

October 3, 2019

Highlights:

Peace Valley Trip: Tuesday, October 8th (Students should dress for the weather.)

Dear Parents,

I hope this note finds you and your family happy and well! It is hard to believe that we are already into the month of October. I have continued to enjoy working with your child and look forward to each new day with this wonderful class. Below, you will find details on what we have been up to, and what is headed our way.

❖ **What We Have Been Working On**

In reading, the class has been reading the book, *Bunnicula*. This book is a “blast from the past,” and is always a lot of fun.

In writing, we just finished paragraph writing, and are moving on to work with “parts of speech.”

In math, Chapter 1 of *Math In Focus* is going well. We are working on multiplication and division.

In science, we have been working on energy and energy transfers. Today, the students worked in table groups, to make “Rube Goldberg machines” that demonstrate energy transfers utilizing at least six different forms of energy. As they worked, and I stepped back to observe them, and could not help but take note of how far they have come, in a short period of time. They have grown in their ability to follow directions, to listen to others, and to resolve conflicts independently. Sure, there were a handful of challenging situations, but most were resolved quickly, and teamwork prevailed. The groups debriefed, afterward. They talked about what went well, and what they needed to improve on, as a group. In life, all we can ever hope to do is continue to grow. We’ll never be perfect, but that fact should not be a deterrent to taking the next step in our journey to become a little bit better. I consider myself fortunate to be walking with your children for this stretch of our respective journeys.

❖ Peace Valley Trip

Our trip to Peace Valley is on October 8th. During the trip, we will be studying our local ecology. Because we spend the trip outdoors, please have your child dress for the weather. Lunch will be at school, at 10:45 (but otherwise unchanged). There is no cost for this trip.

❖ Homework

Homework completion has been going well, from my perspective. Hopefully, it has been going smoothly at home, and your child has been doing his/her 20-30 minutes of independent reading, each evening.

Know that if you feel a need for your child to have more homework, I have an “*Enrichment Homework*” document, detailing several voluntary homework assignments. Though they are not graded, they can certainly open the door to further learning, at home. The document can be found on the *Home* page of my website.

❖ ~~Mistakes~~ Mistakes and Learning

As I said at Back to School Night, I do not want students to be stressed. Mistakes and missteps will happen, are expected, and at times, are even desirable! They create wonderful opportunities for learning and growing to occur. It is not my goal to remove challenges, but to cheer my students on and to give them guidance as they face them. It is easy to lift them over or remove obstacles altogether, but doing so does nothing to strengthen them- which is what learning is about! And, if students fail, we will work to help them reflect and try again. Over time, this builds courage, perseverance, and confidence. It is those who desire success- AND do not let a fear failure impede them- that will take the risks necessary to accomplish remarkable things!

As always, please contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Know that I will contact you if any concerns arise on my end.

May your heart be filled with peace,
and the beauty of autumn...
no matter how soggy,
Mr. VanZant