Grade 3/Div. 6 Class Newsletter – September/2014

Yes! We are finally back! I hope that everyone enjoyed our lovely and warm Island summer! This is my eighth year at Cumberland Elementary and my seventeenth with Comox Valley School District. Before teaching on the Island I taught for eleven years in northern Alberta. I am very excited about teaching Grade Three this year! The first few days with your children have been fun and we are enjoying getting to know each other! We have twenty-two students in class; ten girls and twelve boys. We will be working this school year with a brand new BC curriculum! https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum

**Language Arts** – Our Language Arts program will consist of a variety of activities. We will do a lot of our reading activities through ‘Book Club’ (literature circles). We also have a Nelson reading series that I enjoy using as it has a lot of non-fiction material that complements other curricular areas. The goal is to meet each student’s individual needs better and over all, build higher reading levels. Writing activities will vary from exercises to short stories, to letter writing and narrative compositions. L.A. will overlap into the Science and Socials areas where they will develop research skills.

*Spelling* - We will do a weekly spelling program; students will receive their words on Monday, which will be written in the planner, and write their quiz on Friday. Please help your child practice his/her words before quiz day.

*Home Reading* - We will also participate in a Home Reading Program. The goal for Grade 3s is to participate in Home Reading a minimum of twenty minutes, five nights per week. Following reading, each student should write the book title in his/her planner along with the number of pages read. I have asked the students to have their parent initial their Home Reading. For each reading entry students will receive one ticket which goes into a lottery bucket. I do a draw at the end of each month.

**Math** – Our main resource is a text called *Math Makes Sense*, by Nelson Publishers. This text will be used as our classroom resource and not come home. I will also use a program called *First Steps*, which will reinforce the primary resource. Our Math program will also be supplemented by games and other activities that support the curriculum.

**Science** – Our Science program for the year will have the theme units “Animal and Plant Eco-systems”, “Food Chains”, “Solids, Liquids and Gasses as Matter” and “The Water Cycle”. We will also partake in the Salmon Enhancement Program, through Fisheries and Oceans, and raise Coho Salmon in our class. Throughout the year, there will also be a focus on environmental issues and we will take on a few projects. In the last couple days the boys and girls have learned about the importance of worms for soil, the worm life cycle and anatomy and we built a worm compost for our class!

**Socials** – There is a strong First Nations focus in the new Socials curriculum for Grade 3. We will start the year by learning about local First Nation communities from a geographical perspective. We will also take a historic look at First Nations government, culture and technologies as well as how First Nations people approach conservation of the environment and resources. We will also be learning about early settlers to BC. Mapping skills, research skills, being able to analyze information and make decisions and well as discussion and debating skills will be intertwined throughout the year.

**Planners:** Planners have been distributed already and I want to instill in my students that the planner is a very valuable organizational tool for the school year and needs to be at school every day! We will use it at the end of each day to write homework assignments and any other reminders and, as previously mentioned, will use it for our weekly spelling list. I am expecting students to write in their planners neatly and I will check and sign or stamp the planners on most days and would really appreciate if parents would check their son/daughter’s planner each day and sign it as well. I have
recommended to your child that he/she set the planner out on the kitchen table or desk upon arriving home each day so that assignments/reminders are not forgotten. I might write the occasional note to you in the planner and you are welcome to do the same to me. If your son/daughter is going to be away or has been away please note this in the planner.

**Scholastic Book Orders** - I tend to send Scholastic Book Orders home every second month. Most of the boys and girls enjoy the book orders; some like to order and it helps us to develop a classroom library. The September one went home Friday. If interested, please return it by Wednesday, Oct. 1st.

**Birthday Party Invites** - I have not asked of this before but please do not send your child to school with birthday party invitations. So many of the children that aren’t on the receiving end have hurt feeling and when half the class comes to school with party invites each school year, you can imagine the frequent social issues that arise because of it. Thanks for understanding.

**Paradise Meadows Hike** – In keeping with Cumberland El. Tradition and previous fall start-ups, I would like to take the students up to the mountain on Friday, October 10th to do a Fall Hike on the Lake Helen McKenzie loop. We will leave the school at 9:00 am and return for our 2:40 dismissal. Students need to wear layered clothing, a hat, sunscreen and comfortable walking shoes. They also need a nutritious litterless lunch and water. Grade 3s must have their booster seat along (unless they are already 9 years old). If you are able to help drive/supervise on this hike, please indicate on the field trip form. Please return the form by Monday.

**Art** – We will be studying a few different artists throughout the year as well as art history, and technique and colour theory. Rather than sending art home here and there throughout the school year we will maintain an art/special projects portfolio. This portfolio keeps everything together and makes a nice keepsake for the students. I like to use the large size Hilroy scrapbook and have purchased a class set of them. Please send $3.00 with your child to school to cover the cost of their ‘art portfolio’.

* We are doing a mural for the Cumberland Community Forest Society and it will be on display at the Fall Fair this Saturday!

**Email Communication:** I find that email communication with parents is very efficient and I would like to continue this year. My email address is **pam.twin@sd71.bc.ca**. You are welcome to contact me at any time if you have a question or concern. Please share your email address with me below. When I communicate with all parents, I use ‘bcc’ so that your email address is not seen by everyone else. You are also welcome to phone me at school to discuss your child, 336-8521. I write a monthly class newsletter and will email it to you each month as well as post in on the blog. (see below)

**Class Blog:** I maintain a class blog, [ourforest.edublogs.org](http://ourforest.edublogs.org), which I started a few years ago. It has turned out to be a valuable tool and resource for students and their families. The reasons I started the blog and would like to continue with all students fully involved with it this year are:

a) It provides a site where students can go home and reflect on their learning and activities from their day at school.

b) It allows parents to access information and a window to view their children at school.

c) It allows students to share their school activities and accomplishments with grandparents and other family members.

‘Our Forest’ can also be accessed via Cumberland Community School’s home page. Please take a few minutes to check out my posts and other site pages. You will notice that there are several slide shows of student activities, work samples, a newsletter page, a homework page, etc. As a safety precaution, the students’ first names will be mentioned time to time but they will never be posted next to their photos. Until I have consent, I will not post student pictures.
A Few Reminders . . .

Wed. October 8th - 12:30 dismissal for SD71 PLCs
Fri. October 10th - Hike to Mount Washington
Friday, October 3rd - $10. for planner fees due

***Please note that future class newsletters will be delivered via email and available on the blog.

Thank you for the Tour de Rock donations!

Along with your partnership and support, I look forward to a productive and enjoyable year with your son/daughter!

Sincerely,

Pam Twin, Division 6 Teacher
pam.twin@sd71.bc.ca

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I have read my son/daughter’s Division 6 Class Newsletter for September, 2014.

_________________________  ______________________   ______________________
student name                      parent signature                    email address

I give consent for my son/daughter, ________________________, to have photographs and students work displayed on the Cumberland Community School Division 6 class blog ‘ourforest.edublogs.org’.

_________________________  ______________________
date                        parent/guardian signature