Dear First Grade Families,

I hope that you all had a great week because the first grade sure did! We were busy, productive, and made some growth in many different areas of our learning. Even after having a four day weekend, the first graders walked into school on Tuesday ready to learn and work! They never cease to amaze me with their persistence and desire to learn.

In Math this week the first grade has really taken a leap into subtraction. We are focusing on using number bonds to discover and explore this concept. A number bond helps students build number sense by referring to numbers as parts and wholes. So, for example, 10 is the whole with 4 and 6 being the parts. So, when you add the parts, you get the whole! This will also help them with quick fact fluency because students will always recognize that 6 and 4 make 10. Speaking of number bonds, students started doing the Number Bond Dash. They are given 1 minute and 30 seconds to complete up to 25 number bonds to 5. I then graph their data, so they can see visually if they have increased their fluency or not. Next week, we are moving onto fact fluency to 6 and 7. Anyway, let’s go back to subtraction. Students are learning that you always have to have the larger number first, or using the Number Bond terminology, the whole number comes first. When given a problem with the whole being 5, a part being 3, and a missing part, students actually wrote an addition sentence with a missing addend to try to solve the problem. This method works as well, and it can be switched to be a subtraction equation. So, this weekend, ask your student to teach you number bonds. See if they can write subtraction equations using number bonds, and of course, continue to give addition word problems! The class can easily get confused on which operation we are using in word problems because they have learned addition and are now learning subtraction, so we have to give them plenty of practice.

In Reading/ELA/Phonics/Writing, students have been working on retelling stories. We learned how to retell stories by using the retell rope, which has 8 knots. Students also made their own retell rope drawing and labeled the different knots. The knots stand for what a good retelling of a story should have: characters, setting, problem, first event, second event, third event, possibly a fourth event, solution/lesson learned. We are learning how to retell stories sequentially, which really helps with students understanding what they are reading. However, the retells have mostly been what I have read to them. Their level of books do not always have the depth that a retelling requires. I recommend reading fables and folk tales together, such as: The Tortoise and the Hare, The Boy Who Cried Wolf, etc. With these stories, you can talk about characters, setting, all of the events, and the lesson that was learned at the end. These stories can be found online with a Google search if you do not have the book, and there may even be a video of someone reading the story on YouTube! Students have also been working on writing every sound that they can hear, learning about vowels, focusing on ending consonants, and reading the words in a text by looking at the segments, as well as the contextual meaning of the word.

Our class also participated in The Great American Shakeout at 10:16 on 10/16/14. It is a drill that many schools participate in at the same time on the same day across the country. An announcement was made that we were practicing an Earthquake Drill. Students went under the tables, covered their bodies, and held onto the tables. They then stayed there for 1 minute. Our class did excellent! They definitely had a lot of questions about Earthquakes. Maybe that could be a dinner conversation some night!

Overall, this week was jam-packed with learning. Students did their best, they worked hard, and they were persistent in everything that they did. I am so excited to see what next week will bring.

I hope that you have a great and safe weekend!

Ms. LaCasse

Parent Reminders:

* Scholastic is due: 10/31/14
* Don’t forget our website: <http://gesgrade1.weebly.com/>
* Grades close 10/31
* Early Release 10/29/14