

## *Welcome to my Grade 3 Class*

September 11, 2015

I am very excited about teaching grade 3 again this year! I wanted to officially introduce myself and tell you a little bit about our classroom and some of the activities we are doing this year. I am very much looking forward to teaching your child and working together with you so that your child has a great year!

My full name is Ms. Jody MacKenzie. I'm starting my 14th year at Keenooshayo. I am originally from Drayton Valley where I was very fortunate to get my first teaching assignment in my hometown. I have a 10 1/2 year old son named Kayne. He is in grade 5 and is so enthusiastic and excited about going back to school. He is a very active little boy who keeps me busy and on the go but I love every minute of it. I look forward to spending all my spare time with him. We love to go swimming, to football games, play street hockey (soccer and football too), skating, skiing, we go fishing, camping and quadding, riding bikes, scooters, reading books, playing mine craft and building LEGO! He teaches me how to play his DS and laughs at my dance moves on the Wii. There is never a dull moment in our house. I feel very fortunate and blessed. I think St. Albert is a wonderful community and I feel very lucky to be a part of the staff here at Keenooshayo. It is a great place to come to work everyday!

This year Ms. Boychuck will be working with me in the classroom. She has been a Teacher's Aide for over 14 years and absolutely loves her job! She is looking forward to a busy year in grade 3 and all the exciting adventures we are sure to have.

**In Language Arts**, I will be doing "balanced literacy". I will be focusing on spelling, writing and reading skills all year. We have started reading the novel, "TJ and the Cats". We will be reading the book out loud, as well as answering questions in their booklet that follows each chapter. My focus will be on making complete sentences and recalling important information from the chapters that we are reading, focusing on comprehension too.

We soon will be starting **reading groups** in the classroom, once I finish all the individual testing. This will be done everyday and so far the kids have been doing fantastic. During reading centers the children will rotate through many different centers within the classroom. The main centers are: read to the teacher, partner read, silent read, listening to books on CD, computer, spelling, and/or writing center etc. Each day I will read with one group at their reading level. The kids really look forward to this time together, especially "FUN FRIDAY" center time and the LEGO table rotation.

We are starting ***cursive writing (handwriting)*** next week and will continue to work on letter formation and words for both lower and upper case letters until Christmas. After every second letter, I will be sending a homework practice sheet to complete that night for extra practice. It's so cute; they are very excited about having homework! They can look forward to writing stories in handwriting after Christmas and in their agenda/Friday journals.

We will do a lot of ***writing*** in grade 3 and I try to do this approx. 3 days a week. In our writing journals the kids do 10-15 minutes a day on a specific writing prompt. Sometimes it will be on a prompt of their choice and other times I will provide it on the white board. They enjoy writing to me and I love to read their entries. We will also do weekly paragraphs this year to enhance their writing based on the 6+1 writing traits- organization, conventions, ideas, word choice, sentence fluency and voice.

***In Math***, my focus has been on reviewing grade 2 concepts. Next week, we will start Chapter 1, it's called, "Patterns in Mathematics"- skip counting and Chapter 2 will be on "Numeration"-numbers, adding and subtracting. There are lots of concepts to be covered in mathematics this year. I may send corrections home from time to time to complete or a review page for homework to help practice certain concepts. This will give you a chance to see what your child is working on and help support them if they are needing some extra practice on a skill.

We have also started '***timed tests***' on ***basic math facts***. I give the kids 2 minutes to complete addition facts and subtraction facts. My goal is to help your child with speed and accuracy on basic addition and subtraction facts to 18. I encourage you to practice flashcards on these basic facts at home to help these become more automatic. This is one of the student learning outcomes on the first report card.

