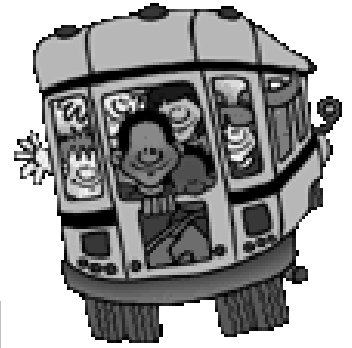


Mrs. MacDonald's Intermediate Classroom



Welcome Back to School

Issue 1
August 24, 2008

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.

Your 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 the rainforest, your child will also be simultaneously learning to be a good researcher, note-taker and reader. Some spelling words will be science vocabulary words that will be used when they write mini-reports or stories about the rainforest. Art, math and computer technology are also 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.

Important Dates

- ☺ **Start of school**
August 27
- ☺ September 1st,
Labor Day
No School

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.

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 number, 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.

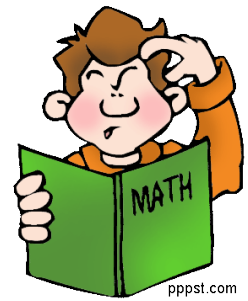
In algebra, students will identify, describe and extend numeric patterns. They will develop an understanding of the use of a rule to describe a sequence of numbers or objects

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 rainforests. We will be exploring the biome of the rainforest, the life found within a rainforest and the

adaptations needed for survival. Students will choose an animal or plant found within the rainforest and write a research report about this plant or animal. We will learn about atoms, the smallest unit of an element, and learn how atoms can combine to form molecules and compounds that have properties and characteristics that are unique to the elements from which they are made. 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 simple machines. We will learn more about the human body and explore the circulatory, respiratory, muscular, and skeletal system. We will investigate weather, wind and the water cycle. All students will participate in a science fair in the spring. A deeper exploration of any of the above topics is strongly suggested.

In Social Studies, we will learn more about maps and compasses and practice orienteering. We will learn about early American History including the settlement at Jamestown, the growth of the 13 colonies, the reasons behind the American Revolution, the expansion out west and the significance of the Louisiana Purchase, and the causes of the civil war. We will explore the 50 states and learn more about our home state of Ohio. Of course, we will learn about the election and the electoral process, candidates and government as we learn through this year's election.

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 to help break up the time before lunch.

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 Wednesday's students will have the opportunity to purchase a pizza lunch and Friday's, lunches can be purchased from the Boro Bistro. More 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.

For safety reasons, do not attach additional items to your child's backpack.

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. Late arrivals cause a disruption for the whole class. Students that arrive after 9:00 will be marked tardy.

If your child is going to ride home in a different manner than usual, you must send a written note.

Pick-up from school will be at **3:15**. 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.

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. Always send money in a sealed envelope (or Ziploc bag) with the following information written on it:

1. Your child's first and last 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 include 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

Legacy Project



Last year students 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 one I need to repeat. We plan

on continuing this tradition for the third year. 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.

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.

Other Information:

- Throughout the year, students will be working on books that we create and publish through SHUTTERFLY.COM. These books are about our "umbrella" themes. Last year students worked on books about rocks and fossils, ABC's of the solar system, and a poetry anthology. These books come home with a different student each night. Students are asked to share the book with their family that evening and return it to school on the following day. This allows everyone to have a chance within two weeks.
- 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 the 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.

I am looking forward to a great year.

Mrs. Lauren MacDonald