

Back to School



Third Grade

Vejar Elementary School
909-594-1434

Welcome to Back to School Night! It is our goal to excite, enthuse, energize, and engage your children in the curriculum this year and to help them on their way to becoming organized independent students. Teachers, parents, and students must work together help to make the most of the elementary school experience. The following information will help you better understand my expectations so we can jointly support your child this school year.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Behavior and discipline in this class are based on 4 basic character qualities: *Conscience, Respect, Empathy, and Self Control*. These are the roots of the *C.A.R.E.S. (Conscience and Respect, Empathy, Self Control)* program that Vejar students have become very familiar with.

GRADES

A traditional grading scale is used on MOST assignments:

- A = 90 – 100%
- B = 80 – 89%
- C = 70 – 79%
- D = 60 – 69%
- U = 0 – 59%

Homework assignments are graded as “credit/no credit.” Full participation in homework assignments is expected for in-class assessments. Some homework assignments are student/self-corrected in order to gain accountability and for their own learning experience.

(Unsatisfactory)

CURRICULUM

Language Arts: Reading, Writing, and Spelling

Vejar’s third grade offers a print rich environment that reflects a wide range of literary examples and genres. The main focus of our reading program is the development of comprehension strategies and skills. Students will also continue to develop skills in vocabulary, word study, and decoding. Students interact with literature through read-alouds, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, “Book Clubs,” and/or literature circles. In addition to novels, chapter books, and picture books, our program includes the use of a state-adopted literature series by Houghton Mifflin. This series is based on the California State Standards and uses an integrated approach to teach skills in the context of each reading selection. This series has two hard cover books with 3 themes in each and 2 areas of focus. The themes and areas of focus are:

- Off to Adventure
- Celebrating Traditions
- Incredible Stories
- Animal Habitats
- Voyagers
- Smart Solutions
- Focus on Biography
- Focus on Trickster Tales

Literature is also used to ignite writing. Students will learn about the use of various forms of writing, including paragraphs, letters, notes, directions, etc. Students will also be using sensory details in their development of descriptive writing. Grammar and mechanics instruction is based on skills needed to bolster student writing.

The language arts program will also incorporate the use of science and social studies books into the curriculum. There will be a balance of both fictional and information reading and writing.

Spelling is taught using a phonetic approach along with the high frequency words used in writing. Master of spelling words should be demonstrated on a daily basis in student writing, not just on weekly tests. Spelling grades will be based on assessment of both. Cursive writing will be taught from the beginning of the school year, however, students will not be required to do all class work in cursive until all letters and connectors have been taught. Listening and speaking skills are also integrated into our language arts program.

Math

Upon entering third grade, students should have mastery of basic addition and subtraction facts up to 18. They will need this mastery to solve more complex computations and word problems. **Mastery of multiplication and division facts is expected by the end of third grade.** Our math curriculum will include the following concepts:

Understanding Numbers and Operations
 Money and Time
 Multiplication Concepts and Facts
 Divisions Concepts and Facts
 Data, Graphing, and Probability
 Multiplying and Dividing by 1 Digit Numbers
 Geometry
 Measurement
 Fractions and Decimals

Beginning in third grade students no longer have consumable math books in which they may write. Students will need to copy from their book to paper when working from the math book, except when worksheets are used.

Our math program is enhanced with the MIND Institute computer program called ST Math. This program requires the class to go to the computer lab where the students will “play” games. These games allow students to visualize math using the spatial and temporal parts of the brain. The games are all based on third grade math standards.

Social Studies

We will be using social studies text by Harcourt Brace. The third grade social studies theme is based on Community. In addition, the students will be learning about their local community of Walnut. The units in the text are:

Our Geography
 American Indians
 Community History
 Government and Citizenship
 Standing United
 Understanding Economics

Science and Health

Science is taught using a hands-on approach. The publisher for the newly adopted science text is Scott-Pearson. Activities and experiments are entered on the following concepts:

Physical Science: Energy, Light, and Matter
 Life Science: Living in Different Environments, Living Things in a World of Change
 Earth Science: Objects in Space, Patterns in the Sky

The students will also be taught to live a healthy lifestyle with the *Too Good for Drugs* curriculum. This program emphasizes for students to live happy, stress-free lives.

Fine Arts

Music, art, and drama will be incorporated throughout the year in our curriculum. There *might* be a music portion of the MIND Institute program where the students will use keyboards to learn, listen to, and create music. Several times a year the students will learn about an artist and make their own rendition of the artists’ style through the *Meet the Masters* program.

Physical Education

The main portion of the P.E. program is designed and implemented by a team of P.E. teachers and takes place every Thursday for 1 hour. Please be sure that your child is wearing comfortable clothing and shoes that can be used for running. You may also want to apply sunscreen on your child on Thursdays. If your child is unable to participate in P.E., a note will be needed to excuse your child. Students with notes will not be kept in the classroom, but rather become a helper to the P.E. teachers. Students will also participate in P.E. activities with the classroom teachers throughout the year.

NEATNESS

All work should be completed neatly.

Cursive handwriting will be expected by the 3rd trimester.

In order to prepare students for 4th grade, please follow the page set-up below.

○	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>First and Last Name, #</i> <i>Full Date</i> <i>Subject / Assignment</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Begin work here.</i></p> <p><i>Skip lines between rows.</i></p> <p><i>Write Neatly</i></p> <p><i>Mind the margins.</i></p>
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FRIDAY FOLDER/PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION FOLDER

Your child will bring home a plastic red communication folder each Friday. This will have your child's completed papers from the week. Please take time to look at your child's work and enjoy his/her progress and celebrate strengths. When you see areas of weakness, keep this in mind to help you decide how to give extra help during homework time. Please remove the completed papers from the folder and sign for the designated week. You may also use this space to write any questions or comments that you would like me to see. Be sure to have your child return the folder on Monday.

