

Home/School Communication

A folder will be coming home on a daily basis. We hope that it will help keep the line of communication between school and home open. It's very important to us to have your input into the classroom and we want you to be well informed of what's going on at school. The middle section of the folder will be used for writing notes to each other. Students will be required to write notes to parents about what they are learning/doing at school on a daily basis. It may be tempting to correct your child's writing, but please accept it as a personal note, not a school assignment to be graded or evaluated. We do encourage you to respond to your child in writing, directly below their note, with questions and comments about their school day as often as possible. Your notes will let your child know you are interested in his/her education and encourage him/her to write more. Your notes will also serve as a model of correct spelling, punctuation, etc. Be sure to print your notes since cursive is difficult to read for many second graders.

Students are directed to put homework and any other papers that need to go home in the pockets of their folder.

The best way to contact us is through e-mail.

<u>teacher</u>	<u>e-mail address</u>	<u>classroom phone #</u>
Sue Backhaus	sbackhau@austinisd.org	841-0321
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Classroom Behavior

The motto in second grade is "Respect the rights of learners." We talk about what this means frequently at the beginning of the year. We also try to maintain a positive learning environment and prevent disruptive behavior by making instruction meaningful and interesting to the children, following well established routines, and praising appropriate behavior. Consequences for disruptive behavior depend on the severity of the behavior and include: warnings, conferences with the teacher, removal from an activity, five to ten minutes time out during recess, the student or the teacher may write a note to you about the inappropriate behavior in their take home folder, notes/phone calls to parents, and/or a trip to the office. **Please initial** any note in your child's folder about inappropriate behavior **so that we will know you saw it**. Students participate in keeping a record of inappropriate behavior in a notebook kept in the classroom.

Homework

The importance of daily reading for children can not be overstated. Among its many benefits, it reinforces newly learned skills and can help develop a lifelong reading habit. We would like your child to read twenty minutes or longer at home at least 4 nights a week. We believe choice is an important factor in encouraging a lifelong reading habit and rarely make specific reading assignments. Your child may read library books, books from home, magazines, or books checked out from our classroom library. He or she is responsible for keeping a record of his/her reading on a form kept in their take home folder.

Please do not do this for your child! Keeping a record of their reading is part of the homework assignment because it helps second graders develop self-responsibility. You may need to help your child determine the genre of a book. We would like you to initial the reading record. Something to think about...

Why Can't I Skip My Twenty Minutes of Reading Tonight?

Let's figure it out -- mathematically!

Student A reads 20 minutes five nights of every week;

Student B reads only 4 minutes a night... or not at all!

Step 1: Multiply minutes a night x 5 times each week.

Student A reads 20 min. x 5 times a week = 100 mins./week

Student B reads 4 minutes x 5 times a week = 20 minutes

Step 2: Multiply minutes a week x 4 weeks each month.

Student A reads 400 minutes a month.

Student B reads 80 minutes a month.

Step 3: Multiply minutes a month x 9 months/school year

Student A reads 3600 min. in a school year.

Student B reads 720 min. in a school year.

Student A practices reading the equivalent of ten whole school days a year.

Student B gets the equivalent of only two school days of reading practice.

By the end of 6th grade if Student A and Student B maintain these same reading habits, Student A will have read the equivalent of 60 whole school days Student B will have read the equivalent of only 12 school days.

One would expect the gap of information retained will have widened considerably and so, undoubtedly, will school performance. How do you think Student B will feel about himself/herself as a student?

Some questions to ponder:

Which student would you expect to read better?

Which student would you expect to know more?

Which student would you expect to write better?

Which student would you expect to have a better vocabulary?

Which student would you expect to be more successful in school.... and in life?

In addition to reading homework, spelling will be assigned on Mondays and math on Tuesdays and Thursdays. *Completion of homework assignments is a part of your child's report card grades.* Keep an eye on your child's folder for any exceptions to the above or additional assignments.

