

Mrs. MacDonald's Intermediate Classroom

Welcome Back to School



I am looking forward to our new school year together. I know we are going to have a great year. I spent a great deal of time this summer researching our units of study and planning activities for our classroom. I am very excited to get started.

- My responsibility is to provide a positive learning environment and prepare the children academically.
- Your child's responsibility is to come to school regularly, on time, and ready to learn.
- Your responsibility is to help your child understand the importance of education and provide the time, space, and materials for your child to practice at home and to offer encouragement.

Support in this three-way partnership is crucial to your child's success.

Your child will experience an integrated curriculum. This simply means that we will have "umbrella" topics, and we will relate many subject areas to these topics. For example, while studying pioneers, your child will also be simultaneously learning to be a good researcher, note-taker and reader. They will incorporate math skills when they determine cost of supplies to include in the wagon trip as well as calculating weight of items packed and measurement of distances traveled. Art and computer technology will also be a part of this experience.

This type of immersion in an exciting student-centered topic makes a lasting impression on a child.

I will use a variety of approaches to address different learning styles including videos, music, art, field trips, expert guests, community members, and the Internet.

Students are encouraged to ask questions and pursue the answers selecting sub-topics to study independently. Once students are immersed and knowledgeable, they can demonstrate their learning through a variety of project-based activities. This format allows each child the latitude to work at his or her own pace.

Language Arts



Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are integrated across the curriculum through our various themes of study.

We will be focusing on the aspects of spoken and written language that will allow the students to become more efficient and independent readers and writers.

- We will continue to build upon spelling and vocabulary skills and learn more about the conventions of grammar.
- We will work on research skills and follow the steps of the writing process to produce descriptive and creative written work. As writing becomes stronger, students will have more responsibility for organizing and revising their own work and proofreading for errors in spelling, usage, and mechanics.
- We will also be studying a variety of English sayings and phrases, learning both their literal and figurative meanings and also discussing how these sayings and phrases are used in everyday conversation.

Students will continue to learn how to convey effectively their own thoughts and idea using spoken and written words. By building a strong language arts foundation, students will be better able to read increasingly sophisticated literary and non-fiction works and write with clarity and fluency.

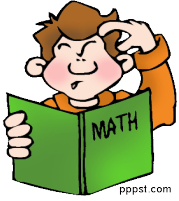
Students will work each day in a Daily Language Review workbook. These will come home from time to time for you to review with your child.

Issue 1
August 23, 2009

Important Dates

- ☺ Start of school Wednesday, August 26th
- ☺ NO SCHOOL Labor Day-September 7th
- ☺ Field Trip to Victoria Theater- September 28th

Mathematics



The math curriculum is based on the Singapore Math Series, developed by the Ministry of Singapore which parallels the national goals and state standards. In this program the emphasis is on understanding and communicating mathematics through "doing" and "thinking," and on creating an environment that stimulates learning, often cooperatively. The children should continue to gain a sense of numbers, use estimation skills, solve problems, and learn how and when to use mathematical tools, such as calculators, compasses, and protractors. Math lessons will be presented in a spiral form, repeating concepts and coming back to them throughout the school year. Focal points of math include:

- Developing quick recall of multiplication facts and related division facts and fluency with whole number multiplication.
- Develop an understanding of decimals, including the connection between decimals and fractions.
- Develop an understanding of area and determining the area of two-dimensional shapes.

In algebra, students will identify, describe and extend numeric patterns. They will develop an understanding of the use of a rule to describe a sequence of numbers or objects.

In geometry, students will extend their understanding of the properties of two-dimensional shapes as they find the area of polygons, explore transformations and rotational symmetry. They will explore tiling and tessellations to deepen their understanding of two-dimensional space.

In measurement, students will measure and classify angles.

In data analysis, students will solve problems using frequency tables, bar graphs, line plots and develop and use stem and leaf plots.

Math instruction will consist of whole group mini-lessons and small group instruction to meet individual needs.

Science and Social Studies

We begin the school year with the "umbrella" theme of pioneers. We will be exploring the adventures of coming to a new home. Students will investigate the hardships encountered and the challenges of selecting land. Students will obtain information about real pioneers and use primary and secondary resources.

Additionally in social studies, we will learn more about maps and compasses. We will learn about the regions of the United States and what makes these regions unique. We will explore the 50 states and learn more about our home state of Ohio. Students will investigate family heritage and participate in a project that will involve interviewing a grandparent or grandfriend and work with that oral history to develop a book. Students will explore the workings of government and learn about economics through our classroom "economy project".

In science, we will learn about the universe and explore space technology. We will learn about chemical and physical changes and have opportunities to observe and distinguish between the two. We will explore forces, the laws of motion and magnets. We will learn more about the human body and explore the circulatory, respiratory, muscular, and skeletal systems. We will investigate weather, wind, the water cycle, and the impact weather has on plants.

Snack and Lunch

We will have a snack mid-morning. Please be sure to pack a healthy snack for your child to eat. Fruits and vegetables are recommended, however, oranges can be too messy. Try to avoid high sugar snacks. Please make it something simple.

Students will need to bring their lunches from home.

Lunches will be provided if your child forgets, but we will not be able to warm up, or refrigerate student lunches.

- On Wednesdays students will have the opportunity to purchase a pizza lunch
- We are working on BORO BISTRO lunches for purchase on a different day for those interestedmore information will follow about these lunch programs.

