

Gresham Arthur Academy Teacher's Corner

December 2009

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Gresham Arthur Academy 503-667-4900
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New Things Happening In Kindergarten

December Birthdays

Lilah Krohn
12/1/01

Sadie Thomas
12/4/02

Makayla Moss
12/6/01

Justice Shough
12/7/00

Rebecca Brewer
12/9/99

Brodie Joseph
12/9/02

Ryan Burch
12/20/00

Ruben Arciniega
12/22/00

Jacinda Stone
12/26/03

Hannah Pokorny
12/30/02

Joslyn Grek-Porter
12/31/03

Happy December! My gracious, it does not seem possible that it is already December.

Our kindergarten class is split into three groups. Right now they are Asia, Australia and Europe. These names will be changing soon. Each group can earn points for great behavior. The group with the most points on Friday becomes the Star Group for the following week. Being the Star Group is exciting because they always get to line up and come to the carpet first for the entire week! It is rare, but points can be taken from groups as well. Remind your child in the morning to practice his/her best behavior to help earn points for his/her group. You can also help by writing short notes about anything your child shares with you about school. These notes earn your child's group one point!

Math is becoming increasingly more complex. Your child will really benefit at school if you practice these things:

- "The boy ate 2 apples. Then he ate 3 more. What's the problem?" We want to work up to the point where each child can say the problem, "2+3=", without too much thought. Right now you will probably need to start very slowly.
- "Listen again, the boy ate 2 apples. How many (child: "2")? Then he ate 3 more. What does 3 more mean (child: "plus 3")?" Writing what your child says as s/he says it is helpful.
- You can change the numbers and the words in the story. Remember to stick with numbers 9 and under and to use the word "more" for plus.
- When you look through your child's yellow folder have him/her read all of the numbers on the math worksheet. S/he should be able to explain everything that was done. Use the worksheet as a guide about what to talk about.

For reading it's helpful to have your child read all of the sounds and words on the worksheets that come home. If your child brings reading homework home, have him/her read it several times, sign it and return it in the yellow folder. If your child does not have homework yet, it will happen soon. It begins on lesson 62. You can keep an eye out by reading the lesson number on the reading worksheets. If s/he does not have homework yet, have him/her read the regular worksheets.

We go outside even when it is very cold. Be sure to send your child to school prepared for the weather. Hats, gloves, scarves and boots are all good ideas. I do help each child get ready. However, this can be a very long process. Please have your child practice zipping, putting on gloves, fixing inside out sleeves and wrapping scarves at home.

Now that we're in the thick of the holidays please help keep our school schedule a priority. From now until January it can be hard to keep school focus high. You can help by helping your child get to school at 8:10, doing homework and getting a good night's rest.

Thank you, Families, for being advocates for your child(ren)! You know your children the best and are crucial teachers in their development. I appreciate everything you bring to the school and how much time you put into your child's education!

Thank you, again,
Ms. McCool





Catch Up With The 2nd Graders

Contact Your Teacher

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Hello everyone! I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving! We have some really exciting things happening in 2nd grade that I can't wait to tell you about!

The first thing, that I'm sure many of you have heard from your excited kiddos, is that we have started cursive! So far the 2nd graders have mastered lower case t, u, i, and are working on c. They are all working very hard, and their concentration is apparent in the atmosphere of the room. While they are working independently on their cursive the room is dead silent and there are a few tongues sticking out of the corners of mouths; such is the intensity of their concentration!

In reading we have had exciting news as well. The Red Reading Group has been working really hard, including doing 2 lessons a day, and last Tuesday they joined with Blue Group to form the new Purple Group. This group is at an exciting point. We are just beginning the "Jean" stories. These stories will take us through the end of Reading Mastery II (RM II). The Jean stories involve many rules about the strange "Land of Peevish Pets", so please ask your student about these rules when they are doing their nightly homework. Also regarding homework: it is a guideline that the children read the homework out loud to you once. If there is time for them to read it more than once, please encourage them to do so. In addition, we are working on reading with expression, so please encourage them to do this as well. I am very proud of the new Purple Group, and can't wait to begin Reading Mastery III with them soon!

