

Gresham Arthur Academy Teacher's Corner

January 2009

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New Things Happening In Kindergarten

January

Birthdays

Dennis C. 1st
Noah S. 23rd
Jesse D. 19th
Kaleb D. 23rd
Lindsey F. 28th
Gage M. 28th
Yesenia T. 7th
Tyrone W. 12th
Morgan B. 11th
Lucas B. 2^d
Mariah P-D. 26th
Melanie R. 2nd
Josh S. 9th
Olivia B. 5th
Corbett G. 8th

Kindergarten families,

Each child has made so much progress this year! They are almost unrecognizable from the little kiddos they came in as. One of their successes includes getting homework in reading. Two of the three groups have it now and the other group will get it in a couple weeks. They have remembered all kinds of facts from our core lessons and love to share them! We have been in school for 61 days. I feel like I really know each child and the special qualities that make them who they are. Thank you for giving me that opportunity!

Ms. McCool is teaching **Red Reading Group**. This group is practicing the sounds they know so that they can say them without even thinking about it. They are also learning to sound out words such as "sock", "not" and "the". These words are combined into four word "stories". These are the sentences at the top of the Take-Home sheets. When you child comes home. Have him/her sound out and read the words on their starred work. They can also share the sounds on the worksheet too! Sharing their work is a great way to make them proud of all they are accomplishing!

Ms. Thomas is teaching **Blue Reading Group**. This group has been working hard on sounding out in their head and

then reading the word out loud. This is a huge pre-reading skill! Soon they will be reading their work without even sounding out! Have your child practice this by asking him/her to sound out in her/his head and then to say it fast. They can even do this over the phone with a long distance relative!

Mrs. Brucker is teaching **Yellow Reading Group**. She has officially begun teaching the Yellow group this week. They had a mastery test that they did great on! This group will begin using books very soon. Getting to use a book is a huge milestone that all of the groups look forward to.

I love this point in the school year. This is when all of the groups are really taking off with reading, we begin spelling and all of the kids really know, now, what is expected at school. These kids have worked hard and show it. Be sure to ask your child about Purple Cards and about spelling! You will see a half sheet of paper coming home with a couple sounds written on it. This is the beginning of our spelling program.

I hope that every family had a relaxing break! Please email or call me with any questions you have.

Ms. McCool

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First Grade Welcomes 2010!

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I hope you all had a wonderful and relaxing winter break 2009, and enjoyed welcoming our new year. It is great to have you back! This month will be a busy one in first grade as we are gearing up to begin a few new programs!

The spelling program I started the year with is called Reading Mastery One Spelling. It consists of the students writing sounds from dictation, words, and eventually full sentences. January is the time to transition to a new program called Spelling Mastery A. This program includes similar concepts and branches off into other exercises that help students learn to spell. They will also learn various forms of punctuation and have oral spelling lessons. Students are always excited to get their very own spelling workbook to keep in their desk. Ask your child about it!

Another program we will be starting in the next few weeks is a language program called Reasoning and Writing A. This program builds on concepts students are learning in Language for Thinking, but takes it to the next level. We will be following longer sets of directions and listening to stories and answering questions about them. The students will love the stories, as they tend to be quite comical. Reasoning and Writing A will provide each child with a bright orange workbook to keep in their desk that we will work through daily. Your child is sure to tell you when they start this program!

Reading Groups:


Red Group: This group is working really well at reading the fast way. The group just transitioned from choral reading the stories to each student having an individual turn to read whole sentences! The kids were so excited for this. Reading Mastery I has 160 lessons, and this group is at lesson 131 and moving at a brisk pace. Encourage them to practice homework at least three times!

Gold Group: This small group is moving quickly through Reading Mastery II, currently on lesson 41. The students are learning the “ar” sound, “ou” sound, and will be slowly transitioning into the “e” rule (the difference between “hope” and “hop”). Continue to have students read homework at least three times as well as ask them all kinds of questions about what they are reading. Keep it up Gold!

Blue Group: The group is working really hard to complete their first story with several chapters, called *The Magic Pouch*. This story has eight chapters and requires students to really think about what they are reading because they have to recall quite a bit of information each lesson. The paper students are working on each day is now changing a lot, requiring students to fill in the blank instead of multiple choice questions. If students don’t know an answer or how to spell an answer, they are required to look it up in their storybook and find it on their own. This is a tough task for many at first, but will help them transition more easily into Reading Mastery III. Encourage your child to take their time on their papers and not rush through them.

Yellow Group: The stories in Yellow Group are getting longer and longer all the time! It requires students to think and make sense of what they are reading so they may recall the details later on. During homework time, it may be a good idea to have your child read the story all the way through, and then ask them to retell it to you in their own words. See how many of the major details they can remember! The papers in Yellow Group are very detailed as in Blue Group and require students to look up answers they are not sure of in their storybook. If students are unsure how a word is spelled I also encourage them to find the word in their story. Students can get frustrated at this experience at first, but are so proud when they finally get it. Encourage your child to slow down and take time to really think about each question.