I will be sending home at the end of every second month, a "***portfolio binder***". The binder will contain samples of work that your child has done that month, testing sheets and any other important pages for you to review with your child. This has worked extremely well in previous years because parents can see exactly what their child is doing as well as areas that may require extra assistance at home. There will be a pink "parents reflections" sheet, as well as a sheet for the children to fill out, located at the back of the binder for that month. When you are finished looking through the binder, please return it back to school. I have found in past years that 2-3 days was enough time to have the binder at home. Your child's binder will be going home towards the end of October.

Please fill out the ***monthly reading record sheet*** that was sent home during the first week of school and return it back to school when it is full or at the end of

each month. I will send a new one home at the beginning of each month in the Friday envelope. Thank you to all parents for taking the time each night to sit with your child and listen to them read. Your child should be reading between 10-15 minutes a night. Together this year, we are going to make sure that reading is top priority for your child. My goal is to get them 'hooked on' books and for them to love reading books. I can tell many of the children are already hooked and just love to read! This is awesome! As they become more familiar with words, practice good word attack skills and are exposed to a variety of chapter books at their level, they will become more fluent readers and therefore want to read more at home. I am excited to see this unfold and take place!!

At school, we have a school wide reading program. Its called 'Renaissance Place'. The kids are encouraged to take library books at their reading level. Preferably chapter books in grade 3. All the kids have taken a STAR test and they have a range where they are able to take out books and read them at home. When they have finished, they are able to take a quiz on their book. It's a great way to practice comprehension. Most books have 10 questions and 60% is a pass. I will reward kids throughout the year by having 'AR PARTIES". **We set a class goal for 4 books/quizzes passed by Friday, October 67<sup>th</sup>. We are going to have an ice cream or ice cream float party to celebrate those kids that have met the goal.** I am very proud of how excited they are to participate in this. ☺ Plus it's a great way to get kids reading!

I will continue to set reading goals throughout the year to encourage reading and to make learning/reading fun.

Please make sure that all library books are returned on Thursday. Our Library class is right after lunch recess. I have a basket in my room where the kids can put their library books when they are done reading them. I encourage them to take out 2 chapter books that they can read at their level from the library each time we visit.

We have *music* on Monday and Thursday. We have *gym* on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. Tuesday afternoon is *computers*.

**Communication Pocket-** I have put together 'communication pockets' to go between home and school for things that need urgent attention, that are from me or need a signature from you. It's a way that information can go back and forth and not get lost or misplaced.

I would also like to thank Heidi Clement for volunteering to do the **Friday Envelopes** for our class every Friday. I appreciate this so much. ☺

Also, please feel free to send the birthday invitations to school on Fridays and we

will make sure they go home in the Friday envelopes at the end of the week.

If your child is celebrating a birthday and would like to bring in birthday treats, email me ahead of time or write me a note and I would be more than happy to distribute the birthday snacks on their special day. 😊

**Behavior-** I have also started a 'positive behavior visual display' at the front of the class. There are different levels the kids can move to. I will reinforce the positive behaviors that are seen throughout the day and move the kids accordingly. All kids start the day at 'Ready to Learn'. These are the other levels: Good Choice, Super Student, Think About It, and Consequence. If your child is at Consequence level they will be asked to stay in for 5 minutes of their recess, this will give us a chance to talk about their behavior and hopefully come up with a positive plan. If they continue there they are at I will contact you either by telephone or a note to discuss. Sometimes your child may even write a note home to you to be signed and returned. I want this to be all positive and I want us to all have a fabulous year together in grade 3. We will work towards 'Fun Friday' Centers to celebrate a great week and reward the kids for their hard work. As well as ballots, games, dancing and treats 😊

**Homework-** Thank you also for making sure your child's homework gets done and gets back to school the next day.

1. *The homework that is sent home is usually concepts that we are working on and that I feel the kids need extra practice and reinforcement or*
2. *If they have corrections to fix or work that was not completed during class time. I always give them plenty of time to get the work done.*
3. *or work that is incomplete because of being absent.*

I think it's important to see what your child is working on and how they are doing at school. Sometimes extra reinforcement from home helps too. **Please make sure that all workbooks are returned the next day.**

This year we will be featuring a "***student of the week***". Before hand, I will be sending home the sheets that will need to be filled out and put up in the classroom on Mondays. Your child will have the opportunity to talk about themselves, and the pages and pictures they have brought. The students have seen our displays and now understand what is expected and how it will look once it is complete. Thank you in advance for helping your child complete these pages. They are excited for their turn to come and share with their classmates.

