Grade 2 News

January 6, 2012
Mrs. Whitehead's Class

Dear Parents,

Happy New Year! I hope that everyone had a terrific holiday. The students are settling back into the routine (with a few reminders about classroom expectations) and are ready to head into what I consider to be one of the most critical learning periods of the year .We are almost halfway through the year! As the saying goes…so much to do, so little time.

A few reminders…

PTO Meeting- Tues., January 10th at 6pm
Professional Development Day- NO SCHOOL - Fri., January 13th
Book orders - Due by Tuesday, January 17th
Holiday- M.L. King Jr. Day
Monday, January 16th
Early Release- Thursday, January 19th

Character Education- Word of the Month- Perseverance

Ask your child what that word means to him. In what subject or topic does he need to persevere? At home, is there an area or activity where he needs to persevere? Perhaps you could share a time when you had to work with determination, especially at school. Our children need to know that we had to work hard too, and that we understand it isn't always easy for them.

Also, please talk to your child about wise people. Discuss wise people in their lives. What do they do? How do they act? It would be nice if every child could bring in a photo of a wise person in their lives. This ties in with our character education program and we will use this topic in language as well.

Winter Cold Season

Our nurse, Mrs. Horsfall, has often talked to the students about washing their hands appropriately, keeping fingers out of mouths, sneezing into the crook of their arms, etc.

Since it is difficult to always be able to *wash* hands, we use quite a lot of hand sanitizer in the classroom.

The class could also use some disinfectant wipes and kleenex if anyone would like to make a donation.

When the heat is on in the classroom, the room can get *very dry*. Again, your child is welcome to have a bottle of *water* for his or her desk. This not only helps to keep your child hydrated, it saves time and is more sanitary than using the fountain.

Subject Update

January is a huge month for assessment. This month your child will be taking the system wide grade 2 Benchmark Reading Assessment. This test is an indicator of how much your child has learned in vocabulary, language and grammar, and phonics. In addition, it shows how well your child is able to read stories independently, and use skills we have practiced to respond to both multiple choice questions and longer open response items.

In addition, your child will be assessed for reading fluency using DIBELS. This is the same format that we discussed during parent conferences. The MAZE, a timed measure of a student's ability to read and choose words to complete sentences in a reading passage, will also be given.

It is important that your child be in school as much as possible. I know that can be difficult with cold and flu season upon us.

Reading- The students are working on the third unit in their reading program. The theme is Creative Ideas.

Phonics skills discussed and practiced in this unit include the following vowels: long e: e, ee, ea, y; long a: a, ai, ay; long o: o, oa and ow; and long i: i, ie, igh, and y. Students will also practice reading and using comparative endings as well as compound words.

Comprehension skills stressed during this unit include:
identifying the author's purpose, story structure, theme and plot, drawing conclusions, visualizing, predicting outcomes, and cause and effect. They have also practiced adjusting their reading rate to reading for meaning and fluency. Your student should be able to tell you what the words antonym and synonym mean and give examples of each. The focus in grammar has been on verbs and verb tenses.

A *summary* is a shortened version of the story. Unlike a retelling it does not contain all the details. A summary contains the main idea and only the most important information/ details of the story. This is often a difficult concept for children to grasp. Please have your child practice telling summaries when they read or when you read to them.

Students should also practice comparing and contrasting characters and character traits in a story. They also need to be able to tell how two *stories* are alike and different. This can be difficult for some children. When you read with your child at home, try to discuss similarities and differences between stories and characters. Some areas to address are settings, genre (type of story), author's purpose, character's behavior and traits, and theme.

Math

The students will be taking the grade 2 math quarterly test this month as well. Once again, it covers all of the skills that we have practiced so far this year.

Place Value and number patterns are the current skills. Your child should be able to identify the value of digits in a three digit number. A student should also be able to complete number patterns such as 16, 20, 24 … Students should be able to write the number before, after and between a given number. Students need to be able to round numbers to the nearest ten. Applying knowledge of these skills to solve riddles is also addressed.

Money is the skill we will be practicing next. It might be a good idea to review the coins and their values. Practice counting different groups of coins. Have your child use coins to make an amount you say.

Geometry- The students have been studying quadrilaterals.
They need to be able to discuss and write the attributes of these shapes with regard to congruent lines, types of angles, sets of parallel lines and lines of symmetry.

We have studied squares, rectangles, and parallelograms. Students will study the attributes of the trapezoid and the rhombus this month. A study guide will be sent home. *Please* review the attributes frequently.
Also ask your child to compare and contrast triangles and quadrilaterals.

Math Facts- Once again, the expectation is mastery of addition and subtraction facts in second grade. While the children are able to compute, many still need to work on mastery. I still see lots of fingers flying during Mad Minute, but there has been a lot of improvement for many students. In addition, students need to learn *when* to add or subtract.

Expectations are high. Some students need more time and practice than we have in school. It would be helpful if you would spend a few minutes a day just working on math skills. The car is a great place to practice!

Language-

Many of our language skills are connected to reading. In addition to skills already mentioned, the students have been working or recognizing verbs and verb tenses.

Daily Oral Language continues to give opportunity to practice the mechanics of language.

Vocabulary is also very important. Try having your child expand their sentences or think of a more interesting or specific word when they are describing something. Not everything is happy and sad.

Students have been writing some dreams for the new year. They will also be writing summaries of stories.

Next week we will be discussing and listing vocabulary to use when we write compare and contrast pieces. The students will learn how to use Venn diagrams and T-charts to organize information before they write.

As you can see, your child will be working very hard. Your assistance, encouragement and reinforcement are very much appreciated. Please let me know of any problems or concerns. Thank you!

Mrs. Whitehead