

Please
read and
heed.

Tattler



GKES Mission Statement: The Geilenkirchen Elementary School community of students, educators, and parents is committed to excellence. Together, we will educate our students to be responsible, productive, and ethical citizens with the skills to think creatively, reason critically, communicate effectively, work cooperatively, and learn continuously.

Smooth Start

Yes, I do feel that the first week of school went very smoothly – despite the fact that we were all unprepared for the news that our second-grade German immersion class was turned into a *non-immersion* second-third grade combination! I have already seen exciting evidence that this class configuration can offer many benefits to **all** of us. Please support me on this unique and thrilling ride through SY 2008-2009!

Adjustment

It is my pleasure to report that the students of 2B-3A (I was wrong about our name on my handouts!) are working very hard to learn routines that are new to all. Those who are new to Building 92 are learning their way around quickly, and C. seems to be adjusting nicely to being in our school. This is a very important transition time for all of us. It is essential that we do not try to skip steps in the process of setting up routines and establishing expectations, as we will pay a high price for that later, if we do. So far, the transitions seem to be going smoothly, and this week we will begin to move right into our second and third grade curricula. I am delighted to see the positive attitudes of your children. Teaching eager learners is truly a rewarding experience! I look forward to spending this school year helping these students to develop new skills, strengthen others, and become responsible, productive citizens.

Appreciation

How rewarding it was to see so many 2B-3A families at the “Back-to-School Bash” on Monday! 76% of our families were represented at one of the two sessions. I will do my very best to remember your names the next time I see you, but I sometimes have trouble putting the right name to a not-yet familiar adult face. Looking out over that sea of new faces in the classroom Monday afternoon made me thankful that I have a class full of concerned, caring parents, who take an active interest in their children’s learning. I look forward to having you on my TEAM, as **T**ogether **E**veryone **A**chieves **M**ore!

Responses

Thank you very much for your prompt responses to my requests for information about your children. Almost 100% of the families have returned the completed forms that I requested! Most families have expressed a willingness to help out in some way(s), for which I am quite grateful. This week I’ll begin making phone calls or sending e-mails to line

up helpers who expressed willingness to take on *regular* tasks. **Many** of you offered to help on Fridays, so it looks as if a rotating schedule might be possible – thereby saving any *one* volunteer from suffering burn-out. If you offered to help at home, please expect to be contacted closer to the winter holidays, if not sooner.

Your introductions to your children have provided me with valuable information that should help me to serve each child better. The students themselves have also revealed much about their interests, strengths and goals for this school year.

Presenting...ME!

Those who were unable to attend on Monday might be a bit curious about this teacher of their children. For 39 years, I have had the pleasure of teaching children in kindergarten and first through fourth grades. (Some years I even got to have combinations of K-1, 1-2, or K-3 together!) 24 of those years have been in DoDDS schools, 11 in Mönchengladbach and 13 (including this year) here at GKES. All of my professional experiences have shown me that the students of military families are the greatest kids anywhere, and I feel blessed to have had the wonderful teaching opportunities that have come my way.

My husband, R., is a local national who lives in our house in K., not far from D.. His son and daughter, whom we raised together, are grown and are working on establishing their own families. We hope to someday have the joy of being grandparents. Because K. would be a daily 90-minute round-trip commute for me, we chose to try a weekend marriage for the duration of my tenure at GK. This means that, after school on Fridays, I head home to my husband for the weekend, returning to my apartment in Ü.-P. on Sunday afternoons. (For this reason, I prefer not to schedule any conferences after school on Fridays, but I *am* available before and after school Mondays through Thursdays.)

Great Questions!

Sometimes you might have questions that could be of interest to other 2B-3A families. If you send me a note or an e-mail (Either way is fine with me.) with such questions, then I will answer them in this newsletter. If your questions pertain only to *your* child, then of course I will respond to you personally.

