

Dear Students & Families,

August 2016

Hello, and welcome back! I hope you had a nice summer! I can't believe that school is about to start! I am so excited to get rolling again. Summer break provides a change to rejuvenate and relax—and now I am refreshed and ready to start another fun-filled 3<sup>rd</sup> grade year. I hope that you are just as excited as I am for school to begin!

Our class theme this year is...**SAFARI!** Three summers ago I went to Tanzania to volunteer at an orphanage, to learn about another culture, and to work with children in need. I learned and experienced so much while in Tanzania. I also saw African animals up close and in person. My experiences in Tanzania, Africa led to this fun theme! **Our learning will be a WILD adventure! I'm not 'lion,' it's going to be a great year!** You'll see all sorts of safari-related items in the classroom, in our routines, and in lessons. *Be prepared to embark on a WILD journey of learning!*

This is my 19<sup>th</sup> year of teaching. I've taught 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grades. This will be my fourth year of teaching 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Are you doing the math to figure out my age? ☺ I just turned 41! I graduated from Kent State University in 1998. I attended John Carroll University for graduate school. I have a Master's Degree in Administration, with a principal license for grades Pre K-9. I live in Cleveland Heights (which makes for a nice and short commute) with my husband, Bryan. We just celebrated our 17<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. We share our home and lives with our 3 pets: Lily (dog), Reesie (cat), and Hosta (cat). Much to our neighbors' relief, I did not bring a giraffe or an elephant home from Africa. (It's a well-known fact that I like to save animals – and giraffes and elephants are my favorites!)

Third grade is full of enticing curriculum. We will study life cycles, perform experiments, and study various cultures and governments. Students will continue working with and learning about math, fact practice, and will also participate in Guided Math. Shaker students will again be using the *enVision Math* series this year. Writing Workshop, the Daily 5 (for Guided Reading Groups), and Word Work will also ROAR! I'm still in the process of tweaking and deciding how this will all look and function in the classroom this year. You'll be able to get more details on **Thursday, September 1<sup>st</sup>** at **CURRICULUM NIGHT!**

I am an avid communicator. I have a class website ([www.superbecerra.com](http://www.superbecerra.com)), use email, Monthly Calendars, newsletters, and POWER Calendars to keep families informed. I haven't updated the website since the end of the school year (June 2016). At some point soon, I'll archive most of it and begin new posts.

Students do NOT need to bring any school supplies into the classroom. Student fees cover all supplies. All needed classroom supplies will be provided. Students should bring in a pair of gym shoes to keep at school for gym class (twice a week), an Art shirt/smock, and a water bottle. The first day of school I will provide snack for students. Beginning Tuesday, 8/23, students should bring a HEALTHY snack to school. Snack is optional. There is not a specified “snack time;” students who bring a snack will eat the snack sometime during the school day.

For **STUDENTS**:

1. We’ll get to know each other very well this year, and it’ll start on the first day! In the envelope you’ll find an index card. On the front, write down 1-3 facts about yourself. This is totally open-ended. You can write ANYTHING you want me to know about yourself. (It can be school related, family related, friend related, or anything related.) On the back write 1-3 questions you want to know about me and/or the upcoming school year. Don’t forget to write your name!
2. Please bring a book to school that you enjoy reading. It can be a new book or a favorite book you love to read. It will go in your personal book box.

For **PARENTS**: If you have any questions, or just want to say hi/check in, please e-mail me at [becerra\\_m@shaker.org](mailto:becerra_m@shaker.org).

I look forward to seeing everyone on August 22<sup>nd</sup>! I will take the class upstairs to the classroom after the “Beginning-of-the-Year” ceremony. Please give your child a “good-luck-and-have-a-nice-day” hug on the front lawn before the class goes inside. Remember to pack your supplies (lunch, tennis shoes, art shirt, and water bottle) in your safari bag (your back pack), and most definitely—remember to bring your sense of adventure and your **SMILE!!** ☺ ☺

Adventure-ly Yours,

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Safari Guide (Mrs. Melissa Becerra) ☺