**Agendas** should be signed and checked daily. We will write in them everyday. As this is our most important means of communication between home and school. Homework and important items will be written in the agenda and or on the blue homework slip.

Please feel free to write me a note and attach it in your child's agenda as I sign them at the end of each day. If you could please initial your Childs agenda each night I would really appreciate it. If you write a note, please get your child to put it on my desk first thing in the morning so I see it or please feel free to email me. I turn my computer on first thing in the morning and try to check it periodically through the day. We write in our agenda's at the end of each day.

**Friday Journals** will go home every Friday. The kids will enjoy writing to you about their thoughts, feelings and/or activities that are going on at school. Please write back to your child and return all books back to school by the following Monday.

**Spelling words** will continue to go home on Mondays. The children will write these words in their agenda. Thank you for studying these words at home with your child. We will be doing various activities/worksheets daily at school to practice. This is so important for them to be exposed daily to these words and practice spelling them. Some parents do a pre-test with their son/daughter at home and help their child learn the words they are struggling with. This is a great idea!

In your child's "**portfolio binder**" next month you will see a copy of the word wall words for grade 3. Your child must know these words by sight. Please take out this copy and leave it at home so that you are able to practice these words at home occasionally.

**In Science**, we are learning about "Rocks and Minerals". I personally love rocks and am looking forward to sharing that passion with the kids. I have many of my own rocks that I like to collect and buy and will share these with the kids. Many students also share that same passion. ☺ Our next unit after this one will be "Hearing and Sound".

**In Social**, we have started with a "Mapping Skills booklet". We will work in this for the next couple weeks and then we will start to explore and study these 4 countries: India, Peru, Ukraine and Tunisia and comparing them to Canada/Alberta.

**In Health**, for the next few weeks my class will be participating 2x a week in 'Mindfulness' lessons. (Monday and Wednesday) I am very excited and happy to be doing this again, this year. Please see the letter that is going home today for information.

I will be participating in ordering *scholastic books* each month. This is a great way to have books at home for your child to read. Please make cheques payable to Scholastic Canada Ltd or you can send cash as I order from the book clubs each month for my own son and for our classroom library so that I am able to put books into the class reading program. Thank you for supporting this worthwhile program.

We are in need of some gently used games, puzzles, books, blocks, Lego etc. to be donated to the classroom for the children to play with during those rainy/cold days that we frequently have throughout the year. If you have any such items that you and your child are willing to part with and are in great condition, I would love to have them for the classroom. Please send anything you feel is suitable at your earliest convenience. Thank you!!

Also, going home today is our class directory with phone numbers and email addresses. The grade 3 teachers are also collecting the field trip fees for this year. A letter is going home next week regarding this. Our first fieldtrip is in November.

I believe in open communication with the parents- we are partners together in your child's education.

Please feel free if you have any questions, to not hesitate to call me at school or attach a note in your child's agenda as I see them everyday. Also, please feel free to contact me by email as I try to check it throughout the day. ([mackenziej@spschools.org](mailto:mackenziej@spschools.org)). I am also very excited about my brand new web page I created. I will be posting things each week so please continue to check it often- news, events, class letters, math info, pictures etc. From now on I will be putting my class newsletter on it as well. 😊 😊

Webpage- <http://3mackenzie.weebly.com>

Looking forward to a fabulous year working with you! 😊

We are going to have an awesome year together. I am very much looking forward to it! 😊

Sorry, for my lengthy newsletter. I have so much to share with you.... 😊

Your child's education at heart,  
Ms. J. MacKenzie

