



Second Grade News Ms. Blanchard's Class
September 30, 2009



I enjoyed our gathering at Curriculum night. Thank you for coming, and for your interest in your child's learning. We are truly a team as we both support your child's learning. Be sure to keep in touch. I am still looking for help with book orders. I hope someone will be willing to organize the orders and submit them to Scholastic. This can be done on-line. While that procedure helps greatly, I realize it is difficult for me to find the time to do the orders accurately—please help the class be able to use this source of economical books to support our emphasis on reading. Also, if you are interested in volunteering as a listener of our classmates as they read, let me know. I will get your names to those doing the Parent Volunteer training. And, finally, be sure to send me an e-mail so that I can easily assemble a class list of parent contacts. My goal is to send the class newsletter out electronically (another way to be attentive to a responsibility to "reduce" paper consumption in support of environmental interests). Let me know if you prefer a paper copy, though.

I am also looking forward to our upcoming parent conferences. This conference is intended to share observations about how your child is settling into school. Initial observations and questions from home (and your knowledge of prior school experiences) will be important information that will be shared. At any time throughout the year, I am available to meet as additional questions or concerns about skills and learning arise.

In Math, we are exploring the patterns of numbers as they occur on numberlines. And we are reviewing how to use numberlines to perform basic operations such as addition and subtraction. We are also practicing how to talk about the math concepts we experience around us. Problem solving and expressing our observations are often challenging for young students. It is much easier to simply memorize math facts. While fluency in facts is critically important, it is also important that we understand how to think and talk about ways we use math. For fun, you might pose spontaneous problems such as "There will be five people eating dinner tonight. We have 3 plates on the table. How many more do we need?" Using math in authentic, and fun ways makes the learning more interesting. Enjoy!

We have been working on our Class Constitution. While we are almost settled on rules that we agree will be the best for our class, the Buker Code of Conduct is still in place. In the meantime, we are also talking about the importance of being sensitive to our own individual energy levels and whether they are, or aren't, "just right" for learning at various times of the day. Mrs. Clyse, our Occupational Therapist, has added to our list of

strategies that we can use when our personal energy is too high, or too low. I continue to acknowledge that learning is challenging, and that we have a responsibility to be attentive to our own energy level so that we can do our best learning, and so that we can also support the learning of others.

In Reading, we have been looking at reading behaviors before, during, and after reading. We are also learning how to choose a book at our “just right” reading level. An early focus has been to teach what routines are expected while reading independently. At this point, we know how to log in our books on a monthly list, and are responding to books by considering our favorite parts of particular books. Explaining why we have chosen the part is helping children comprehend what they are reading. In Writing, we are reviewing the basics of sentence construction and conventions (upper-case letter at beginnings, and end marks). The children are also expanding basic subjects and verbs with expanding details (Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?) and the inclusion of vivid words. This focus will continue throughout the year. In Word Study, we have reviewed 1st grade trick words and are reviewing closed syllables, blends and digraphs, and the /k/ sound.

As we begin our Homework routines, we are discussing those characteristics that show good effort. In general, the responsibility of homework is your child’s, with your support and guidance. But, Second graders need help with timing and pacing. You can help by setting routines such as a homework folder, a time of day, and a place in the home, that promotes careful work. Many families find that splitting the packet into manageable pieces, taking into account extracurricular activities, encourages successful completion each week. If you find yourself getting into disagreements or arguments, let me know. Homework is intended to provide additional practice of the skills being explored in the classroom, and as another way to develop individual work habits. Also, watch for the notice that will explain a change in how we are going to be handling our home reading lists. It is very important that children experience reading on a daily basis, in addition to the homework packet.

Finally, a few “housekeeping” tips:

- With damp mornings, indoor shoes are now more important. We will send home reminders to those who forget. I recommend a pair of shoes, perhaps slip-ons, that can “live” in cubbies overnight.
- Remind your child to deliver notes, notices, and forms first thing in the morning. Please send in any changes in transportation routines so that your child can confidently communicate them on arrival. That way, the rest of the day is worry-free.

As always, we appreciate your ongoing support!

Thanks,

Beth (Ms. Blanchard) and Leah (Mrs. Mitchell)