Please note that third grade students begin to correct their own daily practice work. It is very common for students to make occasional errors when correcting their own papers. If you notice an error, you may help your child make the correction but you do not need to worry about returning the paper to school. Daily practice work is recorded by me as complete or incomplete – not as an exact score. If you do notice a mistake on a paper, quiz, or test that I have graded, please have your child bring the paper to me so that I may recheck it.

COMPUTERS

Our classrooms are equipped with several computers which the children will use during the school year. Our school is also fortunate to have a computer lab with enough computers for every student and has Internet access.

LIBRARY

Your child will have an opportunity to visit the school library on a weekly basis to check out 2 books. Please note that you are financially responsible for the books that your child checks out.

HOMEWORK

The amount of time third graders should spend on homework is 30 – 40 minutes each day/night. This will *include* daily reading for 20 minutes as well as assignments in math, handwriting, spelling, social studies, and/or science as needed. A weekly assignment sheet will be giving in order for your child to record the homework assignments. Student will also record their daily independent reading on this sheet. Homework and assignment sheet will come home in a homework folder. Please check this folder each night to help your child complete and organize the necessary materials. Part of the educational process is the development of independent study skills and homework management. It will be your child's responsibility to keep track of the homework and class work to make sure it is turned in (with a name on it) at the appropriate time. Homework needs to be returned with the homework folder daily. If homework is incomplete or not brought to school, your child may be asked to work on it during his/her free time and/or recess.

MATERIALS LIABILITY

Students are financially responsible for any lost classroom textbooks, CD-ROMS and/or library books.

SOCIAL SKILLS

All students are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner. Students who adhere to the behavioral standards/expectations (rules) will receive verbal and/or written commendations. Negative

consequences for not following the classroom, school, and/or playground rules may include one or more of the following:

- Verbal warning/teacher coaching
- Time away from the group/class activity
- Practice of the appropriate behavior
- Writing about appropriate behavior and making good choices
- Loss of recess time (students will be allowed to use the restroom and get a drink)
- Conference with school administrator*

**When a student demonstrates a serious or dangerous behavior, he/she may be sent directly to the office.*

As a school we emphasize making good choices and decisions. The class will meet periodically to discuss issues that may be a problem at the time and discuss good solutions to solve these problems.

We will also continue the use of the Vejar C.A.R.E.S. program that teaches the virtues of conscience, acceptance, respect, empathy, and self-control. This program is used throughout the whole school.

BIRTHDAYS/PARTIES

It is a school policy that children *not* have birthday “parties” in the classroom. Details regarding this policy are in the Vejar School handbook (available on the school’s website).

We will have 3 parties this school-year. One will be before winter break; a second will be on Valentine’s Day; and a third will be at the end of the school year. Room parents will be needed to coordinate these events.

WELLNESS POLICY

The school district follows a state mandated Wellness Policy. This policy encourages schools not to use non-nutritious foods in the classroom. The district also encourages student’s parents to pack nutritionally balanced lunches and snacks for children. This means that snacks must be healthy. No candy is to be passed out at school.

SUPPLIES

The following supplies are separated into two categories. We ask that each child have their own set of “personal” supplies listed below and contribute whatever possible to the “classroom” supply list.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p><i>Yes!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 Standard, No. 2 lead pencils • erasers • glue sticks • noiseless soft pencil case (large pencil <i>boxes</i> are <i>not</i> convenient) • paper (lined, grid, and for the copy machine) • staples, tape, etc.* • <u>dry erase markers</u> • at least 2 boxes of Kleenex boxes (please send in more <u>throughout</u> the year) | <p><i>No!</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanical Pencils • Toys • 3-ring binders • Hard pencil boxes |
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FUND-RAISERS: COMMUNITY CLUB

We will be having several fundraising drives throughout the school year. Contributions to these fundraisers are vital in order to pay for enrichment and supplemental activities. Your ability to participate in these fundraisers will help pay for classroom supplies, field trips, class parties, computers and other new technology items, etc.

BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION

As an easy means to raise money for the school, look for Box Top for Education labels on various General Mills products – it’s easy and it cheap. Plus, our class can win school competitions for collecting them.

SCHOLASTIC BOOK ORDERS

Orders take about one month to receive. DO NOT SEND CASH. Make checks payable to SCHOLASTIC. Some teachers have ordering available online, see individual teachers for details.

LUNCH PROGRAM

Lunch is from 12:05 – 12:55. A hot and cold lunch program is supplied by the district. The cost is \$2.50. On minimum days breakfast will be served to students during their recess time. The electronic lunch purchasing program will continue. You can deposit money online or through the front office for your child's lunch account.

TOYS/SHOES WITH WHEELS

Students may not bring toys from home. This includes electronic games, iPods, balls, fancy pens or erasers, action figures, trading cards, or anything else that may distract your child or his/her classmates from learning. Students should not wear shoes with wheels, "Heelys," to school. Students found with wheels will be asked to remove the wheels and will be confiscated in the office for parent pick-up.

CELL PHONES

Students may bring personal cell phones to school – but they must be turned off and put kept in their backpacks during the school day. Phone calls made from students during the school day must be made from a school phone in the office. Students using cell phones during school time will have their phones confiscated and returned at the end of the day.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

We try so hard to develop creative opportunities for parents to help in the classroom – there are many opportunities. The list below is just a sample of how you can help here at Vejar if you have the will and time. Remember – you are your child's most effective role model.

- Library
- Science Experiment Facilitator
- Read With Students
- Write With Students
- School Office/Copying
- Community Club
- Field Trips
- Room Parent
- Meet The Masters Art Program
- ... and just about anything else you can think of...