



Saint Francis of Assisi Mission Statement: We are a Catholic community of faith striving to follow Jesus, pledging each day to do our best by imitating Saint Francis of Assisi as "instruments of peace." Our goal is to maintain a safe and healthy environment and to be academically prepared for this technological age.

Dear Parents,

I hope everyone enjoyed their summer break! This is the beginning of a very important and exciting stage in the educational and social development of your child. My goal is to create a safe and healthy classroom where learning is hands-on and exciting. This will enable the children to develop their skills to their best potential. I hope to instill a passion for learning that will carry forth through their school years.

Arrival: School begins at 7:50. It is very important that each child comes to school on time.

Communication: Ask your child what he or she is studying, and look in their TEAM binder every night.



The TEAM binder is where you will find the notices that are sent home or any other communication, reading record, as well as any homework that needs to be completed. My monthly newsletter will help you keep up with important happenings in our classroom. Please check the website regularly for important classroom news. I will also send home progress reports, email or make phone calls if I feel that your child is not progressing as expected. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me at any time. I welcome all concerns, ideas, and feedback that affect your child or our classroom.



Homework: You should expect that your child will have some type of homework Monday-Thursday. You will always find the homework assignments on the SFA homepage under "Class Announcements and Homework." I encourage you to set up with your child a scheduled time for homework each day. Students should be able to do most assignments independently as the homework will reinforce a concept we have been studying in school, but do help if it is completely necessary. If you notice that your child is not able to do an assignment on his or her own, please email or jot a note to me on the assignment.



Snack: Students will have the opportunity to have a morning snack. All students may bring a *nutritious* snack to school everyday. Please remember that the children are not to bring in snacks with milk products (cheese, yogurt) or peanuts for *morning snack*. They may have these foods at lunch. Please also give me a heads up at least a day ahead of time if your child is planning to bring a treat for his or her birthday.





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Gym - Grade 3 will have gym on Thursdays. Make sure your child is dressed appropriately on Thursdays; SFA sweats and sneakers.

Library - We will be going to the Thayer Public Library every other week. Each child should have his/her own library card to use. They can bring their cards in each week or I can hold on to them in the classroom. They will be able to take out 2 books at a time provided that they do not have any books overdue. Also at this time, I will help them pick out any books they may need for monthly projects.

Textbooks - We have been blessed with many wonderful new and exciting textbooks. Please make sure that each of their hard cover textbooks are appropriately covered.

Language Arts

One of the major goals of reading instruction is to help children attain high levels of comprehension. Children who understand more of what they read are children who enjoy reading more. Parents can play a vital role in helping their children attain sound comprehension skills.

This can occur very naturally during your sharing time together, when you are reading a story to your child, or even when traveling in the car. Providing your child with opportunities to reflect and appreciate what he or she reads can be an important contribution to his or her reading development.

1. Before you and your child read a story together, ask your child to formulate a question about the title or initial illustrations. This helps your child develop a reason for reading the story.
2. Some children enjoy making up their own questions about a story after it is read. You may wish to encourage your child to develop questions like those on school tests. Take some time to go over all of the questions.
3. It is often a good idea to keep a vocabulary notebook or word card box nearby when reading stories with your child. This provides an opportunity for your child to record any new words, which can be defined and written in his or her own sentences.
4. As you and your child are reading a story together, stop every so often and ask your child to draw a picture of a significant event. Upon completion of the story, direct your child to arrange these picture in sequential order and/or paste them into a special scrapbook.
5. After you have finished reading a story, ask your child to summarize it in as few words as possible. Assist your child in coming up with a statement that conveys the main idea of the entire story.



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Students were asked to read *Nicholas: A Massachusetts Tale* over the summer. They will be receiving projects instructions within the upcoming week.

Math

An effective mathematics program is based on careful development of concepts and skills taught through extensive concrete and pictorial experiences and activities. To really understand the concept of a number and the relationship that can exist between numbers, children must first begin with concrete experiences. Through the use of manipulatives, children have the opportunity to explore the meaning of numbers. This activity-centered learning is a valuable approach, because it utilizes the child's natural style of learning. The children are able to develop concepts from the actual manipulation of the environment. Thus, the child is able to move gradually from a "hands-on" experience to mathematical abstractions.

There are three levels a child should experience to acquire a full understanding of the concept of a number.

1. The Concrete Level: The child uses manipulatives.
2. The Representational Level: The child uses pictures to represent numbers instead of manipulatives.
3. The Abstract Level: The child uses numbers.

Depending on the individual child's stage of development, various amounts of time may be spent at each level. Combined, these three levels are a helpful sequence and structure which provide success for the child. The activities that a child may encounter at each level, do provide a child with the necessary and appropriate experiences, enabling them to understand the concept of numbers, and the structure of our base ten number systems.

I will constantly encourage students to use manipulatives, or draw a picture to help them solve a problem before they say, "I don't get it." These strategies must be used to help students investigate and solve a problem on their own.

Technology

Students will improve their computer skills this year. Curriculum driven computer programs, internet websites, and intriguing games enhance instruction in writing, math, science, and social studies. We have two computers in the classroom which will be used during center time, and during other times as well. Students will learn to use the Web to access information, research, play curricular games, use programs that reinforce concepts learned in the classroom, type, and publish their writing.

I will also integrate the SMART Board interactive whiteboard into my classroom. SMART Board has interactive flash activities and dynamic graphics that help achieve learning objectives and bring lessons



S A I N T F R A N C I S O F A S S I S I S C H O O L

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to life. We can use the SMART Board to look at the internet as a class and it creates many other opportunities. This is a great addition to our learning during this technological age. Please check the Classroom Homepage for a list of helpful websites that your child may enjoy using. These will help reinforce concepts learned in class.

I look forward to another year at St. Francis and I wish everyone a peaceful, exciting and productive school year!

Thank you!

Miss Giroux
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T ogether
E veryone
A chieves
M ore