Welcome!!

Thank you for coming to the SOL Information Night. This meeting will provide you with the information to best help your child prepare for the State of Virginia’s SOL tests.

If you were unable to attend the SOL Information Night and have any questions, please contact your child’s teacher.

**Tonight’s Agenda**

**Introduction and SOL Content:** Mrs. Erin Nesheim

**SOL Binders:** Mr. Marlon Mohammed

**In-Class Review:** Ms. Leslie Lane

**Test Taking Tips:** Mrs. Amy Kantor

**At Home Review:** Ms. Jennifer Avery

**Questions**

**Test Dates for 2012-2013 SOL Tests**

The third graders take four SOL tests in the spring. They include Reading, Math, Science, and Social Studies. The *Reading SOL* test will be on Monday, May 20th, followed by the *Science SOL* the next day on Tuesday May 21st. Wednesday the 22nd will be our break day. Testing will resume on Thursday with the *Math SOL* test on the 23rd, and the *Social Studies SOL* on Friday May 24th.

Please try to arrange vacations, doctor appointments, and other absences around these dates so that your child will not miss any of the tests. The tests are often given in the morning, so it is also important that your child be at school on time. Thank you for your help!
Introduction

• **What does SOL stand for?**

SOL stands for “Standards of Learning.” The SOLs provide an outline of basic knowledge that Virginia school children are taught and are expected to know as they progress from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

• **What are the SOL Tests?**

The SOL tests are standardized tests given in grades 3, 4, 5, 8, and high school. These tests have been developed to measure your child’s progress in specific material he or she is being taught. Third grade students take four tests: reading, math, science, and social studies.

• **When are the SOL tests?**

  *Reading SOL*: Monday, May 20, 2013

  *Science SOL*: Tuesday, May 21, 2012

  *Math SOL*: Thursday, May 23, 2012

  *Social Studies SOL*: Friday, May 24, 2012

**It is extremely important that your child be in school every day during testing.**

• **What material do the SOL tests cover?**

The third grade SOL test are cumulative, with the exception of math, meaning that it covers material from all of the standards from Kindergarten through third grade. The following section of this packet will describe in more detail the specific material covered.

**Please see the Virginia Department of Education website given below for more information about the SOL tests.**

**SOL Content**

Please remember that the science, social studies, and reading third grade SOL tests are cumulative. On the following pages, we have provided only a general overview of the SOL content. Most of what is listed here comes only from the 3rd grade SOLs. For a more detailed description of the tests, and to see the standards for Kindergarten through 2nd grade, please visit:


**Reading**

The reading test will focus on skills used to increase comprehension and effective communication across the curriculum.

*Skills and Strategies include:*

- Identifying vowel patterns and homophones
- Using context clues to determine meaning
- Setting a purpose for reading
- Making predications prior to reading
- Identifying parts of a story (e.g. characters, setting, plot)
- Sequencing events
- Identifying characteristics of folk/fairy tales, autobiographies, and biographies.

**Math**

The math test IS NOT CUMULATIVE and covers a wide range of skills including number sense, estimation and computation, measurement, geometry, probability, and patterns.

*Skills and Strategies include:*

- Solving addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems
- Identifying place value through 100,000
- Rounding numbers and using them to estimate
- Adding and subtracting fractions and decimals
- Making change up to $5.00
- Measuring: linear, weight, liquid, temperature, and time
- Identifying 2D and 3D figures and describing their characteristics
- Describing congruent and symmetrical shapes
- Creating and interpreting graphs and charts
- Extending patterns
Social Studies

The social studies test looks at historical events, mapping skills, economics, civics, and government.

Skills and Strategies include:

- Describing ancient civilizations of Egypt, China, Mali, Greece, and Rome
- Identifying European explorers
- Discussing the settlement of Jamestown
- Identifying the continents and oceans
- Applying map skills (e.g. using a key, using a grid map)
- Discussing economics in terms of supply and demand, goods and services
- Identifying rules and laws in relationship to our government
- Describing inalienable rights
- Identifying famous people from American history
- Describing 3 main groups of Native Americans (Eastern Woodlands, Plains, Southwest)
- Identifying the purpose of U.S. holidays

Science

The science test focuses on concepts such as energy, matter, life cycles, the environment, Earth’s cycles, and natural resources.

Skills and Strategies include:

- Identifying simple and compound machines
- Naming states of matter and their properties
- Understanding animals’ natural ability to protect themselves and adapt to their environments
- Creating a food chain
- Describing habitats and their effects on the environment
- Describing cycles including the water cycle and animal and plant life cycles
- Identifying natural vents such as fires, floods, and disease
- Describing natural resources and their advantages/disadvantages
- Identifying Earth’s natural cycles (e.g. day/night, seasons, moon phases)
SOL Binders

The SOL Binders are a tool that we have put together to familiarize students with the format of the test and to give them practice with answering test questions and completing the bubble sheets.

- What is in the SOL binder?
  - The front pages of the binders contain a homework assignment sheet describing which questions in each section are to be completed and when the assignments are due.
  - There is also a set of pages behind the homework sheets that describe various strategies that can be used on multiple-choice tests.
  - After that, the binder is broken into four (4) sections, one section for each of the 4 SOL tests: reading, math, social studies, and science.
  - This year, students will have an increased rigor Math and Reading SOL test. We will be preparing for this throughout the year as well as added computer lab time. (Please see doe.virginia.gov for more details on the increased rigor SOLs that are being adopted.)
• **When do the binders come home? When are the assignments due?**

  o The binders will always come home on either Thursday or Friday. **Assignments are always due on Tuesdays.** Because the SOL binder is such an important assignment, it will count as either 3 or 4 homework assignments each week (depending on how many sections were assigned).
  o While we do not usually assign homework on weekends, we feel that the schedule we have come up with allows flexibility in completing the assignments in case of extracurricular activities.