Because Red & Blue Groups combined I have now been able to begin teaching another group in the classroom-the Cats. We are approximately ½ way through RM II and will be moving quickly through the remainder of the program. We may do 2 lessons per day on occasion, so if your child brings home 2 homework pages in one day please do have them read both to you. I am very excited to be working with this new group!

Mr. Seiter's Yellow reading Group has finished up the stories about Nancy, and are about to begin reading about a very well traveled fly named Herman. This is a fun story that does a nice job including some facts about Geography and a little bit of information about insects as well. Your child should have homework every day, with very few exceptions. Please help them remember to read their homework out loud to you, and check with them to make sure that they are turning it in every day. Reading the homework out loud again to you helps them with their fluency (how well they read out loud), as well as their comprehension. In addition, you can always ask them questions about what they've read to see how well they are paying attention to it. Please have your child do their homework every day.

My Math Stars Group is amazing! We have already finished 57 lessons! These kids are hard workers who take learning math seriously, but understand that we can have fun doing it. We have learned to count by 2's, 5's and are mastering 10's. Our latest achievement is that we are learning to tell time. Currently the students know the minute hand and the hour hand, and the number placement on the clock face. Very soon they will be learning rules about how to tell the hour, and how to count by 5's to tell the minutes. Encourage your student to tell you which hand on a clock is the hour hand and which is the minute hand. They'll be telling time like pros in no time!

Mr. Seiter's Math Group is continuing to work their way through CMC C. Encourage your child to practice basic math facts (2+7, 5+3, etc.) as they can. A great inexpensive way to do this is to use an empty egg carton. Label the pockets where the eggs fit with #1-10, with 2 spots with question marks that can be any number the child chooses. Put 2 markers inside-these can be anything small enough to fit inside the carton such as a die, etc.-and close the top of the carton. Shake the carton, open it up, and add (or subtract) whatever numbers the markers landed on. The things this math group is doing are going to continue to become more complicated, and being very solid on the basic math facts will really help them as they move forward in the program.

One last note is that we will be starting a unit on The Constitution this week. Be ready to ask your child what they're learning!



Welcoming December in 3rd Grade

Hello, parents! First of all, I would like to thank you for taking the time to come to fall conferences last week. It was so wonderful to have that face time to speak with you about your children's progress, as well as areas of needed improvements that we can help them with together.

Reading

RM 3 Red Group: This group is reading a story about two friends who discover a time machine. We have read about their adventures in the past and will be traveling with them to the future soon ☺. The boys have been making very few reading errors. Areas of improvement include following along as directed in order to avoid unnaturally long pauses and getting lost. The boys are to follow under each word with their finger as words are read. Please watch for this at home and correct them if they try to skip it. Use of expression is another important skill that you can help with at home. If their reading sounds flat, please read the sentence to them the way it should sound. Thanks for your help!

RM 4 Blue Group: Our group continues to read about Al and Angela, a brother and sister who have been going on educational adventures with a mysterious old man. Each time they pass a test on what they have learned, they get to choose another destination. We've learned about the differences between solid, liquid and gas molecules, as well as information about water pressure. The kids have been doing a great job. In order to help them with reading check-outs, please help your kids by timing their reading the day before a check-out. These appear in the homework right before lessons with 5's and 0's (ex: 119, 124, 129, 134). Your kids can show you and tell you what to do. Practicing timed reading helps with fluency.

RM 5: Mr. Seiter's group has been reading a story called The Cat Who Walked Alone. This is a fictional story with two goals: learning about the difference between wild and domesticated animals, as well as the difference between fiction and non-fiction stories; fiction is make-believe and non-fiction is true. One of the ways the kids can tell this particular story is fictional is that the animals speak to humans. At home, you can quiz your kids by naming specific stories and asking them if the story is fiction or non-fiction.

Decoding B1: As mentioned during report card time, this group has been working very hard. They are very consistent in their daily work. Ms. Thomas has been so pleased with the way the group has been going that they have even been able

to skip 10 lessons. Please be sure to ask your Decoders about their homework each day. In order to keep up their pace and mastery of lessons, the homework is crucial for extra practice. Keep up the great work, boys!

