Class Newsletter March 13, 2015

Dear Parents and Families,

What a relief to finally enjoy some warm weather!! Thank you for signing up for parent teacher conferences. I look forward to meeting with you all to share about our learning in first grade and to celebrate all the progress your children have made since the last time we met. **If you have not signed up for a conference time, please call Heather in the office at 864-8477 or email me.**

Here’s a summary of what we learned this week:

**Reading – Fluency and Punctuation -** Our learning target is, ***I can read smoothly and expressively like talking*.**  We continued our work on reading fluency, expression and punctuation. Good readers read smoothly, like we are talking, by phrasing and scooping words in a sentence. They raise the tone of their voice for question marks, stop at periods, and give characters a voice. Starting last week we began taking a closer look at periods, commas, contractions, question marks, exclamation points, and quotation marks. During our independent, partner and group reading we were ‘punctuation detectives’ who focused on finding the varying types of punctuation and notice how they affect meaning. Next week we will look at the apostrophe and ellipses. To support this learning at home have your child point out the different punctuation they are noticing while reading their ‘just right’ books to you.

**Reading Homework**- Thank you for all your help getting students reading at home!   Please help your child keep track of their borrowed books and return them once a week.  If you believe the books are lost, please contact me either via email or send a note into school.  I want students to be responsible for our materials and am holding them accountable for their homework bags and books.  Thank you for your support!

**Writing – Informational Text** – Our learning target is, ***I can use text features in my own informational writing to help my reader understand my topic.*** We have begun turning our Penguin Research Folders into informational texts. First graders sorted through the notes they took while researching key details about penguins. After deciding what topic they wanted to write about, they began creating an ‘All About Penguins’ text that includes an introduction, facts organized by topic, a conclusion, and any text features that will help their reader better understand their writing. This has been a fun way to wrap up our informational text unit. The class is really impressing me with their ability to apply this new knowledge to create their very own informational texts. We can’t wait to share our work with you!

**Math –** Our Learning Target is, ***I can use the ‘make ten strategy’ to help me solve problems with three numbers.*** We continued to practice the ‘make tenstrategy**’** by adding 9, 8, and 7 to another single-digit number as they decomposed the second addend to make ten with the 9, 8, or 7. Students solved problems such as*, “Maria has 9 snowballs and Tony has 6. How many do they have in all*?” as follows:

Students learned to represent their thinking through concrete, pictorial, and abstract representation. We learned that the ‘make ten strategy’ is a more efficient way to solve problems and leads to mental math. By using 7, 8, and 9 they were able to generalize this strategy to several numbers. You can support this learning at home by practicing this strategy, add 9, 8, or 7 to a single-digit number and have your child record their thinking.

 9 + 2 = 11 10 + 1 = 11

**Science –** Our learning target is, ***I can make shadows and explain what causes them.*** Last week we explored the question, “What makes a shadow?” The class partnered up and used flashlights to make hand shadows and compare them to the actual size of their hands. They experimented with changing shadows and noticed how the shadow is similar to or different from the actual object blocking the light. We discussed the correct order of the three things needed to produce a shadow. Play around with shadows at home and discuss what makes the shadow change shape or size.

**Word Work –** Our current *Fun*dations unit is: Words with up to 5 sounds**. Example words include:** ranch, twist, shrimp, blimp,

Sight words we studied and quizzed this week: **can’t, man, think, great, saw**

Next week’s sight words**: where, help, much, before, through**

**You can find all our sight words to date, as well as what’s coming up next at**

http://mrsgalushasfirstgrade.weebly.com/word-work.html

**Some other logistics:**

* **Parent Teacher Conference sign-up began online Wednesday, March 4th**

[**http://ptcfast.com/schools/Champlain\_Elementary\_School**](http://ptcfast.com/schools/Champlain_Elementary_School)

  If you do not have access to a computer or are having difficulty with this online system you may

 call the office at 864-8477 and speak with Heather Sienkiewicz who will schedule your

 conference for you.

* **Our next field trip is to the Flynn Theater to see Harold and the Purple Crayon.** An art teacher from the Flynn will be coming into our classroom on March 25th to help prepare first graders for this presentation. More details will be sent home in the coming weeks.

Please feel free to contact me anytime, and please check out our website!

Sincerely,

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