Second Grade Curriculum

Science and Social Studies

The required topics for second grade are very broad. They include:

- *Butterflies/Life Cycles
- *Communities/Citizenship
- *Economics
- *Weather/Air
- *Plants
- *Balance and Motion
- *Geography
- *Scientific Method

Math

Texas has adopted a new math textbook for use beginning with the 2008-2009 school year. enVision Math and other resources will be used to teach the following state mandated concepts and skills for second grade:

- *base-ten place value system,
- *compare and order whole numbers
- *addition and subtraction strategies
- *measurement processes
- *name parts of whole objects or sets of objects (fractions)
- *use patterns to describe relationships and make predictions
- *compare and contrast 2 and 3 dimensional geometric figures
- *organize data to make it useful for interpreting information
- *solve problems connected to everyday experiences

Language Arts

Reading goals for the year are:

- *Strengthened comprehension
- *Increased fluency
- *Oral expression
- *Written and oral reflection
- *Enjoyment

Our work in writing will focus on:

- *Writing for multiple purposes and various audiences
- *Personal narratives
- *Revising & editing
- *Simple research

Spelling is a developmental process that develops along the same lines as oral language - it's not perfect immediately. Second graders study a new spelling pattern each week and will be expected to apply the patterns they learn in their writing and on tests. Students **will not** be given lists to memorize for a weekly test. Spelling assessments will be given to determine if they can apply the spelling rules studied in class.

Grades

The report card used in second grade is identical to the first grade report card. Please remember that grades reflect not only intelligence and ability, but also effort and performance.

Book Clubs

We send home book club order forms often because of two advantages they provide - a reasonably priced source of children's books for you and free books for our classroom library. We can't emphasize enough the value of our classroom libraries for not only reading instruction but other content area instruction as well. We REALLY appreciate it when you choose to order! Book club order forms are usually sent home on a Monday and are due on Friday. Of course you are under no obligation to buy anything.

Cans

Gullett's aluminum recycling program will continue. Please save your cans for us and send them to school in a large garbage bag labeled **2nd Grade** (not teacher name as in past years) with a permanent marker. All money raised goes directly to instructional materials for our classrooms.

Water Bottles

Students are allowed to keep a water bottle with a pop-up top at their desks. No other beverages are allowed. Please do not freeze the water since the condensation will make your child's desk wet.

Lunch

Gullett has joined mylunchmoney.com - which means you can now pay for your child's lunch online or by calling 1-800-479-3531! Contact your child's teacher for the student id number needed to set up the account. School policy permits treats to be sold on Fridays only. Also, students may not purchase more than one treat. You are welcome to eat lunch at school with your child. **School policy no longer allows students to take guests to eat outside the cafeteria.** You are welcome to eat with the entire class in the cafeteria. If you do choose to take your child outside to eat we would appreciate your help in taking care of the unique outdoor learning environment Gullett provides. We use the courtyard area near our classrooms for a variety of educational purposes such as studying butterflies and their habitat. It is not meant to be used as a playground.

Second Grade Lunch Times:

Backhaus	11:30 - 12:00
Crawford	11:40 - 12:10
Southwell	11:35 - 12:05
Moore	11:25 - 11:55

Parties

School district policy allows 2 parties a year. These are your child's "office parties" and provide a time for children to learn how to socialize with each other in a more relaxed environment than school normally provides. Room Moms will enlist parent help if needed.

Birthdays

Gullett has a "no cupcake" policy. If you would like to send a special treat for your child's birthday it needs to be non-edible(pencils, stickers, etc.) or a healthy treat such as animal crackers, pretzels, popcorn, etc. These treats will be passed out at the end of the school day and need to be individually packaged.

Afternoon Dismissal

Second grade teachers will walk their classes out the front gate at 2:45. Please

talk to your child about where they should meet you. Gullett is encouraging parents to remain in cars upon arrival and dismissal. For more details, refer to the Gullett procedures provided by the office.

Absences

It is not possible to duplicate the work we do at school with “makeup work.” Our standard assignment for students who are absent is to read a book, chapter, or magazine article of their choice (or yours) and write a summary. If your child is absent several days, additional work may be assigned.

Thank you for trusting us with your child's education this year. We take this responsibility very seriously and look forward to working with you and your child.

Sue Backhaus, Jayne Crawford, Jennifer Moore and Sheryl Southwell
Gullett Second Grade Teachers