If you are interested in volunteering please let me know. I really appreciate the volunteers I have had so far this year, and could not have done it without you!





Catch Up With The 2nd Graders

I can't believe that it is January already and that the school year is nearly half over! I hope that everyone had a fabulous winter break and even got to enjoy the 12 hours or so of snow fun that we had. I was really impressed with the number of kids that completed the homework that was sent home over the break. Thank you for helping to reinforce what we are doing here!

The second graders are back hard at work. The most exciting news is that the Purple group has started Reading Mastery III (RM III). This is the next level, and the stories will become more complicated and contain more detail as well as facts that the students are expected to remember over many months. The students have daily work from a workbook as well as work from a textbook that they complete on lined paper. There is definitely a higher expectation as far as the student's ability to manage their time, and so far (two lessons into it) the kids are doing a great job.

The Cats are fast cycling their way through Reading Mastery II. They have just learned the rule about double letters in a word; if there is one letter, the first vowel says its' name (moping vs. mopping). They are quick learners, and have a fantastic work ethic as well.

Mr. Seiter's Yellow group has been learning about a traveling fly named Herman, distances vs. speed, measurements of weight, and the location of important US cities, states, the Pacific Ocean and Japan. Yellow group has impressed Mr. Seiter with the amount they have remembered after coming back from winter break.

My Math Stars just took test 7 and did very well (as usual!). The most exciting thing

happening in this group is that we are learning to multiply. Have your child practice with you. When there is a problem that says 5×6 , we say that it tells us to count by 5, 6 times. Then the child can hold up 6 fingers and count by 5's until they run out of fingers. The one thing that this group still could work on firming up is their math facts basics like $7+2$, etc. Most of the kids can get the answers eventually, but we want to have the answers come so quickly that they're almost automatic. For a fun alternative to flash cards, ask them about making the egg carton game!

Mr. Seiter's math group has continued to work with area, time, number families and borrowing and carrying. The group is preparing for test 4 of CMC C and I am sure they will be going into it with confidence.

For core we are beginning a science unit on digestion. This group really loves science, and I can't wait to teach this unit!

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January Greetings From 3rd Grade

Happy 2010! I hope that all of you enjoyed your holidays with family and friends as much as Craig and I did. Now, it's back to school, back to learning, & back to achieving in the 3rd grade.

Reading Groups

Ms. Thomas' Decoding group is almost finished with their current book, level B1. They will be starting to complete 2 lessons a day instead of reading the same lesson twice. The boys do need to remember to bring their homework back to Ms. Thomas each day. Please try your best to have them read the story more than one time. This will be very beneficial to the goals are trying to achieve.

My Reading Mastery 3 group just completed their end-of-program test before the holiday break. All 5 boys passed the test, which means we will be moving up to Reading Mastery 4! It's always very exciting for groups to move on to a new book. Please congratulate them ☺. I will still be sending homework with the group to read with you at home. The stories will grow more complex as we go so it may be a good idea to have them read the story twice, especially when it seems tougher.

My Reading Mastery 4 group will be continuing the Al and Angela story that we started in December around lesson 125. At this point, there are so many specific details about various parts of the body that having them read the homework more than once will be beneficial. Please ask them questions as they go in order to keep the information fresh. It's very complicated!

For Mrs. Shaw's RM4 group, they are also continuing the Al & Angela stories and have about 15 more stories before they reach the end of the book. I know they will continue to work hard as they learn more about the human body in this story.

Mr. Seiter's Reading Mastery 5 group is reading a story called Adventures on Rocky Ridge. In this story, the students are reading about an intelligent girl who has a physical disability. When her father goes missing on a stormy night, she decides to take her prized dog to go search for him. The story demonstrates bravery, as well as the fact that it is possible to overcome physical challenges in order to have a fulfilling life. The group is doing great!

Math Groups

My CMC C group is on lesson 87. We have been continuing to work on fractions that are more, less, & equal to one. We have also been starting to work with money in multiplication number families, some simple division, rounding, and word problems. I know I bring it up every month, but doing math flashcards with your kids is still very important. Also, having them add items on a receipt from the store is great practice for money calculations. You can ask them *about how much* certain items are and also *exactly how much* the items were.

Mr. Seiter's CMC D group is on lesson 10. We are still so proud of the group for moving up to this new book. The group is off to a strong start. Much of what they are working on at this point is review of concepts learned in CMC C (multiplication number families, some division, word problems), but newer pieces will be introduced soon as well. Math facts practice at home, in the car, wherever you have a chance, remains very important. Multiplication and division mixed with occasional addition and subtraction would be great. Thanks, as always, for what you do at home.

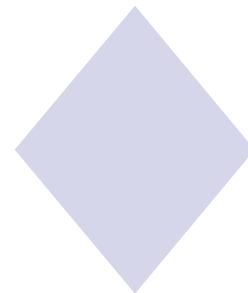
Core

My plan was to include some photos from the animal projects in this newsletter. The kids did such a wonderful job and I took several shots while they were evaluating the work of their classmates. Unfortunately, my USB cord must still be packed in a box from my move in October. I can't find it anywhere! As soon as it turns up (hopefully sometime this school year ☺), I will try to get the photos to you. The kids did such a fantastic job on their reports! I was so impressed.

