



Room 109 Weekly Update

September 15, 2023

Heggerty - This week we started the Heggerty program. The Heggerty program focuses on developing students Phonemic Awareness. Phonemic Awareness is a skill that focuses solely on the sounds of words, what you can hear - there is no written component to it. However, as students learn to listen more carefully to sounds in words, we are learning how to manipulate these sounds and build our listening vocabulary of words as well. Some areas that we have been focusing on include discriminating words that rhyme, identifying the beginning or ending sounds of words, and recognizing syllables (or word parts) within words. This learning is paired with multi-sensory hand motions to help student to be more fully engaged in the listening of the sounds in words.

Fundations - This week we also started our first week of Unit 1 in Fundations. Units can last 1 - 3 weeks long, and Unit 1 is a 3 week unit. While Heggerty focuses on hearing the sounds in words, this program helps students to learn how to apply their learning of letters, letter sounds, and syllables to written words. This first unit is more of a review of Kindergarten skills for letters and sounds and we will be building upon this learning as we progress through the program. This knowledge will help us to "decode" or use the letter/sound knowledge to "sound out" many words as we are reading and writing. But starting in October, we will also be learning more about "Trick Words" that students should be able to read and spell automatically. These Trick Words do not follow any "spelling rules" or generalizations, we just have to know them, as this quick recognition will help to improve our reading and writing fluency and confidence. Examples of Trick Words include "was", "the", and "is." We will start with a review of Kindergarten trick words and then move forward with First Grade Trick Words throughout the year. Learning and practicing these skills and trick words help us to build strategies on how to figure out unfamiliar words more efficiently as we are reading.

Reading Workshop: During Reading Workshop, students will have times that they are working with a teacher in a small group or working independently to practice reading skills. Students will engage in many areas of practice, such as Word Work (practicing trick words to build automaticity/immediate recognition or spelling of the trick words), Independent Reading, Reading to Someone (partner or small group reading), Listening to Reading, in addition to so much more. This week, we have started to work on the 3 ways to read (reading the pictures, reading the words and retelling a story), as well as building our reading stamina (the length of time we can sustain attention on reading independently).

Writing This week, we also started to learn about writing. As beginning writers, we have learned that we can write, even if we don't know how to spell every word conventionally. We use the GUM strategy: G -give it a try, U - underline the unfamiliar word so that a grown up can help us spell it later, and M - move on. Writing is about being able to communicate and share our ideas and learning with others, so as beginning writers, we start with what we know and as we learn more skills, words, and strategies, we start to be held more accountable for these skills in our writing. Next week, we will also be starting the Empowering Writers program. This program has 2 components - Sentence a Day and Writing Workshop. During our writing block, we listen to a story and then write a sentence a day. This helps us to have daily practice with creating a complete thought for our sentence, using sentence mechanics (capitals and punctuation) and also practice our handwriting. In Writing Workshop, our focus is on developing authors and confident writers. To do this, we will focus on using different kinds of texts as mentors so we can see what good writers do, and then use this learning to improve our own skills as writers.

Math - We have several components to focus on, as our math goals focus on many different areas - 1. Fact Fluency, 2. Calendar Concepts and Building Number Sense, and specific content that pertains to the current unit. During math, there will also be a workshop time where students may be working with a teacher or may be working independently to practice skills, explore number concepts, solve problems. We have been working on building math independent work stamina, math talk, and working/staying focused. We have been learning and practicing how to use the materials in our classroom that we use for math as Math TOOLS, not toys.

Other news - If your child is ordering the Breakfast/Snack bag, could you please remind them in the morning? This helps them to know that they can stop by the cafeteria on their way down to our room. This saves them much more time in our busy morning (and more steps) so that they can have the full time to get settled and ready for our day instead of making an additional trip to the cafeteria. I really appreciate your help!

Library classes will be starting soon. Our Library day will be on Day 4, and our first Library day will be September 26th. So, on Day 6, we will have both Library and Wellness, so please be sure to help your child be prepared with sneakers and any books that need to be returned so students can borrow new books.

As you can see, September is VERY busy as we learn our routines, expected behavior for learning and safety, and new academic content. Our schedule is jam packed with learning objectives, so it is very important to keep our learning focus and use our time on task effectively. Please remind your child that his/her job at school is to do his/her best learning and save the side conversations for more appropriate times so we don't detract from the learning of others.

Thanks for your help and support! It is a true learning partnership but working together we will accomplish amazing things this year!

April Fuller