September 23, 2020

Welcome to Grade 3

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. You can also check out the ‘ Meet the Teacher’ video that is being sent home on Friday. You will be able to see our classroom and the kids.

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. This is my 19th 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 15-year-old son named Kayne. He is in grade 10 this year and is so enthusiastic and excited about starting at the High School. He is active and 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 skating, skiing, camping and quadding, riding bikes, and scooters, we love watching football games and enjoy spending time together. There is never a dull moment in our house. I feel very fortunate and blessed to be able to enjoy all these activities with him. 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!

I also get the pleasure of working with Mrs. Kathleen Bilodeau. She is my educational assistant this year working with a student with autism. She worked in Mrs. Badiuk’s class last year with some of your children and already has a connection with so many of them. She brings with her 13 years of experience working in a number of different schools across BC and Alberta from Kindergarten to grade 12. She is passionate about math and science and her enthusiasm for these subjects is infectious. Her calm but fun demeanor is such a great fit for my class.

***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 just finished reading chapter 10. We are reading the book out loud together, as well as answering questions in a booklet that follows each chapter. My focus will be on making complete sentences and recalling important information from the chapters that we are reading.

We soon will be starting reading groups in the classroom ( looks like it will be next week), once I am done with all the individual testing with each student. During reading centers, the children will rotate through many different centers within the classroom-practicing social distancing of course. The main centers are: read to the teacher, silent reading, chrome books, spelling, basic math facts and/or writing center etc. Each day I will read with one group at their independent reading level. The kids really look forward to this time together, especially “FUN FRIDAY” center time.

We started ***cursive writing this week-*** we have done letters- e, l and b and will continue to work on letter formation and words for both lower and uppercase letters until Christmas.

We will do a lot of writing in grade 3. Each day, the students will work on activities that will lead up to writing a paragraph on Fridays. Each week, we will focus on a different trait to enhance their writing, based on the’ 6+1 writing traits’. The traits are: ideas, conventions, organization, voice word choice, sentence fluency and presentation. The topics will vary each week. Occasionally, we will write in our writing journal for about 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.  I also use the Lucy Calkins writing Program too.

***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 or Tuesday.

***Spelling words***- I will introduce their new words on Mondays. I sent the master list home last week of all their spelling words for the year. 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 too!

***Spelling tests*** are on Friday’s. Your child will spell 15 spelling words, 2 bonus words and write 2 sentences with a spelling word in it. I will be marking the sentence looking for capitals, end punctuation and the spelling word circled and used correctly in the sentence- 3 marks for each sentence. Their red spelling duo-tang will go home on Friday’s to show you. Please sign and return on Monday or Tuesday.

***In Math,*** my focus for the last 2 weeks have been reviewing grade 2 concepts. Today, we started Chapter 1, it’s called, *“Patterns in Mathematics*” and Chapter 2 will be on *“Numeration*”. There are lots of concepts to be covered in mathematics this year. Please refer to my website on my weebly site for the breakdown and extra activities and pages that can be printed off and practiced at home. We will also do these activities in Google Classroom after each lesson for extra practice too.

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 (speed and accuracy). This is one of the student leaning outcomes on the first report card. We have also been practicing ‘Xtra Math’ on our chrome books, which helps them become quicker at recalling their basic facts.  The students also like doing prodigy, too.

Please fill out the ***monthly reading record sheet*** that was sent home and return it back to school at the *end of each month*. I will send a new one home at the beginning of each month.. 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!!  I am very passionate about kids reading and will reward them throughout the year. I am encouraging all students to try to take out chapter books from the library at their reading level. I will help them select books each week. ☺

I will continue to set reading goals throughout the year to encourage reading and to make learning/reading FUN. It’s very important to me and I am very passionate about it. Reading is in ALL subjects and it’s just so important to develop a LOVE for it.

***Library***- the library is NOT up and running yet. So, I am not sure the day of the week that our class will be going to library. I will let you know through email when we are able to go. I have a basket in my room where the kids can put their library books when they are done reading them. I will be encouraging 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 Mondays and Fridays.

We have ***gym*** on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday***.***

**Chrome Books-** We have a chrome book to use in our desks. I have assigned one to each student and they only use their own. We will play a variety of web games, type spelling words and practice our typing skills, play math games and access Google Classroom too.

**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.

**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 the “Ready to Learn”. They have a clothes pin with their name on it. These are the levels: Super student, Good Choices, Ready to Learn, Think about it, and Consequence. If your child is at the ‘Think about it’ they will be asked to stay in for a few 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 are at Consequence level, I may contact you either by telephone, email or a note to discuss, or your child may write a note to you. 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, free time, listening to music, and dancing☺

**Unfinished/Missed Classwork**-

1. *The classwork that is sent home is usually concepts that we are working on at school and that I feel your child may need some extra practice and reinforcement or*
2. *If they have corrections to fix or work that was not completed during class time. I always give plenty of time for kids to get their work done.*

*3….. Or work that is incomplete because of being absent. I will do my best to make sure your child has the books at home that they need so they do not fall behind. It may require you to pick up their material ( booklets) from the school if they are going to be at home for a few days.*

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

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 at recess. Your child will have the opportunity to talk about themselves, and the pages and pictures they have brought. The students have seen the display 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 .

Please feel free to email me. I turn my computer on first thing in the morning and check it periodically throughout the day- my preps and lunch and after school. Emails work great and are effective for communication.

***In Health***, we are doing activities in our Heart Smart Book and learning about eating healthy and doing exercise to keep our heart healthy. We are doing activities this week in Google Classroom about Terry Fox.

***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 them and will share these with the kids.  We will finish this unit in November. 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. There will be a test on this unit. We will then start to explore and study these 4 countries: India, Peru, Ukraine and Tunisia and comparing them to Canada/Alberta- we have a textbook that is divided up into chapters.  We will read this and do activities together after each country.

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 and for the classroom. I sent an email as well as the first book order on Monday. When ordering please make sure you enter my teacher number so that I am able to collect points to purchase new books for our classroom. Thank you for supporting this worthwhile program.

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.

My email address is [jody.mackenzie@spschools.org](mailto:jody.mackenzie@spschools.org)

My web page is: [www.3mackenzie@weebly.com](http://www.3mackenzie@weebly.com) . You can also download the app, to make it convenient and easy to check.

Please check this weekly. I will post pictures and important events and news on there.

I update my weebly page every week. I usually do not send home a monthly newsletter. I put all info on my weebly website and or email you. With weebly, I take pictures and upload them. Please check it out. There are lots of pictures in the September folder already. ☺ I take pictures of the bulletin boards, special projects and special days and the kids having a great time together. I will also put reminders on there, news from our classroom and important events that are coming up. The kids have already seen it as I have an entire page of web links to a variety of games and activities across the curriculum. Please check it out if you haven’t done so already. You can down load the app on your phone too.

Looking forward to a fabulous year working with you and your child!  I am very much looking forward to it!  I am happy to be back teaching in the classroom and hope it stays that way all year. ☺

Sorry, for my lengthy newsletter. I have so much to share with you…. just want you to know what grade 3 is all about!!  ☺

We are not able to do a ‘Meet the Teacher Night’ this year at school, there is a video that will be shared on Friday that you can check out. I just finished it yesterday.

Thank you for your support and I look forward to a super year teaching your child!

Your child’s education at heart,

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