are looking for parent volunteers who can share an hour or more each week with us. For parents who would love to support their child's classroom, but are not able to come in during the school day, we often have work that you can take home, complete and return with your child. Some examples include: book repair, assembling student books, cutting, gluing and coloring. These home volunteers are also vital to our classroom, because they make fun activities available that would not otherwise be possible. Please sign up for volunteering opportunities on our back-to-school page on our classroom website.

You must attend a parent orientation in order to volunteer at the school (if you have not already done so). This will provide you with school procedures that need to be followed in order to volunteer. Confidentiality is **KEY** when volunteering in the classroom.

Before Monday...

Back to School Night Form (online)

Volunteering Form (online)

Find us on Facebook

Sincerely,

Brenda Martin and Ryanne Van Sciver