Dear Third Grade Families,

As you are aware, letter grades are given in the Third Grade. Since this is the first year that your child has received letter grades, we wanted to explain to you how grades are calculated. **Please be sure to save the attached Powerschool letter as this contains the directions and login number you will use to view your child’s academic performance.**

CMS gives us specific policies for grading so that it is consistent for all students. Grades are either counted as “formal” and “informal”. Formal assessments average a total of 60% of the final grade for the quarter. Informal assessments average a total of 40% of the final grade for the quarter. To be consistent as to what is being counted as formal and informal, we will write “Formal” on the top of any test to let you know that is will be counted as a formal grade. Basically, any Common Assessment that assesses the reading strategy taught across our grade level or math unit test will count as a formal grade. We plan to have at least four formal assessments in both reading and math each quarter. **Test corrections on Formal Assessments can be made and rescored**. If a child scores lower than a 79C on a formal assessment, he/she will have the opportunity to redo the test in the classroom and a new grade will be given by averaging the original grade and the new grade. If your child makes a 100 after making corrections, the school system only allows us to bring the average of the corrected test to a grade no higher than a 79C. So that you can see the original grade as well as the new grade received after corrections have been made, your child’s teacher will mark both scores on the assessment. Informal assessments will consist of the following: spelling tests, class exit tickets, science lab reports, DLR and DMR quizzes, projects, or class participation grades. These grades can be corrected, **but will not be changed in the grade book because there are many informal grades given in reading and math and they only comprise of 40% of the total grade**. The goal is to accurately reflect the student's performance in ELA and math. In science, social studies, and health, all grades will be counted as informal. We do not give as many grades in these subject areas and we don’t want a formal test on a unit taught in these subject areas to drastically bring down the student's overall average. We will have at least four total grades in these areas per quarter.

When viewing your child’s performance on PowerSchool, you should be able to click on your child’s average to view each assignment posted and to see whether or not it is a formal or an informal grade. CMS uses a 10-point grading scale, therefore grades are as follows:

* 100-90 A
* 89-80 B
* 79-70 C
* 69-60 D
* 59 or below F

For literacy instruction, students will receive balanced literacy from their homeroom teacher. In addition to this block of time each day, we will group students across the grade level during a period of time called “Learning Lab”. This is a 45 minute period of time that allows literacy differentiation to occur in a variety of ways. We will have Learning Lab four days a week. Support staff including the TD teachers, EC teachers, ESL teacher, and Instructional Assistants will be available to help us meet the needs of our students to enhance and enrich all learning styles and needs.

To differentiate instruction to best meet the needs of all students in math, students will be changing classes amongst the third grade teachers. Your child will be pretested before each unit for us to examine which areas he/she needs enrichment and which areas need to be developed. He/she will then be placed in either their homeroom teacher’s class for math or with another teacher for math instruction. All math classes follow the same CCSS standards and will receive the same core instruction. However, depending on your child’s needs in the unit being taught, he/she will be placed with the teacher that best meets the enrichment, remediation, and pace that is most appropriate. *Keep in mind your child’s math teacher may change as we pre-assess the standards over the school year.* To find a complete list of the pacing and standards taught in math, please visit the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction found here: <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/acre/standards/common-core/>.

As always, if you have additional questions, please feel free to contact your child’s teacher. We look forward to seeing you all at the Open House on September 22nd. Thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,

The Third Grade Team