Math

CMC C Red: My group will be working towards Test 8 this week. We have been learning more about fractions that are more, less, and equal to 1. There are a few areas that these kids can work on-one is completing their daily work during our morning work time. Math Facts are another hugely important factor that you can help them with at home. Dollar Tree usually has packs of flashcards for \$1 per skill-addition, subtraction & multiplication. 10 minutes per day at home can make a big difference in your child's success during timed-math sections and problem solving. Thanks!

CMC C Blue: Mr. Seiter's group has come to the end of their book, which means a large cumulative test on lessons 1-120 is coming soon. Mr. Seiter will spend time reviewing with this group to be sure they are solid before this test, as well as being prepared for the next book. They have been working on division number families and word problems. Extra math facts practice for this group is very important. The easier their basic facts are for them, the better prepared they will be to move to the next book.

Core

As you know from conferences, we have been working on animal classification in Core. Please be on the lookout in the near future for criteria for an animal report. I think this will be a great topic for their first take-home report of the year. They have been enjoying this unit so hopefully they will be interested in the research. More to come!

Again, thanks so much for taking the time to meet with me. Your kids have been working so hard and I can't believe that we are into the 2nd quarter already. I know that this month will go quickly. Let's make it a great one!

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Welcome back from Thanksgiving, 4th Grade!

I hope everyone had a fun and restful short break. Winter break is fast approaching, let's try to work together to keep our kiddo's focused on their school work.

Red group is continuing to work with Mrs. Shaw in RM 4. We are reading a series of stories about a boy named Waldo who makes food that animals love. These stories are teaching us a little bit about different kinds of animals and will go on to teach about how to train animals. Pinky group is continuing to read "Go Anywhere, See Anything." This group will be working in these stories until the end of RM 4. Al is about to learn about the human body. I wonder what adventure he will go on to learn about that! Blue group is working with Mr. Seiter, they are on lesson 45 in RM 5, and just finished up with domestication of animals, and are now learning about the Yukon/gold miners. The group is really getting into learning about the adventurous western history. Ms. Stoltz's Purple group is continuing to work in RM 6 They are reading a story called Sara Crewe, which is the story of The Little Princess and learning about figurative language and contradictions.

In math, Green group is continuing to work on double digit multiplication and double digit division. Again, it would help this group to work on their counting by numbers to get their math facts more fluent. They should be able to count by 1's, 2's, 3's, 4's, 5's, 7,'s 9's, 10's, 25's, 50's and 100's. Working with Ms. Thomas in Yellow group, they are working on ratio problems and harder mixed number problems. They will be taking work home as homework if it doesn't get done in class.

We have started Spelling Mastery D. Spelling tests will be on Fridays until the end of the school year. This shouldn't change much, unless scheduling conflicts occur. Make sure your students are practicing at least a couple of words each night. They don't have to "memorize" that whole list, but spelling the words will help solidify the rules we learn in our spelling lessons.

In Comprehension, we are reviewing parts of speech, body systems and grammar so that we can re-take test four and everyone can do a great job. In reasoning and writing, we are starting to work in the D program. This will help sentence construction and writing is passed tense.

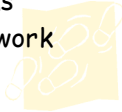
The reading logs are, for the most part, the responsibility of the student. They should pick up a new one IMMEDIATELY after turning one in.

There will always be a stack of blank ones in one of the empty mail box pockets by the door of my classroom Please have your student read each and every day to start to help build an after school homework routine..

I have already had some great volunteers and have very much enjoyed getting to know them and having them around. Please feel free to contact me by phone or email with any questions or concerns. mammarainy@aim.com

I earned a good behavior card!

- Thomas M.
- Nathan
- Naoh
- Emma D.
- Isiah
- Nicole H.
- Bailey F.
- Christopher C.
- Hunter
- Abi
- Isaac C.
- Tatum
- Hannah R.
- Matei
- Christopher S.



Happy Holidays from 5th Grade!

This month, there is a lot to be thankful for in Fifth Grade. We just received a shipment of 6 donated computers that were immediately added to our classroom collection. Now we are able to have 7 students at a time practicing their typing and word processing skills, and soon we'll begin researching and investigating as well.

