Class Newsletter October 24, 2014

Dear Friends and Families,

Thank you all for taking the time out of your schedules to meet with me to discuss all the learning and growing that is going on in first grade. I am thrilled with all the growth the class has already made! Your support and partnership truly makes a difference in your students learning.

Our first field is on Monday, October 27th to the Audubon Center in Huntington. It looks like we should have a sunny day, but the temperature will be cold, low 50s. We will be walking around outside all morning by ponds and swamps, so please send your child to school with appropriate shoes, sneakers or boot, in addition a warm coat and hat will keep them happy in the outdoors. Thank you for your help with this.

Here’s a summary of what we have learned:

**Readers’ Workshop** – **Our learning target for reading is *I can read with a “wide awake brain*.” Comprehension Strategies:** Active thinking is such an important component to learning how to read.  Students are learning that reading is more than just figuring out what the words say, **readers read for meaning.**  We’re learning how readers use active thinking before, during, and after reading our books.  Much like our previous unit on figuring out tricky words, students will be learning some concrete skills to help them think actively and read with a wide awake brain.  Our first skill is making connections.  When we’re getting ready to read a book, we think about what we already know.  In adult language, we call this *activating our prior knowledge.*  We know that the most meaningful learning happens when new information is connected to existing knowledge.  Students are learning how to make connections to their own life, to other books, and to the world around them.  You can support our learning when you read with your children at home.  Whether you’re reading to them or listening to them read to you, you can practicing making these text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections.  Ask your child to show you the symbol for making connections!  Thank you for your support at home.  It makes such a difference for your child’s growth as a reader!

**Homework -** Your child’s reading homework bag includes a copy of our reading strategies bookmark so you can help support your independent reader at home.  When they get stuck on a word and ask you to tell them what it says, point them toward these familiar visuals and use the language on the bookmark to prompt them to use their strategies.   **I ask students to read their books to you as many times as possible throughout the week, and bring them back at the end of the week to trade in for new ones.**This means they are reading you the same 4 books several times throughout the week. Repeated reading is so important in first grade!  Students need to practice reading accurately and fluently, and every time they re-read a book they gain confidence, build their sight-word recognition, and are able to have deeper conversations about their books with you.

If you want additional homework, please help your child practice our word work (see below.)  I will not be sending home worksheets or other written assignments on a regular basis in first grade, but will always include ways to support our learning at home in our weekly newsletters.  I know how hard your children are working all day and that they need some down time in the evening.  I also want to respect your time together as a family at night.

**Integrated Studies –** **Our learning target in writing is *I can plan and write personal narratives.*** Students continue to apply the writing process: plan, write, illustrate, revise, celebrate!  One of our first grade standards is for students to become independent authors.  We are learning how to make choices about what we need to do next, how to go back into a piece of writing to finish it or fix it up, and how to turn our own life experiences into stories that make sense to readers.

First graders learned how to use temporal words, or *tell-a-story* words, to signal event order. Often we see children use the word *then* frequently when transitioning through events. Tell-a-story words such as, next, first, suddenly, or finally, makes our writing more interesting for the reader to read. Students went back into their writing pieces, highlighted all the *thens* and replaces them with a variety of temporal words that fit their story. What a difference these revisions made!

**Math** – **Our current Learning Target is *I can use numbers and words to help me make sense of problems.***

This week students organized, recorded, and interpreted data based on the question, *What is your favorite sport?* In our first round of data collection we surveyed our class and recorded our information on a table with tally marks. We determined the three most popular sports students like to play or watch are soccer, gymnastics, and football. These three sport choices were then taken to Mrs. Leon’s first grade classroom where each student interviewed and recorded 15 students favorite sport. Students determined what questions can be asked and answered by interpreting the data on their tables. Question examples; *what sport was the most popular? What sport was the least popular?* Or *how many more students like soccer than football?* To support this learning at home have your child collect data for you around the house. A sample data question could be, Who is wearing the most buttons? Let your child determine the best way to record their data and then interpret it by asking similar questions to the ones above.

**Word Work** – Our current *Fun*dations unit is: **glued sounds – *am* and *an*** Since *m* and *n* are nasal sounds they change the sound of *a.* Some examples are; **fan, ham, slam, plan, sand**

Here are the sight words we practiced this week: **this, from, or, one, had**

Next week’s sight words are: **says, but, what, all, your**

Current sight words and *Fun*dation skills are listed on our website [www.mrsgalushasfirstgrade.weebly.com](http://www.mrsgalushasfirstgrade.weebly.com/)

**Some other logistics:**

* **Our first field trip is coming up on Monday, October 27th. Your child came home with a field trip slip on Monday. If you have not yet filled this out, please send the signed form in with your child on Monday.**
* **School-wide assembly, October 31st, 2:00-2:30.**

Please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

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