



October Newsletter

October 2, 2017

Dear Parents,

Our class website is up and running, and is very active! Remember that our calendar is on the webpage, as well as each week's spelling list. In addition, there is a page where I have made all of the newsletters I've sent home available to you as a link, in case you miss or misplace one. I have also posted a few photos of our class. On the links page, you'll find a couple of good math facts practice games too, as well as some keyboarding practice. Enjoy perusing our website!

Here's a quick synopsis of what we're learning in school:

Reading- We are primarily using our reading textbook which is rich in non-fiction as well as a wide variety of reading genres. Generally, each selection requires about four days of study, and is accompanied by work on reading skills which will continue to appear and be developed and reviewed through the year. Our spelling tests will be on Thursdays, as will reading tests. Friday's ELA block will consist of reading in a new magazine called Storyworks Jr, which 4th and 5th grades also use, and a writing project. Storyworks Jr is a monthly publication and the children will be given theirs to take home at the end of each month.



I'm placing a lot of emphasis on writing, both long and short writing assignments, and we're working on foundational skills, such as spaces between words, neatness (correctly made letters- both printed and cursive), spelling, correct use of I, capitalization, and punctuation), as well as idea development, expression, and supporting details. There is a great emphasis and requirement for independent reading, asking and answering questions from the text, and supporting those answers with details (evidence) from the text. Whew! The curriculum is very demanding in both areas of ELA (reading and writing) and math. Some good ways you can help your child in ELA is establishing an independent reading routine of at least 15 minutes at home every day, modeling reading, and discussing and asking about what your child is reading. This will help build fluency. The more your child reads, the easier it will become, and when reading independently becomes easy, then reading is fun!



Math- I'm taking the math book out of order and we began with Place Value, chapter 5. We're now in Chapter 6, Addition and Rounding. Several things I've observed: Some of the children don't read carefully, and RUSH through their work, missing critical directions and information in solving problems or completing the tasks. It's really important that the children do their homework on time, and practice the new concept taught while it's fresh in their mind, as well as practice it because each day builds upon the previous day. (Some are rushing through their work in order to not bring any work home. If YOU want to see the work before it's handed in, please tell your child to bring it home. It's fine with me. If they hand it in in the morning, it's not late!)

Around the middle of October we'll begin Subtraction. Please have your child practice their + and - facts at home- especially subtraction facts! Fluency with facts is critical and some of the children have forgotten subtraction from 2nd grade! The next few chapters are multiplication, then division. Flash cards would be an excellent investment in your child's education, if you don't already have them.

Science- We're learning about life cycles. We are also in the midst of our butterfly unit, and after observing our larva eating, growing, and spinning chrysalises, we finally watched the butterflies emerging from their chrysalises on Thursday! So exciting!



Social Studies- Our focus in third grade is communities around the world, but it begins with learning about kinds of maps, directions, and symbols. The children completed a group project making a map of Forestville, using symbols to identify various places in the village. (Ironically, the first chapter talks about "The Great Hurricane of Galveston Texas" in 1900. Hasn't Texas suffered enough?)

Cursive writing continues as we work our way through all of the lower case letters first- and not in alphabetical order, but rather by shape and stroke groups.

Next week:

-Open House is Thursday, October 12th, from 6:30-8:00 PM. I hope to be able to meet all of you then. I'll have sign-ups for parent-teacher conferences and for party treats at Open House. (Be thinking about healthy treats, like fruits, vegetables, cheese... Children actually get tired of cupcakes, candy, and cookies, and in recent years, I've seen children throwing away more sweet treats than you

can imagine.) About a week before each party, I'll send reminders home to the parents who signed up to send treats.



-Halloween will be celebrated in school on Tuesday, October 31st. We will be having our party *in the afternoon*, and the Parent Connection is also having their Haunted House that day. If your child wishes to wear a costume for the afternoon party, please send it in a bag. Costumes may not be worn to school! Minimal make-up please! And no weapons, of course.

This year, our class will again be sponsoring "Trick or Treat for UNICEF". Each child in our school from pre-K to 5th grade will receive a UNICEF box a couple of days before Halloween, and with your permission, will take it with them when they go trick-or-treating. Over the next few days, the boxes will be returned to school and we will send the *entire* proceeds to UNICEF. UNICEF is a worldwide organization that provides food, clean water, blankets, school supplies, medicines, and immunizations to children who suffer from disease or disaster in their homeland (*including* the U.S.). More information about UNICEF can be found on my UNICEF webpage.



-Book orders: I'm sending home the October Lucky book order that looks interesting and worthwhile. **And Christmas is only 85 days away!** If you wish to order any, the orders and payment will be due by this Wednesday, October 11th.



-Birthday Celebration Treats and Holiday Party Treats: We no longer have children going room-to-room during the day, delivering extra treats, as it's disruptive to teaching and work going on in the classroom, and sometimes in the past, the children delivering "disappeared" for an extended time! If you wish to send a few extras for previous teachers of your child, your child can deliver them at the end of the school day. Thanks for your understanding. We have 15 children in our class.

Thank you so much for all of your help, checking assignment books at night, helping your children to get their homework done, and everything else you do to prepare them for school. I'm working on the responsibility end here-when children say "my mom forgot to put my homework in my backpack" the first thing I ask is "Whose homework is it???? It's not mom's..." At this age, the

children need to become more responsible for their homework and supplies (and they can pack their own morning snacks too!) Together, we'll get them organized!

I think that's everything for now. Looking forward to seeing you at Open House!



Sincerely,
Mrs. Faxlanger