Dear Parents,

 Things are off to a terrific start in First Grade!!! The children are settling in nicely to their new routine. (Lunch and recess are the highlight of the day. ☺ ) We are having fun learning new procedures and taking responsibility for getting things ready and organized for our day. The students are also starting to enjoy the technology in the classroom. We have been using our Mimio and document camera to help us work together on the white board. In addition, we are really enjoying using some new sites like; X-Tra Math, Spellingcity, EPIC, QR Code Reader, IXL, Word Cloud and Superkids to enhance our learning. Our Scholastic Weekly Reader magazines also offer great on-line activities that we can use on our white board. These sites allow access from home. I have sent home hard copy letters from each detailing how to log on from home so that your student can use them whenever they would like.

1. Our first field trip of the year is coming up on October 4th. We will be visiting Goebbert’s Pumpkin Farm in South Barrington. We will learn about the life cycle of a pumpkin and explore and exotic animal farm. We will eat lunch at Goebbert’s. More details will be sent home soon. This trip fits in perfectly with our Social Studies and Science curriculum this year. We are also planning to see a play in December and visit the Garfield Park Conservatory in May.
2. Mrs. Gibbons from the DuPage County Farm Bureau will be visiting us again this year. She will be here to talk with us about apples in late September.
3. Superkids Reading/ Language Arts: We just completed our kindergarten review. We reviewed letter sounds, vowel sounds and handwriting strokes and mechanics. We started the First-Grade reader books this week! I will assign nightly reading directly from the Superkids site. Now that we have started the first-grade books we will also begin utilizing weekly Memory and Pattern words for spelling tests. (I sent a separate email about this last night.) This week we will also start breaking into small reading groups for guided reading time. We have started writing simple sentences during Writer’s Workshop. We are also working with the 6 Traits of Writing program. We have been focusing on Ideas and Conventions so far. We will utilize this program for our writing all year.
4. My Math: The students are really enjoying their new workbooks, math tools and virtual tools. We use them every day during math time. Information about Math Fact Fluency testing will be sent home closer to second semester.
5. Homework: At the first-grade level, homework is not counted towards the student’s grades. Typically, I will assign some sort of reading and math homework nightly. On occasion, I will send home a spelling assignment too. I do keep track of homework completed and turned in. I would prefer if you help your student if needed on this homework. It is meant to be review and reinforcement to our daily lessons. On nights when we have “free reading”, your student can choose to read whatever they would like. You are welcome to read to them during this time. It is essential that they also HEAR how good readers use inflection and fluency in their voice.
6. Scholastic Weekly Reader Magazines: These are a Scholastic publication that offers our students a weekly nonfiction reading opportunity that coincides with our social studies and science curriculum. I encourage you to go online to [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com) and read through the magazines with your student when they bring them home. They are a lot of fun! Information on our class log on and password was sent home with the first magazine two weeks ago.
7. Studies Weekly: This magazine is another weekly publication that enhances our social studies curriculum.
8. Green Light Behavior charts: Please remember to check these nightly and always keep them in the green folder. Please also note, if your child earned a “Car Buck” or two for the day, they will note that in the box with the star. Car Bucks are earned for following P.B.I.S. models and procedures. (PBIS is our school wide positive behavior incentive program.)
9. Apple Week is coming soon! This week we will learn about and explore apples! We will incorporate apple lessons across our curriculum from reading about Johnny Appleseed to taste testing and graphing in math.
10. Our Star of The Week program will start soon. This is a fun program that allows one student to “SHINE” each week as our Star Student. When it is your child’s turn to be Star, all directions/details will be sent home in the Star bag.
11. Last, I wanted to let you know that first grade will be starting our first service project of the year this month. We will work together to collect pop tabs for Ronald McDonald House Charities. Much more information will be coming. Until then, please start collecting those tabs!!!

LAST- I am still looking for someone to volunteer to be our Junior Achievement instructor this year. Please let me know if you can help with this very fun activity. It usually asks for a parent to come into our classroom once a week for 5 weeks in a row. You will teach a short 30-minute lesson related to “Our Families”. All the lesson planning, supplies and materials are provided for you. It is very easy to present and the kids LOVE having mom or dad come to class to do this. Let me know if you are interested.

I am also looking for a couple of parents to head-up our Kindergarten Celebration in May. You would work with Mrs. Struble and Mrs. Loftus to request donations for treats and help with decorations, etc. Last year’s first grade parents did this for your students at the end of their Kindergarten year. Please let me know if you can help.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this newsletter. As always, please email me with any questions or concerns.

Mrs. Debbi Ryan