Many of our academic groups are reaching important milestones, which leads to increased challenges. Our Decoding group is leaping over lessons and getting into tougher stories. Remember to practice your homework every night so you can pass those check-outs on the first try! The Red group is moving into Textbook B and doing very well on their check-outs. Make sure to read your all homework the whole way through at least once so that your daily work is easy to answer. My "Speeders" in RM V are hunting down the reading group ahead of them while they speed through their animal stories; I am so proud of how well they are inferring and stating the main idea. They will catch the next group in about 2 weeks! Mrs. Thomas' RM V group will be in for a big shock when they turn the page into RM VI. They are still struggling with The Prince and the Pauper and finding supporting details of the main ideas. They are really going to have to focus if they don't want the "Speeders" to mow them over. To help, this group needs to be reading their homework aloud every night, and practice summarizing passages with their families. Ms. Stoltz's RM VI group is writing creative stories and enjoying a new story about a little princess. Keep up the great work!

In Math, my CMC E "Jaguars" are astonishing! They are learning middle-school concepts and still having a lot fun each day. Keep up the focus, guys! Mrs. Thomas' math group is settling into a great groove. They have learned many new things this past month, like working with mixed numbers. You're right on track! Mrs. Shaw's math group has lost it's rhythm this month. Your math facts need to be lightning speed, so practice them until you see them in your sleep. It's the key to all math. And remember, if a new concept isn't clear, don't forget to ask for help before it's too late! Those of you who are practicing at home might make the leap into Mrs. Thomas' group this month.

In other areas of our schedule, we have been studying the different biomes in Core, and the variety of plants and animals in each one. December will be devoted to practicing and planning for the science fair. We also have quite a collection of seasonal poetry that the students are helping to get ready for publishing.

And as always, please feel free to catch me after school or contact me via email with any questions or concerns. -Mrs. Hoeksema



Ways to help your student this month

- Ask what they're learning about! Keep those facts in their brains much longer!
- Have them use a computer often. 5th graders can research the answers to their imaginative questions if you guide them.
- Check for homework thoroughness. Are they proud of their work?





Having a Wintry Blast in First Grade!

It is hard to believe it is already December! Time travels so fast during this time of the year. The first grade class is working so hard and enjoying every moment of it. I am very proud of them and all their accomplishments thus far.

Now that we are entering winter and the weather is very chilly, I ask that every child bring a warm jacket every day to school for recess. In addition to the jacket, if your child has gloves, a scarf and a hat I would recommend they bring those as well. The weather is very cold and if it isn't raining the kids do go outside still for recess.

Conferences were a big success! Thank you to everyone who signed up! It was a great opportunity to share about your child and also for me to learn how I can better help them to be successful at school. If you were not able to make your conference or did not sign up and still would like to meet, please see me. I would love to schedule a time that works to let you know about how your child is doing.

There are many volunteer opportunities in December! In addition to the copying and pencil sharpening we have several projects we will be working on from now until winter break. I will be sending home details about the projects sometime in the next week. If you can help with copying, sharpening pencils, or can do some preparation for the projects at home or at school please let me know.

Reading:

Red Group: Working on completing storybook 2 and entering storybook 3. This group is doing a fantastic job! They can always use more practice on their homework as the stories are getting longer and more detailed. Please have them read their homework at least twice. The first time let them read the story all the way through without stopping. The second time ask them all kinds of questions about what they are reading to increase comprehension skills. If they miss a word, ask them to go back and look at the sounds.

Gold Group: This group is currently fast cycling through Reading Mastery I and a few days away from entering Reading Mastery II. Although this group is doing a great job, they are learning a lot of new information fairly quickly. Please have them read their homework several times and even quiz them on the sounds. Some new sounds they have learned are “ing, z, qu, and x.”

Blue Group: Mr. Seiter teaches this group and is always impressed by how well they do. This group is in the middle of the “Walter” stories, where they are learning about the “al” sound. Blue group is also transitioning into using the “e” rule, which allows them to tell the difference between “note” and “not.” It can be tricky, so continue to encourage them as their homework becomes a little more difficult with each story.

Yellow Group: I am really enjoying this group. They move at a very brisk pace and are eager to learn! We are really diving into the “e” rule now, which allows the children to tell the difference between “cam” and “came.” All of their stories have several examples of this rule and are very complex. Please encourage them to practice homework at least twice, and it would be exciting to quiz them on this new rule they are learning and see what they know!

December Birthdays: Sadie 4th, Brodie 9th, Hannah 30th.

