**Mrs. Fernkopf’s**

**First Grade Class**



**WELCOME BACK!**

**2015-2016**

Robin Fernkopf, Teacher

Joseph Kelly, Principal



First Grade Teachers

Abbey Althof

Susan Baum

Robin Fernkopf

Michelle Keim

Janelle Noel

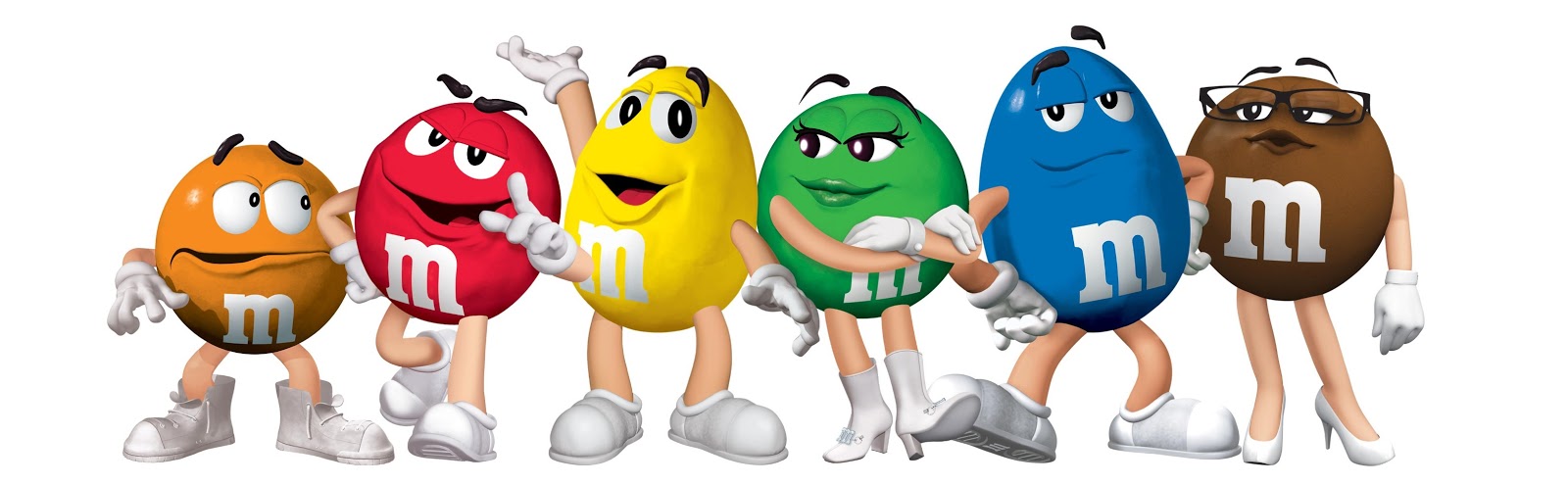
**Dear Parents,**

**I am very excited to have this opportunity to work with your child in 1st Grade. One of the neatest things about teaching a primary class, especially 1st grade, is the tremendous growth that I am able to see in each student-- academically, physically, and emotionally.**

**This packet should help you as we progress together through our school year. I recommend you keep it in a handy place so you can refer to it when needed. I’m truly looking forward to a GREAT school year with your child!!**

**Sincerely,**

**Robin Fernkopf**



****

**Kansas has fully implemented the new common core standards during the 2013-2014 school year**

**Common Core is a rigorous set of standards for the English Language Arts and mathematics curriculum that has been developed based on the best practices of schools and organizations around the country and the world. The standards were created using the feedback of K-12 teachers, college-level educators and experts in the fields of civil rights, English-language learners and students with disabilities.**

**The standards are designed to do the following:**

* **Prepare students for college and career readiness by aligning with college and work expectations.**
* **Be clear, understandable and consistent. Each grade level will focus on key topics, with a coherent learning progression across each grade level.**
* **Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order thinking skills. The level of academic rigor is ambitious but achievable for students.**
* **Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards.**
* **Use strategies from other top-performing countries so that all students are prepared to succeed in a global economy and society; and**
* **Be evidence-based.**

**The standards are not a step-by-step guide for classroom instruction; rather, they are an outline of the goals to be reached and skills to be mastered at every grade level and upon graduation. The main focus of the Common Core is to increase academic rigor and prepare students for postsecondary career and college opportunities. The Common Core Standards define what a student should know and be able to do. It specifies "what" should be taught and learned, not "how" the content is taught.**

