

Wednesday, January 4, 2012

Happy New Year and welcome back, Everyone! I don't know about you, but I have mixed feelings about coming back. I feel like I need a few days to recover from a busy break, but coming back to school may be exactly what I need: a vacation from my vacation! ☺ I hope you all had a wonderful holiday and are well rested. I can't wait to see all of your children (and you) on Wednesday!

When we get back to work on Wednesday, the students will hear a short "lecture" on being "almost fourth graders" and how the expectations will be raised this semester. Mr. Perakos will be taking on more instructional duties, and students have had a difficult time following routine and staying on schedule with Mr. Perakos up to this point. Students will need to understand that we **MUST** stick to our schedule this semester if we are to get through everything we need to cover in third grade. Spelling and Math seem to be the trouble areas for the class as far as time goes. If you start seeing more unfinished work coming home to finish at night, it is because we are trying to stay on schedule better. If students are not staying on task during class and do not finish side A of the math or do not finish definitions in spelling, they are expected to finish these tasks as homework. If students are on task and working during class, this should not even be an issue. Also, students are required to write in cursive beginning this week. The only general exceptions are spelling words and math. If there are any other exceptions, we will make them known to students in class.

Reading - We will continue and finish our Patchwork Poetry unit this week, as we had other projects to finish before Christmas. The unit has gone very well so far. Students have been excited and creative with their patches. Before Spring Break, students will be required to memorize and recite three of these poems for a grade. Any poems they recite above and beyond the three will be extra credit. We will begin novel groups again next week. We will also begin some test-taking strategies to prepare for CSAP/TCAP assessments coming in February.

Math - This week we will have Saxon every day. New concepts will include using the multiplication algorithm for multiplying a 2-digit number by a single digit. Friday will be an assessment day. PLEASE keep practicing multiplication. We will begin testing out of the facts this week.

History - We will begin our unit on the thirteen American colonies this week. Mr. Perakos will be teaching all of history this semester, with any support I can offer. The thirteen colonies unit will be broken into three regions: New England (northern), middle and

southern. Because the unit is so long and packed with information, students will take a short assessment/quiz after each region. The will take us through February and possibly in to part of March. Students will be writing sentences independently for questions in this unit, but this may not happen every day. Some days may include other assignments to check student comprehension and to keep things interesting for students.

Science -We will finish our unit on the human eye and light/optics this week or early next week. I will be teaching the remainder of this unit. We will look at some optical illusions to round out the unit and have some fun. Our next unit will be on the ear and sound. Mr. Perakos and I will begin to team teach science during this unit.

Writing -We will write rough drafts (and hopefully revise and edit as well) for the Grade 13 and Beyond scholarship contest this week. Ask your child about this very special essay. We will also be reviewing some Shurley English parts of speech and grammar rules.

Spelling - Only one new list (53) this week, but it has nine words, so we will break it in to three words per day. The test will be all nine words next Friday. Students will have the chance to begin writing definitions independently this week. We will write the new words together, but definitions and sentences will be more independent.

I hope I have covered everything. If you have questions or concerns about anything, please feel free to contact either of us anytime. Mr. Perakos will be writing the newsletters from now on, but I will still be fully involved and will still add my own little tidbits as necessary. Thank you for your continued support and assistance! You are greatly appreciated!!

Educationally yours,

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