

FIRST GRADE NEWS

Friday, September 25, 2015

Dear Families,



I enjoyed meeting those of you who were able to make it to Back-to-School Night our second week of school. I look forward to talking with you individually about your first grader and your hopes and expectations for this year at Parent-Teacher Conferences on October 28th and 29th.

We've completed our 3rd week of school! Our classroom seems to be a happy place with a wonderful group of first graders who are smart, caring, and enthusiastic. Oh—and did I mention talkative? New friendships are forming, routines are becoming more comfortable, and we're learning every day. These first weeks consist of a fair amount of review and practicing handwriting and number formation as students learn new processes and expectations.

Today our 1st graders enjoyed the annual school *Fun Run*! Even with the rain causing us to move the big event indoors, it was a great way to end our third week of 1st grade learning! If you were unable to attend, you can see our young sprinters in action on our webpage at terisall.weebly.com.

Next week, we begin our **spelling program**. Each week I will introduce ten words to highlight the spelling pattern we're studying. Our goal is to learn to recognize spelling patterns, which will help not only with spelling, but reading and writing as well. Students will keep a word pattern journal at school and sort words according to their spelling pattern. They will also bring these spelling words home each week, and it would be great if you can encourage your child to write the words each day.

I am also beginning **small group reading instruction** at your child's current reading level, to better meet your first grader's needs. Of course the more I read with your child, the better I can determine the just right level.

Homework- Homework packets will be sent home this Tuesday, and are due the following Monday. In addition to 20 or more minutes of reading at home each day, we believe that 10 minutes of nightly homework in a combination of math, spelling, or writing is appropriate for first graders. A packet that contains reading, a small amount of writing, the week's spelling practice, and math will come home each Tuesday, and is due the following Monday (or next regular school day when there is no school). Please encourage your child to put his/her name on each piece of homework so I can make sure to give him/her credit!

Read-at-Home Book Bags- In addition to the *weekly* homework packet, a *Read-at-Home Book Bag* will be sent home *daily*, Monday through Friday. Students will bring a book home in their *Read-at-Home Book Bag* to practice each day. The goal is for your child to read and re-read the book at home to an adult multiple times until the reading is natural and fluent, (this may take several re-readings) and return the book to school the next day. After your child has read 15 of these book bag stories (1 per night), he/she will earn a small prize!

1. Listen to your child read the story until he/she is fluent each night.
2. Record the story title on the Reading Log enclosed in the book bag, and initial it to indicate you have listened to your child read the story.
3. On days your child brings home the anthology, please read only the story I've bookmarked. I'd prefer that your child resist the temptation to read ahead in that book. It would be better to re-read, so that his/her reading sounds more like talking. This also allows me to introduce the concepts we're working on before students read a new story.
4. Please remember to return the book in the ***Read-at-Home Book Bag*** with the Book Log each day, even if there's a day that you just can't get to the homework. Since your child will again re-read the previous day's story in class, it is very important to bring that book back to school each day!

5. Since most of the stories are very short, this reading homework will likely not take more than 10 or 15 minutes. After the bookbag reading, please feel free to have your child read from your home library, or other library books.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's homework assignments, call or email me.

Reading online with Kids A-Z - Several of our students have begun reading on the *Kids A-Z* website at home. Many are recording their reading and sending it to me. It is such a great learning tool! The students get reading practice, and I get valuable information about their reading strategies from listening to these recordings. If you have not yet had your child read on this site, I highly recommend it. For those of you who have been using it, I'd love any feedback. Thanks! You can access this site at kidsa-z.com or under the Reading tab on our classroom webpage, terisall.weebly.com

Volunteers - I'm thrilled that many of you have indicated an interest in volunteering in the classroom on a regular basis! My first priority (once we get our reading routine going) is to have volunteers read one-on-one with students during our reading block in the morning between 8:15 and 10:45, while I pull students for small reading group instruction. Or, if you prefer helping 1st graders with Math, I could use your help between 11:30 and 12:30 any day of the week. And of course there is always a need for making copies, checking in homework, and other lesson preparation, so help with these items is also appreciated! I'll make sure I get in touch with you this week to confirm your time and day. If you don't hear from me and you still want to help, please call or email!

I look forward to partnering with you to make your child's year happy and successful.

Happy weekend!

Mrs. Sall