- A family asked where to find the daily number fact reviews that were listed at the top of “*Probable* Homework.” They are not provided by me. They are 5-minute **oral** quizzes, games, contests, etc. that an involved parent will make up

and do with their child, to help him/her to memorize addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division facts, according to the grade level or the individual needs of the child. These are **not** worksheets or pages in math workbooks. In a future edition of this newsletter, I will write more about memorization and the use of flash cards.

- The assignments listed on “*Probable Homework*” are provided on a daily (not weekly) basis. That is because I want the assignments to match the skills that have been presented in class. Sometimes we do not accomplish all that I think we will, when I am planning for the coming week. If I had given all assignments out on Monday, then the children might be trying to practice skills that had not been presented.

- Many families are probably wondering how the second and third graders will be taught separately, if they are all mixed together sitting at their desks. We are working on finding a comfortable, effective system for this during language arts. What seems to be working so far is that I introduce our “writing block” with a skill that will be *useful* to all, *practiced* by all, but *mastered* to varying degrees by the *individual* students. Currently, Mrs. S. is working in my room from 8:30-10:00. This highly-competent para-educator is able to monitor and support students, freeing me to work on reading comprehension with groups of students. While some are reading with me in one part of the room, others are writing independently, wherever *they* choose to work without being distracted by our reading lesson. (I do not assign minimum/maximum length of stories or writing projects. Just as some adults are “long-winded” – like me – some students need more sentences to make their points. Others are masters of brevity.) Mrs. S. is available to help them, should they need support.

- Our math lessons so far have started with the whole class together learning how to use a math material that we’ll be working with or practicing a process of mathematical thinking that will be useful in the future. Next week, we will explore the skills of gathering and representing data. I have decided to start with this, as it will be quite useful, when the students begin working on project work. I can also incorporate addition and subtraction at levels appropriate to each grade level. With careful planning, I’ll be able to help *all* students work in strands M1 (Numbers and Operations), M2 (Algebra), M5 (Data Analysis and Probability), M9

(Connections), and M10 (Representation). The DODEA standards that fall under each of these strands can be found at <http://www.dodea.edu/curriculum/standards.cfm> . If you are interested in helping your child in this area, practical suggestions are offered at <http://www.dodea.edu/curriculum/2ndGrade/math.htm> and at <http://www.dodea.edu/curriculum/3rdGrade/math.htm> .

Monday Hand-Outs

Barring unforeseen obstacles, I will provide each child with a list of the week’s *Probable Homework* on Mondays. Included will be a list of the week’s spelling words for your child’s grade level. I suggest that this paper remain in the “right-return” side of the Take-Home folders for the duration of the week, so that they can be used as a reference, both in school and at home. (On Fridays, please clean out these folders!) The word *probable* is emphasized in the title, and there is a “disclaimer” at the bottom. This is because we will not always accomplish that which I have planned, and it would not be good for the students to try to complete an assignment on a skill which we were unable to cover. Please believe your child, if s/he tells you that “we didn’t get to that today.” There might be an alternate assignment that does not correspond to what is on the week’s sheet. Please understand that changes might occur without warning.

L.A. and Math Skills to be Studied this Week

- o expanding reading vocabulary (all);
- o summarizing (2)
- o comparing and contrasting in literature (3);
- o identifying questions and using question marks (2);
- o identifying possessive pronouns and capitalizing abbreviations (3);
- o spelling words with r-blends (2);
- o spelling words that have short a, e, i (3);
- o narrowing topics for writing (all);
- o making and using pre-writing organizers (all);
- o writing in complete sentences (all)
- o comparing and contrasting characteristics (all);
- o taking surveys (all);
- o organizing data (all);
- o reading and creating tally charts (all)
- o reading and creating line plots (all);
- o reading and creating pictographs (all)

Important Dates

Wednesday, September 3 – School pictures will be taken. Please look your best!

Friday, September 5 – Early dismissal for students

Friday, September 12 – Open House from 2:00-2:45 P.M. in the classrooms

Friday, October 3 – Teacher In-Service (No school for students)

Mon.-Fri., October 20-24 – Fall Break