• **How can I help my child to complete his or her binder?**

  o During actual test administration, teachers will be unable to help students answer questions. Therefore, we ask that students first try the practice questions on their own.
  o After trying on their own, please go to over the material with your child, reviewing and discussing answers until you feel comfortable that your child understands it.
  o Please set aside time for your child to work without distraction on his or her binder each week.
  o When the binders come home with corrected answers, review any missed questions with your child.
  o Look at the test strategies given in the front of the binder and help your child practice them with the binder questions.
In-Class Review

In addition to basic curriculum, we use a variety of resources and strategies in preparation for the SOL tests. Our objective is to make sure the students not only learn factual information but also are able to read questions carefully and use strategies to help them choose the best answers. Some of the activities we do include:

- **SOL Board Games:** We have a variety of games in all subject areas that we use to review geographical landmarks and important people as well as math and reading skills. One of our favorites is SOLopoly, a version of Monopoly that is also a fantastically fun review game!

- **Famous American Projects:** These projects reviewed all the important people whom the students are responsible for knowing from Kindergarten through 3rd grade.

- **Test Questions:** On all tests this year we have tried to phrase multiple-choice questions similarly to how they will appear on the SOL tests. This includes questions that use the words “not” and “except,” which can be tricky.

- **Thunks:** These are daily review questions for each subject that we work on Monday through Thursday. Some classes take a Thunks “quiz” on Friday as a review of the material covered in that week’s questions. They are a great study resource, as they provide regular multiple-choice practice with material from Kindergarten through 3rd grade.

- **SOL Jeopardy:** We play a lot of SOL review games, but Jeopardy is a favorite! There are many, many versions of SOL Jeopardy that you can find online and use at home as well. Or, if you get really creative, you can make your own!

- **Test Strategies:** We regularly teach various strategies that the students can use to help them pay attention to what the questions are asking and help to eliminate incorrect answers. We have included some information near the front of the SOL binders with the strategies and examples of how to use them.
**Test Taking Tips**

- **Preparing at Home**
  - Set aside specific time and an area free from distraction to complete SOL binder assignments and to do other review activities.
  - Review SOL binder corrections, tests/quizzes, and social studies/science packets throughout the year.
  - Minimize stressful feelings with a lot of practice, patience, concentration, and positive encouragement.
  - Make it fun! Spice it up by playing a game to review material.

- **On Test Days**
  - Get a good night’s sleep the night before.
  - Have a great, healthy breakfast.
  - Keep a positive attitude.
  - Wear comfortable clothing and dress in layers.
  - Try your best!

- **What to Bring on Test Days**
  - A good book for after you have completed the test
  - Sharpened #2 pencils (with erasers, or an extra eraser 😊)
  - A healthy snack for a healthy brain!

- **Taking the Test**
  - Read all of the directions.
  - Underline important words or directions in the questions using the highlighter tool on the test.
  - Read all answer choices.
  - Cross out answers you know don't belong.
  - Ask yourself, “Does my choice best answer this question?”
  - Use ‘scratch’ paper and correctly transfer answers to the computer.
  - Double check your work.
  - Make sure the correct answer is selected on the screen before moving onto the next question.
At Home Review

When the binders come home, you can use the questions to make fun activities for you and your child to play as an alternative to basic review strategies. These include:

- **Board Games:** Use the attached blank game board or make your own. Write questions on index cards to use when playing the game. Don’t forget to include “advance to the next space” or go back # spaces to add some variety.

- **War:** Using a deck of cards, play war to practice basic math facts.

- **Fast Fact Contest:** After reviewing material, have a 5-minute contest. Write down as many facts as you can remember in 5 minutes.

- **Crossword Puzzles and Word Searches:** Using vocabulary and definitions, create a puzzle for review. A great website to generate puzzles for you is [http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com](http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com)

- **Flashcards:** Write facts on one side and answers on the other. Great idea for reviewing on-the-go!

- **Library Books:** Check out library books related to SOL topics. Read them together or take turns reading aloud to each other.

- **Vocabulary Hangman:** Have your child guess letters in the word. Give clues along the way to reinforce definitions.

- **Websites:** There are many websites out there with review games. One of our favorites, which we use in school is SOL Pass.
  - Website: [http://www.solpass.org](http://www.solpass.org)
  - Password: CEDAR
**Ways to Practice Math Facts**

- **Flashcards:** store-bought or homemade (have your child make them him or herself for extra practice). Great way to review on-the-go!

- **Websites:**
  - [www.Multiplication.com](http://www.Multiplication.com)
  - [www.FunBrain.com](http://www.FunBrain.com)
  - [www.GameAquarium.com](http://www.GameAquarium.com)
  - [www.APlusMath.com](http://www.APlusMath.com)

- **Make a List:** list the facts for each “family” (e.g. 2 x 0 = 0, 2 x 1 = 2, 2 x 2 = 4, etc.)

- **Sing a Song:** see the following list or make up your own! There are also CDs available for purchase in different stores and online with premade songs.

- **Practice Sheets:** make at home, print from a website, or ask your child’s teacher for some.

- **Memory Game:** make cards of facts and products; match the facts to the product.

- **Speed Game:**
  - Use a worksheet and cut apart the facts.
  - Spread the facts out face up.
  - Time for two minutes to see how many matches can be made.
  - Facts leftover are the ones to be practiced.

- **Computer Games:** online or from a store – see the websites above.

- **Board Games:** use the attached board game or make your own.