

September 25, 2009

Dear Parents,

As it turns out, Mrs. Skalinder will not be returning to class next week, and I will continue to teach the week of Sep. 29-Oct. 2. (There is no school on Monday.) I will keep you posted as I learn of her plans. Thank you for your understanding and support at this time.

I am coordinating curriculum with the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade team and continuing to follow the established class routines. The children are doing very well. They are a great group of kids, and we have been busy! Here are some of the things we have been working on this week:

**Reading:** The theme for this week's readings in the Treasures book is "Building Communities." We read several non-fiction selections, focusing on summarizing, stating the main idea, and identifying supporting details. We had fun with picture books that I used to introduce graphic organizers that children used all week in their Guided Reading groups. The organizers, in increasing levels of difficulty, required students to identify unfamiliar words, infer their meaning through context clues, and confirm by using a dictionary; students made predictions, explained their predictions, and confirmed by further reading; finally, students chose a character to focus upon, wrote about something the character said or did, explained what they could infer about the character based upon that, and predicted something about the character based upon the inference they had drawn. Children each read a chapter book that they used for these activities. They caught on quickly and did a great job.

In addition to our work in Treasures and the small group work, we have continued to do daily vocabulary and word work. We have also continued to practice and perform the very popular Reader's Theater. Ask your child about his or her play!

**Math:** This week, we started the Length-of-Day Project, a year-long project in which students calculate and chart elapsed time from sunset to sundown. (If you would like to do this at home, look up [www.sunrisesunset.com](http://www.sunrisesunset.com).) Children reviewed the inverse relationship between addition and subtraction; reviewed fact families and number families; and worked with fact tables and Fact Triangles. They practiced using basic facts to add and subtract multiples of 10 and 100 and to solve fact extension problems. They also used calculators to find the difference between a number and the next multiple of 10. Finally, they discussed problems in which one quantity depends on another. This was practiced by working with function machines and "What's My Rule?" tables and problems.

**Writing:** We continued with Lessons for the Writer's Notebook. Students wrote about memories, personal topics, and did "goof-around" (silly and inventive) writing. After reading Wallace's Lists, we wrote lists on many topics. Many students chose to share their writing with the class.

**Science:** We continued to feed and monitor the silkworms, which are not yet spinning their cocoons. This week, we got tobacco hornworms. We learned about their life cycle, physical structure, and diet. Children continued to write in their Science Journals and to use narratives, diagrams, and captions to study the tobacco hornworm, and they used Venn diagrams to compare the hornworm to the silkworm.

**Read-Aloud:** We finished The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane this week. Ask your child to re-tell the plot; children were very engaged with the story.

It was good to meet some of you this week. If you have any questions or concerns, please email me or stop by!

Best,  
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