



## Second Grade Newsletter November / December 2011

### Literacy

We are working hard in Reader's Workshop and Writer's Workshop. Our next unit of study is the Narrative genre. During Reader's Workshop, the children will activate prior knowledge about an author or genre, and apply comprehension strategies such as making connections, predicting, visualizing and questioning. The students will respond to oral and written questions about story elements, as well as use several texts within a genre to compare similarities and differences. The Writer's Workshop model consists of the opening meeting, work period, and closing meeting. In the opening meeting the children will be exposed to a certain skill through a mini-lesson. They will then have an opportunity to practice that skill during the work period. Finally we close our workshop period with some sharing of discoveries or celebrations. In the Narrative Genre, the children will be writing wonderful real-life experience narratives. They have brainstormed different topics that they enjoy, and have begun writing about themselves and their families. We will be working on writing engaging leads, elaborative detail, stretching out the main event, crafting effective dialogue, and constructing satisfying story endings.

### Help at Home:

- **Read to your child or have your child read to you every day. As you read with them, point out how the author began the story, any interesting details about the characters or events, and whether they think the ending of the story was a good one.**
- **Ask them to retell the story to you, summarizing the story by identifying the beginning, middle and end, and the story elements, which consist of the setting, the characters, problem and solution, and the events in the story. Also discuss what the big idea or theme of the story is.**
- **Encourage them to make a connection between what happens in their story and a personal experience.**
- **Please practice our weekly spelling words every night. The more words the children know how to spell easily, the better and more confident writers and readers they become.**

### Math

In Unit 4, addition and subtraction number stories are used as a vehicle for developing mental arithmetic skills. The three main areas of focus will be to solve number stories, read and show temperatures, and to develop different strategies for adding 2 and 3 digit numbers. The objectives of Unit 5 are accomplished through hands-on activities exploring spatial relationships. The four main areas of focus are; to develop the concepts of point and line segment, to identify, name and classify polygons, to observe similarities and differences among 3-dimensional shapes, and to explore symmetry.

## Math continued

### Help at Home:

- Please use math in everyday situations. Make up number stories and ask your child to solve them.
- To help your child read thermometers, you can put one thermometer outside your window, and one inside. Ask your child to tell you what the temperature is both outside and inside. They can also figure out the difference between those two temperatures.
- These are the three major strategies for adding 2 and 3 digit numbers that you can practice with your child.
  - The students start with one number (usually the larger one), then count up the amount of the other number, first by tens, then add the ones. For example,  $47+33=?$  Start at 47. Count up 30 more, then add 3 more.
  - Another strategy is combining the tens and the ones separately.  $29+37=?$  Add the tens,  $20+30=50$ , then add the ones  $9+7=16$ . Add 50 and 16 to get the answer.
  - The third strategy is adjusting and compensating. For the problem  $52+29=?$  You would say 29 is close to 30, so  $52+30=82$ , then take away the one that was added to make 30, and the answer is 81.
- For Unit 5, find 3-dimensional objects around the house that are pyramids, cylinders, cones, spheres, cubes and prisms. Discuss the similarities and differences among these shapes, such as having either flat or curved surfaces.
- To explore symmetry, your child can cut out shapes such as a heart, square, or any random shape, fold it in half, and discover whether it is symmetrical or not.

## Science

The second graders have been busy taking the role of scientist in the classroom! We have done several experiments during our study of Matter. Students have done experiments that involved freezing, melting, dissolving and evaporating as well as experiments in which the states of matter (solids, liquids, and gases) change. These experiments have been key to understanding the concepts of matter. To enhance our science curriculum the second graders participated in an in school workshop presented by High Touch High Tech called "What's the Matter?" Students learned how to blow up a balloon without blowing into it, made water molecules out of marshmallows, played with Oobleck, and made grape smoothies. Our next unit of study in Science will be Soil, which will begin in January. Get ready for the worms, yes, worms!

- Your children will want to share their experiences. Be sure to ask about their discoveries!

## Social Studies

Beginning in December, we will study the culture of the Spanish-speaking country of Mexico. The children will be able to describe the traditions, customs and beliefs of the culture through the use of its stories, myths and fables, and its art and music. We will study Mexico's geography and create individual maps that reflect Mexico's wide range of landscapes. We will construct our own Mexican flags and learn the meanings of each colored stripe as well as the Mexican Coat of Arms. We will read about Mexico's schools, investigate its arts and crafts, and discuss its famous sports. In addition we will explore some of Mexico's most popular holidays including Poinsettia Day and Las Posadas. The children will be able to make connections by comparing and contrasting the elements of the traditional culture of Mexico to the elements of the traditional American culture.

- Take your child to the library or go online to get additional interesting information about Mexico. Your child will be excited and proud to share his or her knowledge with the class.

## **Homework**

As part of their homework students are to read at least 20 minutes every night. Your child can use a book from home, a media center book or a book from the Ferguson Library for their reading log. Please remember to sign your child's reading log in their homework folder.

The students have also been receiving vocabulary words each week. These words are taken from the science, social studies, and math curriculum. The students are familiar with these words. The vocabulary sentences are due on Friday and the quiz is also on Friday.

Each Friday your child has a spelling quiz. The spelling words for the quiz are taken from the phonics program. For example, if we are learning about r-controlled vowels, the students will get words that have r-controlled vowels. The words are used regularly during the week's phonics lessons.

### **Help at Home:**

- **Using games such as Hangman or Concentration are fun ways to help your child study their spelling words.**
- **To play Concentration, write the 10 spelling words on index cards (twice) so you have 20 index cards. Mix them up, turn them face down, then turn 2 over at a time and try to find the matching words!**
- **For the vocabulary words, you can put the word on one card, the meaning on another, then try to pair them correctly.**

## **Miscellaneous**

- Please be sure your child knows whether he or she has home or school lunch. Also, please review the lunch menu selections with your child.
- The weather is starting to get colder. We will still be having outdoor recess, so please make sure that your child is dressed appropriately for the colder days.
- If your child is not feeling well, please keep him or her at home.
- Donations to our classrooms are always welcome and appreciated! We always need tissues, Clorox wipes, paper towels, Purell, and plastic cups.

## **Important Dates**

### **No School:**

Monday, 12/26 through Monday, 1/2 - Holiday Break

Monday, 1/16 – Martin Luther King Day

### **Early Release:**

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday - 12/6, 12/7, 12/8 - Report Card Conferences

Friday, 12/23 - Beginning of Holiday Break

Wednesday, 1/11 - Teacher Professional Development

### **Other Dates:**

Friday, 12/2 - Distribution of Report Cards

Monday 12/5 through Friday 12/9 – Book Fair

Thursday, 1/19 - Morning PTO Meeting