Class Newsletter September 26, 2014

Dear Friends and Families,

Boy, do we love these Indian summer days! Our first lockdown practice was today and the class did great. We practiced what a lockdown looks like and sounds like by sitting quietly in an assigned part of the classroom. Conferences are coming up next month. Please see below for more details on how to sign up for a parent/teacher conference. Our class also earned another 100 Champ Cards, we celebrated with a popsicle party today!

Here’s a summary of what we have learned:

**Readers’ Workshop** – **Our learning target for reading is *I can tackle tricky words*.** This week we launched our unit on Decoding Strategies, or figuring out tricky words when we get stuck.  In this unit, students will be learning many strategies to figure out words so they can become independent readers. The first strategy we learned is to check the picture.  Pictures give us clues and information about the text.  Readers are always asking ourselves, “What would make sense?”  Students also learned to track with their finger as they read to make sure they’re saying all the sounds they see, and not skipping words. Next week we'll learn more strategies, such as “getting out mouths ready”, checking our guess and thinking about what sounds right, what looks right, and skipping the word and reading the whole sentence to figure out what would make sense.  We’ll be sticking with this unit for the next few weeks.  The overall goal of this unit is for students to be able to use these strategies flexibly and become independent readers.

**Integrated Studies –** **Our learning targets in writing are *I can use a planner to write sentences* and *I can write a list with a purpose.*** The class continued to practice the skill of using a planning page to write sentences and write with inventive spelling. Students first organize their thoughts with the use of a graphic organizer. The graphic organizer supports the children when they are transitioning their thoughts into written sentences.

Here are some tips to help support your child’s writing at home:

* Say their whole thought out loud first, then focus on one word at a time.
* Say the word slowly. “Stretch it out.”
* Write all the sounds they hear. (ex: “pizza” may look like “pesu”) Reinforce their emergent spelling by helping them read back what they wrote.

**Our learning target in science is *I can draw a diagram with labels* and *I can record my observations*.** Our caterpillars are getting bigger every day! This week students made observations that the monarchs’ colors are brighter as they grow. They observed that the caterpillar’s frass (aka scat) has grown in size as the caterpillar grows. After reading the book *Caterpillar*, by Karen Hartley, Chris Macro, and Philip Taylor, we painted our own caterpillars with watercolors to resemble the caterpillars we have been observing. From this book we learned that there are front antenna, back antenna, front legs and back legs on caterpillars. We learned about each part and labeled them on our painted caterpillars. During body break we pretended we were a monarch going through each stage of their life cycle. Ask your child to reenact the life cycle and about their observations!

**Math** – **Our current learning target is *I can make models to represent numbers*.** Students are learning what mathematical models are and how to represent numbers using models. This work aligns with the Common Core State Standards mathematical practices. The mathematical practices are “processes and

proficiencies” students develop and use every day. When students model with mathematics they can recognize math in everyday life and use math they know to solve problems. First graders will learn to use words, symbols, pictures, and objects to solve everyday problems. Our focus right now is modeling with symbols and objects, specifically tally marks and tens frames. We are learning how to take the symbolic representation of a number and model that number with objects.

Yesterday I sent home our counting collection container with a note to parents. I apologize these did not come home on Monday. Please help your child find an object around the house to fill the container with no more than 120 pieces of that object. I would love to have these back in the classroom by Monday or Tuesday of next week. If you have any questions regarding our collections please do not hesitate to email me. Thank you for your support at home.

**Word Work** – This year our Word Work will include 2 different programs. *Fun*dations focuses on pattern-based spelling and explicitly teaches skills students can apply to many different words. Our Sight Words will include words that students are expected to know by sight because they often contain spelling “tricks” that we can’t sound out or “tap out.” Our current *Fun*dations unit is: **digraphs at the end of words**  These are words with th, ck, sh, and ch at the end of the word, like **wish, sock, with, such**

Here are the kindergarten words we reviewed this week: **big, off, play, look, as, not, like, for, dad, mom**

Next week’s words are: **here, come, with, have, said, went, today, because, good, say**

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

**Homework** – First grade homework will include practicing our sight words at home, and in a few weeks, reading our “just right” books to an adult at home as often as possible. I will not be sending home worksheets or other written assignments on a regular basis in first grade. 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.

**Some other logistics:**

* **Applefest, TODAY!!** Friday, September, 26th 5:30-7:00pm
* **Picture Day Monday, September 29th**
* **Curriculum Night**, **October 1st; 5:30-6:00 and 6:05-6:35**.
* **Parent/Teacher conferences** will be scheduled online again this year. You may start signing up on the morning of Tuesday, September 30th by going to the Champlain home page <http://champlain.bsdvt.org.> **If you do not have internet access, please call the school for scheduling assistance.**
* **Parent/Teacher conferences** will take place on **Wednesday, October 15th and Thursday, October 16th.** If you know you will need an alternate date, please contact me as soon as possible.

Please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Jeannine E. Galusha

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