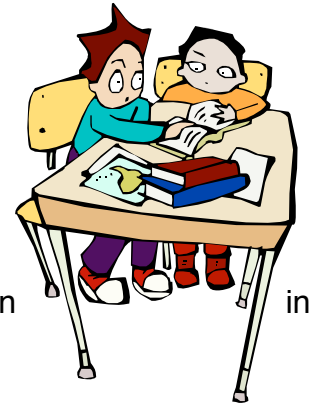


October 4, 2007

News from Mr. Whiting's Class

Dear Families,

Throughout the year, I will regularly update you with the goings-on in our classroom. I hope these newsletters will help you open up dialogues with your children about what they are learning!



Math

At this point in the year, we are exploring place value, estimation, and computation. As I discussed at Open House, different students at times do different work. Through my observations and by asking students directly, I gauge daily whether students are working on problems that are right for them. My goal is for each child to work on math problems that are neither too challenging nor too easy.

Reading

Early in the year, students learn how readers choose books that are right for them. To that end, I ask students each week to share any books they might recommend to their classmates. There is nothing like the recommendation from a peer to turn a child on to a new book or genre. Children will become better readers throughout the year by reading a great deal (both at home and in school) and by reading books that are at the right level of difficulty for them. During fifth grade, all students read such books in small groups and receive instruction from me on how to become better readers.

Writing

Students are improving their writing skills by -- well -- writing! Each writing session follows a short lesson. Then, while they write, I confer one-on-one to give a student encouragement and feedback that moves the child to the next level of writing ability. After students have written in their black and white writing notebooks, the children share ideas and parts of their entries with their writing partners.

Typing

Students have all learned about the “home row” on the keyboard, which fingers should hit which keys, and how to shift. Essentially, they have learned everything they need to know to become speedy typers. This is the age to learn about typing so they get into good habits now. In this era, being able to type quickly will save a person potentially

hours a week. I hope you are seeing your children reinforcing the typing skills we have learned at school. Peek over their shoulders occasionally to see if their fingers are where they belong.

Lunch Bunches

I love opportunities to get to know the students. In September and October, I sit with a small group of students over lunch to ask how the year is going for them and to ask about their after school activities. Before the next two weeks are over, all students will have been part of a lunch bunch.

And more!

There is so much more I could tell you about fifth grade -- from spelling and handwriting to social studies and science. I'll save these important areas for future newsletters.

Til We Meet Again

I'm looking forward to seeing you all at parent-teacher conferences in November. Be in touch if there is anything you wish to discuss before then!

Sincerely,

Brian Whiting

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