**PHONICS/READING**

**A page out of a reading book may look very simple to us as adults who have had a lot of experience using the alphabet, but to children just beginning to read, it is very confusing and hard. The symbols adults know as the alphabet look like just lines and funny symbols to children until they have learned the sounds and rules that those symbols make to form words and sentences. They have to learn to break into the "secret code" of reading. Without some method of breaking the code in a word, reading is a chore instead of something fun. That is why I believe that a strong phonic base is extremely essential when learning to read.**

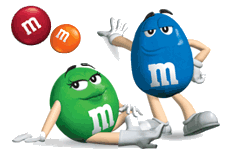
**I use three approaches when teaching children to read. First, I use a structured phonetic approach. We will be learning phonics in a very structured, sequential order. The children learn that each letter or combination of letters in our alphabet has a sound and when blended together those sounds form a word. They also learn phonic rules and code words accordingly to those rules. They should be able to explain the phonic rules you will see coming home on their daily papers.**

**Second, the majority of words in the English language can be sounded out; however, some words do not lend themselves to being sounded out. These words are called "sight words" and they must be memorized. We will drill these sight words and play many games to help them memorize these words so they will be able to pull these words from memory when needed. I always have the children try and sound out the word, but if the word doesn't make sense in the context of the material they are reading, they will have to call on their memory for a word that does make sense.**

**Third, I use a variety of language experiences that allow the children to see and use these phonetic combinations and sight words in action. For example: we will study authors, nursery rhymes, poems, etc. These experiences will not only help with the phonetic combinations, they also help expose the children to different language media that they might like to enjoy further in later years.**

**I truly believe that the first grade is the most critical grade. The more time your child spends reading, the more he/she will develop a love of reading.**

**Reading to and with your child is so important in helping him or her become an independent reader. I will be sending home short stories routinely. It is very important for each student to practice his or her story--I consider this a homework assignment. Please read the assigned story with your child, sign the reading slip, and return both the book and the reading slip to school the next day. Every time a student returns a signed story slip I mark an incentive chart. When they complete their reading chart the student receives a reward. These nightly reinforcements go a long way in helping children learn to read.**

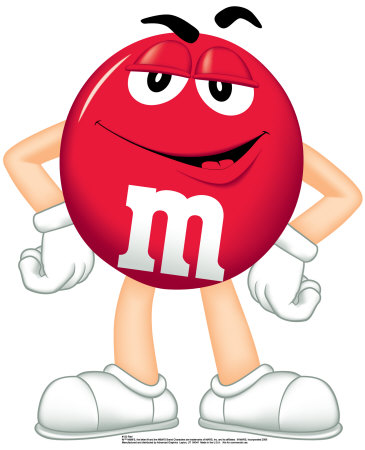
**MATH**

**Young students learn math concepts by hearing, seeing, and touching. I will give the students many different opportunities to experience and develop a good understanding of all math concepts. However, after the concepts have been mastered we will practice memorization, especially with addition and subtraction facts. Later in the school year we will begin working on timed exercises in both addition and subtraction. Our goal is for each student to develop the ability to master a fact page of about 60 problems in three minutes. Students find this fun and challenging and any support and practice that you can give at home is beneficial.**

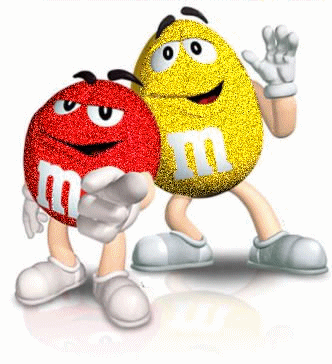
**SPELLING**

**We will begin spelling units the last week of August. The list of words and a dictation sentence will be sent home on Friday for the following week. Dictation will not start until October. Spelling tests will be given on Thursdays and Fridays. If your child scores 100% on Thursday’s test, he/she will not have to take the final test on Friday. The spelling lists are built around the reading unit that we are studying for that week. Optional challenge words will be sent home weekly. We will take a review test every other week.**

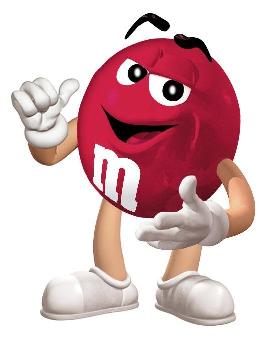
**We also have review spelling word tests every other week. Every once in a while, please practice past spelling words at home when you are practing the current week words. This will help keep spelling words into memory.**