As for our new unit, I have decided to begin 2010 with a health unit that will include topics such as self-esteem, stress, tobacco use, communicable diseases, and diet to name a few. I anticipate that the unit will take 2-3 weeks. Hopefully it will get our new year started off on a healthy foot!

Happy January! Let's make it a great one.

Ms. Truax
truaxjl@hotmail.com





Happy January 4th Graders!

Welcome back from winter break! I hope everyone had a fun and restful holiday.

Red group is continuing to work with Mrs. Shaw in RM 4. We are continuing in the Waldo 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 we are now very much into the part about how to train animals. Waldo is going to go on a tour with his animal show. Keep an eye out for how he saves the day! Pinky group is now working with Mr. Seiter and continuing to read "Go Anywhere, See Anything." This group will be working in these stories until the end of RM 4. Al and his sister Angela learned all about the human body by shrinking so small that they took a trip through the circulatory system. They are now learning about animals in Africa. Blue group is now working with Mrs. Shaw. We are reading interesting informational passages about endangered species, why they are endangered and what things have been done to help the problem. Purple group, which used to work with Ms. Stoltz, is now working with Mrs. Brucker (Mrs. B). They are reading a story called A White Heron and learning about decision making and keeping secrets – is it OK to keep secrets for the right reasons? Interesting to think about. They are also working very hard on deductions.

In math, Green group is continuing to work on double digit multiplication and some division. As always, 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. Please feel free to work on any of these things at home with your student. Working with Ms. Thomas in Yellow group, they are working on large in, out and end-up problems. They are working on area and perimeter and also figuring out the perimeter when they have the area and one side. They are also working on function of X problems. They will start working on math projects of probability, some of these projects may be sent home. Please remember this group needs to get their work done!

We have started new Spelling Mastery groups. We all meet at the same time, but the fourth and fifth grades are split up between Mrs. Hoeksema, Mrs. Shaw and Mr. Seiter. We are working on a range of lessons within Spelling Mastery D and E. Depending on what group your child is in, spelling tests will be at different times and on different days. Please feel free to email with questions about this. Remember, our program is not about memorization. Practicing the spelling rules and making sure those are solid will go a long way to help your child in spelling.

In Comprehension, we are working on vocabulary review, how to pronounce "circulatory" and continuing to work on parts of speech, grammar and body systems. In reasoning and writing we have started to work in the D program, which is helping with grammar and writing. We will soon begin a more intense writing program to prepare for the state writing test in February.

As always, reading logs are due as soon as they are finished. Please make sure this is something your student is working on at home.

I will be sending out a book order soon. The due date will be Friday, January 15 2010. Again thank you to all the parents who have helped out in the classroom so far. Your help is greatly appreciated. Please feel free to contact me by phone or email with any questions or concerns. mammarainy@aim.com

Greetings from 5th Grade!

Happy 2010 everyone! I trust that everyone had as wonderful a break as I did. In order to plan our actions for January, let's review the successes and struggles of late '09.

In reading, the Decoding group is almost finished with level B1 and will soon soar thru 2 lessons a day! It will be extra important to return homework each day and to practice reading for their check-outs. This can even be done in the car; being busy is not an excuse! Mrs. Shaw's red group is reading about Waldo and his adventures with training animals. Remember to read the whole story for homework and to return it each day! In RM V, the "Speeders" caught and joined the next group and are still outperforming the others. This new group, adeptly named "Speeder-Repeaters", will be diving into English history in the 1500's, which requires a lot of fact memorization. I hope 2010 will bring more focus and determination the 2nd time around for the "Repeaters." The wolves group, formerly taught by Ms. Stoltz, will be starting the year with Mrs. Bruker; I know this group will continue to amaze their teacher with their creativity.

In Math, Mrs. Thomas' group is really mastering tough material, including coordinate graphs, perimeter and area. These kids have fun math projects to look forward to and finishing CMC D! Keep up the great work! My Jaguars are prowling the second half of CMC E and approaching cool geometry problems. We're having fun and learning a ton! Mrs. Shaw's green group is still struggling with double digit multiplication and counting by 7's. Please practice your 7's around the house and work hard in school to finish your independent work; it provides needed practice to help pass tests.

In Core, we are approaching the last month before the science fair, and I know many students are excited. If anyone has questions, please don't hesitate to ask. We will continue to perform experiments and master the scientific method this month, plus begin to study minerals. Also, to squeeze more into each day, we will be adding more geography mini-lessons as we identify US states each week. I want everyone to name all 50 by June!

Ways to help your student this month

- Ask what they're learning about every day during the commute!
- Arrive at 8:10 for school so they may be organized and ready.
- Quiz your students on the states in their region (NW, SW, S, Midwest and Rocky Mountain regions).