Class Newsletter December 5, 2014

Dear Friends and Families,

I hope you all had a fantastic Thanksgiving break last week. The children came back to school with a buzz for the holiday season. It will feel like a quick few weeks till our next holiday break at the end of December.

Here’s a summary of what we have learned:

**Readers’ Workshop** – We are learning how to evaluate texts.  We’ve identified several text features and

story elements that make some texts “good” and others “not so good.”  Students are evaluating texts using

a 5 star scale, then backing up their claim with evidence from the text.  Ask them how they’d rate a book

you read together at home, and then ask them why they’d give it that many stars.  You might be surprised

by how well your child is able to evaluate a text and articulate their rationale!  Students are also writing

their own book reviews of some of our favorite read-alouds this year!  Showing students the authentic uses

of their writing increases engagement and deepens their understanding of writing for a reader.

**Homework -** Keep up that wonderful reading at home! Making reading part of your child’s routine will reinforce her or his concept of herself or himself as a reader.  Let them see you reading your own materials, both fiction and informational texts like newspapers, lists, emails, even bills,  and help your child see that reading is an important part of everyone’s life. *All of our sight words to date are on our website* [*www.mrsgalushasfirstgrade.weebly.com*](http://www.mrsgalushasfirstgrade.weebly.com/)

**Integrated Studies –**Writers’ WorkshopStudents built positive self-images of their bodies and abilities this week by writing about a body part they think is the best part of themselves. The inspiration for this project came from [Wendy Ewald’s](http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3402800157.html) book *The Best Part of Me,* which is a compilation of student poems that use descriptive language about their favorite body part*.* After students chose their best body part I took a black and white photo. Children, like many adults, can feel uncomfortable seeing parts of themselves larger than life in a photograph. I allowed students to approve their photo before I printed it, or they could get a retake. After receiving their photo’s to use for inspiration, writers continued practicing claims and evidence writing beginning with the claim: *The best part of me is my \_\_\_\_\_\_\_* and supporting this claim with three pieces of evidence of why this is the best part. Like all “good writers” we started with a planner first and then turned those thoughts into detailed sentences. Some parts students chose were their hands, “*because I give my mom big hugs with them*”, legs, *“because I like to go on walks with my family*”, and their whole body, “*because I like me*!” This was a really fun project and the class did a fantastic job supporting their claims with detailed evidence. Look for our work hanging on the yellow bulletin board facing the computer lab!

**Math** – This week we focused on subtraction and how it relates to addition. The students used mathematical models and number trees to solve word problems with a missing addend. They needed to provide both an addition and subtraction model that matched the problem. For example;

Rachel and Lucy are playing with 5 trucks. If Rachel is playing with 2 of them, how many is Lucy playing with?

 

2

5

-

+

5

2

 

The use of objects to represent discreet counts, served as a bridge to the “number path” later in the week. The *number path* is similar to the *number line.* A number path is a counting model, in which each number is represented within a rectangle and the rectangles can be clearly counted. A number path provides a more supportive model of numbers, which is important as we want models that consistently help students build confidence and accurately solve problems. Number lines on the other hand count the space between numbers instead of counting the numbers themselves. Students' fingers can land in the spaces between numbers on a number line, leaving kids unsure which number to choose. The class engaged in detail discussion about using the number path, building a solid conceptual understanding of why and how one utilizes counting on to solve subtraction. Here is what a number path looks like.

This student was solving the equation 8 – 5 = ­­­­\_\_\_\_\_ or 5 + \_\_\_\_\_ = 8.

**Word Work** – Our current *Fun*dations unit is: **Ending Sounds –ank, -ink, -onk, -unk** These words include; **junk, pink, honk, bank, think**

Here are the sight words we practiced this week: **then, so, some, her, make**

Next week’s sight words are: **these, would could, should, him**

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

**Some other logistics:**

* The playground area has been very muddy recently; please send your student in with boots to wear out on the playground and a pair of shoes to wear in school. We want to keep their feet clean and dry!
* **PTO Holiday Swap Wednesday, December 12th**
* **School Wide Assembly Tuesday, December, 16th at 9:15am** to honor Teacher of the Year Rebecca Haslam
* **School Wide Assembly Friday, December, 19th at 2:00pm** Sing along with Ms. Greene
* **Monday, December 22 2014 - Fri., Jan. 2, 2015 NO SCHOOL**
* **Monday, January 5, 2015 School Resumes**

Please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

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