**TECHNOLOGY**

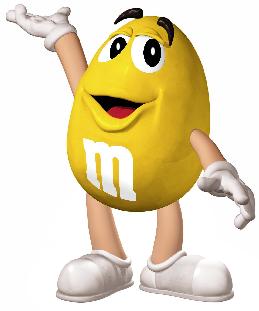
**We will have computer lab time in our classroom everyday. Every child will have their own computer during this time to learn keyboarding and many new computer concepts.**

**HOMEWORK FOLDER**

**Your child will bring home a homework folder with reading stories and math activities to do for homework on a regular basis. After your child reads the books, please fill out the reading log and sign it. Also, please make sure to return the book or math homework the next day. It won’t be every school night and I truly try to shy away from weekend homework, but a majority of Monday through Thursday nights they will have something to complete or review at home. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THEY COMPLETE THEIR ASSIGNED WORK AND BRING IT BACK TO SCHOOL IN THEIR HOMEWORK FOLDER THE NEXT SCHOOL DAY. I can’t stress enough the importance of establishing good work habits at this young age--what we instill in them now about being responsible for their school work will be the foundation that is set for them in the school years to come. Thank you so much for your time and dedication at home with your child. The time they spend practicing and reviewing at home truly does make a positive difference in their achievement here at school.**

 **BIRTHDAYS**

**Birthdays are a very special time for children and we certainly enjoy celebrating them at school. You are welcome to send birthday treats to school for the class to enjoy. There is no need to provide drinks with the treats since we usually celebrate birthdays during milk break. Student with summer birthdays are welcome to celebrate their birthday anytime during the school year. Many kids like to celebrate their half-birthday. PLEASE PERSONALLY LET ME KNOW IF YOUR CHILD HAS ANY KIND OF FOOD ALLERGY.**

**HEALTHY SNACKS**

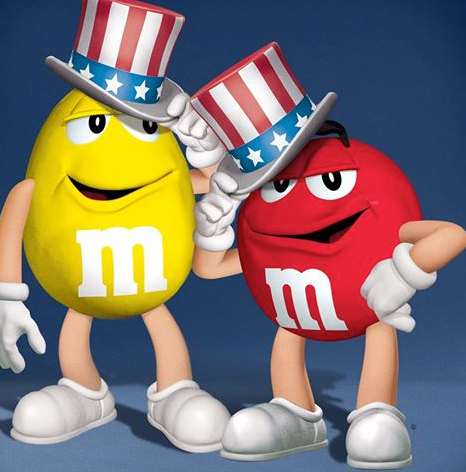
**The Board of Education along with PTO has agreed to fund a healthy snack for all students on Tuesdays and Thursdays. We will have this snack during milk break. You are welcome to send a HEALTHY snack to school with your child Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.**

**On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays we have our healthy snack from in the classroom. This includes any type of small healthy snack. If you would like to donate a snack once in a while we would appreciate it.**

**This snack is usually after morning recess with their milk. It seems to help them make it until lunch with our getting really hungry. Thanks for your help!**

**RECESS**

**Students may bring a toy from home to play with at recess, but please do not send expensive items such as hand held games, IPods, or cell phones. The school cannot be responsible for stolen or broken items that students bring from home. Please make sure your child brings appropriate outerwear for recess when the weather turns colder.**

**** **MILK AND LUNCH NOTICES**

**Milk notices come from the classroom and we send milk money notices when there are two days left on the milk ticket. We then send a reminder when there are no days left on the milk ticket and then everyday after that. I would really like to stress how morning milk helps us. I have seen how just a little milk about mid morning can really make a difference in a child's performance until lunch.**

**Lunch tickets come from the office. Lunch notices are also sent home when there are two days left and then every day when there is no balance left. You can also check lunch balances on Powerschool. If there is ever a question, please feel free to call us the school office at 364-3251.**

** PHYSICAL EDUCATION, MUSIC AND LIBRARY**

**Please remember we have Physical Education on Monday/Wednesday and every other Friday. Music classes are every Tuesday/Thursday and every other Friday. They will continue to alternate every other Friday for the entire year.**

**We will have Library class everyday. Please help your child remember to bring back the library books.**

[](javascript:edit(223310)) **JUST A FRIENDLY REMINDER!**

**Please send a note or call the school if your child is to do something different than usual. We have had children in tears, a lot of confusion and worried teachers when the children change plans without a note or a call. I know some of the children are very responsible, but by the end of the school day they sometimes forget what to do. Just a quick note or a call would really help us out! I really appreciate your help! Thanks!**

**School # 364-3251**

**email: r.fernkopf@holtonks.net**

[**s.conger@holtonks.net**](mailto:s.conger@holtonks.net)