Transportation and Drop-Off Time Pick-up Time

*The future
belongs to those
who believe in the
beauty of their
dreams.*

Eleanor Roosevelt

Safety in the parking lot is of the utmost concern. Be careful when dropping your child off in the lot. We will review at the beginning of the school year safe parking lot procedures.

- Academy students can be dropped off at **8:45** and will be allowed into the classroom at this time to prepare themselves for the day. Promptness is important. I cannot stress that enough!!! Late arrivals cause a disruption for the **whole class**. Students that arrive after 9:00 will be marked tardy.
- Pick-up from school will be at **3:00**. Students will be packed up and ready at this time. We will dismiss students on the front walk. Parents are to pull around to the front and we will load the students in your cars. If for some reason you need to park in the lot, we ask that you park in the center section of the lot. Students should then be walked across the lot for safety reasons.
- If your child is going to ride home in a different manner than usual, please send a written note.

Thank you for your help and patience in drop-off and pick-up time.

Money

On occasion it will be necessary for your child to bring in money to school. Please send money in a sealed envelope (or Ziploc bag) with the following information written on it:

1. Your child's name
2. The amount of money
3. The purpose for the money (book order, lunch money, field trip)
4. My name

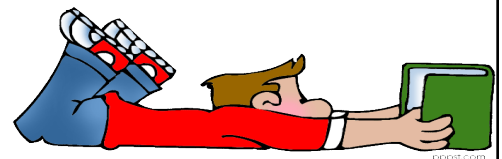
This will help out tremendously and reduce the likelihood of errors. Also, if the envelope gets dropped in the hallway, this information will help the money to be returned to my classroom.

Book Orders

Your child will be bringing home a form to order books about once a month. If you wish to order, simply fill out the form and send the correct amount of money or a check made out to the book company in an envelope.

These orders are provided as a convenient way for parents to buy quality books for their children at a low price. As an added bonus, for every dollar that is spent on books, the class earns bonus points which are used to purchase books for classroom use.

This is a win-win situation because you get quality literature at a low price and you are helping provide quality literature for the classroom. Of course, you are never under any obligation to order.



Extras and Spotlight

Each week on Wednesdays, students will participate in EXTRA's. **Prompt** sign-up is important in order for Mrs. Davies to coordinate the schedule. Extras include on-site and off-site activities. Students have the opportunity to select activities that they are interested in and explore this topic in more detail. Topics in the past have included golf, tennis, swimming, soccer, science, photography, piano, yearbook, ice skating, horseback riding, ornithology, art, games, and more.

Spotlight, a chance for students to share skills, talents, collections, trips or just about anything, occurs on Fridays. Sign-up sheets are available at school and require a parent signature. Please discuss with your child what they intend to do at Spotlight and be sure they are prepared for their presentation on their assigned day. (For example, if they are singing, please be sure they bring the music they plan to be singing with them on the day of Spotlight.)

THE ACADEMY

Minds in Motion

How can you contact me with questions or concerns?

Email me at :

academymacdonald@gmail.com

I check this each day and will get back with you within 24 hours.

You can also try the school phone : 748-1991

Visit my website at: www.mrsmacdonald.net

The Legacy Project



For the past several years students have

participated in the "Legacy Project." I try to come up with new projects every year and new ideas, but this project is so rewarding and meaningful that it is worth repeating. More information will come home

once the school year begins, but for now I would like you and your child to be thinking about someone they want to interview and learn more about. It can be a grandparent, great aunt or uncle, neighbor or friend. I would like for them to learn more about this person and the differences of the chosen person's childhood and their own. There will be interview questions, and other tasks associated with this "Legacy Project". This person should be at least 50 years old or older. We will be working on this project in conjunction with history, writing skills and interviewing skills. It is meant to be a year-long learning project that may bring your child closer to this person. Students will write and publish a book about this person's life and present it to them on our Legacy Day in May. Look for more information in the coming weeks.

Other Information:

- Newsletters— Newsletters will be emailed to the distribution list on Sunday evenings. They will contain a recap of the previous week and information about the upcoming week (INCLUDING HOMEWORK!). Past newsletters will be posted on my website.
- If you are ever wondering what we are doing in class, look at our website. It is updated frequently with new topics and classroom information. I use our classroom website as a springboard to my teaching. Students can refer back to the website and revisit information or games that we used in the class.
- Dress Code— All Academy students are required to follow the school dress code. The dress code policy is listed in the handbook.
- Parent—teacher conferences will be held on October 22nd and October 23rd and another conference in the Spring. You are always welcome to contact me to discuss any questions or concerns.
- This year we will be having a student-teacher for the first twelve weeks of school. Mrs. Amy Lipinski is working on getting her teaching degree. She will bring some exciting new ideas to our classroom.

I am looking forward to a great year.

Mrs. Lauren MacDonald

Birthdays

Birthdays are special occasions for all children. We would like to celebrate birthdays in a simple way. Due to a variety of allergies, I would like to request that your child celebrate their birthday with the class by bringing a wrapped book or card game for the class instead of a sugary treat. I do not want anyone to go to a big expense, but I am suggesting this as a possible way to celebrate birthdays.

Go Fish, Old Maid and Uno card games are a lot of fun. This could help out during winter months when recess may be indoors.

The birthday child would be able to unwrap the gift for the class. Summer and Christmas break birthdays may choose another day to celebrate.