

Back to School Night 2008

Welcome to Back to School Night. This has all the makings of a truly wonderful and exciting year! Those of you who have “done” fifth grade at the Grove will see some new changes blending with the familiar on this journey. To begin with the familiar, we’ll address the curriculum that students will be studying. The district has worked to set standards for all students at all grade levels and has curriculum designed to meet those standards. The Grade Level 5 Expectations Handbook outlines what each fifth grade student should know.

Language Arts

Language Arts consists of reading, writing grammar, spelling and speaking. The reading curriculum will address skills such as phonemic awareness, text handling, comprehension skills, recognition and use of literary techniques and genre. In addition to the basal reader, students will be reading novels. The basal text is Houghton Mifflin, and includes spelling and grammar programs. Starting at the end of September, students will also be delivering biweekly oral presentations and begin to create and deliver multimedia presentations. Challenge activities will include reading across all genres of literature, creative writing opportunities and writing contests.

Math

Mathematics will include appropriate studies of number sense, algebra and functions, geometry and measurement, statistics, data analysis and probability. Students are expected to know their basic math facts upon entering this grade. For much of our study, the basal text, Scott Foresman, will be used. The publisher’s web site, www.onlineintervention.com has all workbook pages online should your child forget their book at school. The site also has informational Flash movies on selected topics to further student understanding. Other resources that may be used in class (for example, Mountain Math) follow the state standards and the adopted Framework for Mathematics. Students up for the challenge may choose to do extra credit activities from the class web site, including Enrichment, Reteach and Problem of the Week in addition to in class activities. Students achieving well beyond 5th grade skills may be eligible to further understanding of algebraic principles through an in class enrichment program.

Science

Students will be studying Earth Science, Physical Science, and Life Science (the human body). Students will be attending two specialist sessions per week. These lab sessions will be on Tuesday and Friday. Challenge activities may include special projects such as science fair participation and thematic enrichment opportunities. The fifth grade unit on Human Growth and Maturation will occur in late spring. Materials are available for check out through the Walnut Grove office or district media services library. If you would like to preview curriculum materials, please plan to do so well in advance.

Social Studies

We will be studying American history and covering immigration, colonization, exploration, the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, and the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution. When possible, students will also have the opportunity to visit sites on the Internet to enhance classroom curriculum. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to participate in computer simulation models of historical events, using decision making skills and analyzing the consequences of those decisions. This provides students with a safe platform for debate, presentation of various points of view, and discussions of the pros and cons of all decisions made.

Homework Policy

The homework policy is outlined in detail on the rules that were sent home on the first day of school. Most often, time is given for assignments to be completed in class. “Homework” is what students were unable to finish in class. If your child has an unusual amount of homework, we will work together on time management and organization or modification of assignments for students with special needs. **Late homework is not accepted.**

Music

Mrs. Borris will return as the Music Specialist for Walnut Grove. In addition to the weekly music time, fifth grade students will have the opportunity to participate in Band with Mr. Borris or Strings with Mrs. Muldoon. Band is scheduled for 2:00 – 2:50 Friday. Beginning band is not offered at the middle school level. Students wishing to participate in middle school band may use the 5th grade band program in lieu of private lessons for preparation. Advanced Strings (for those students who took Strings in the 4th grade) will be held before and after school. Time and locations for Strings are listed on the permission slip. Any student who wishes to **begin** Strings in fifth grade should contact Mrs. Muldoon directly.

Physical Education

We are fortunate to have Mr. Taylor return as our PE Specialist. This year our PE specialist time has been extended to two days per week. Our PE days are Tuesday and Friday, so students should remember to wear appropriate shoes and clothing to participate. Please remember to send extra water on these days as well to help keep kids hydrated during activity.

DARE

The DARE program is offered to fifth grade students by Officer Ted Young. He will visit our classroom on Wednesdays beginning this week and continuing through November.

Field Trips

Field trips are designed to enhance the curriculum. While we are trying to keep costs down, field trips will include the Walk Through Revolution living history program, theater, visits to the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, and the Marine Science Institute Discovery Voyage.

Dates will be announced well in advance. Exact costs have not yet been determined. We are asking that each student pay an initial \$10.00 by September 21. We will ask for the remaining balance to be paid in February. The payment for each child will include fees for rangers and/or docents, transportation, materials and entrance fees. Please make checks payable to Walnut Grove.

Donations

Donations in the form of cash and time are greatly appreciated. Cash donations help to defray costs for magazine subscriptions, graphics costs, enrichment literature, art supplies, enrichment and intervention programs and other classroom materials. I also encourage you to participate in the SCRIP program, which directly benefits Walnut Grove. Order forms may be downloaded from either the PTA or Walnut Grove web sites. Order forms are also available in the office.

Donations of time are most greatly appreciated for our art program, book clubs and general pesky tasks. If you would be willing to volunteer your time, please sign up before leaving tonight. Field trip chaperones will be solicited for each field trip, most often within two weeks of the scheduled trip.

Lastly, you are the most important people in your child's life, and I look forward to working with you for your child's benefit. Please support the classroom academic, homework and discipline efforts. With school and home working together, I know the students will have a successful year.