

Shark Bites

News from the **The Smart Sharks** in the Black/Smith multiage classroom

<http://TeacherWeb.com/MI/WylieElementary/MsBlackackandMrSmith/>

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Announcements

- **We are officially the Smart Sharks!** Following several days of team work, twelve great ideas for a new classroom name were presented. A close primary vote narrowed the choices down to three, and by September 11 we'd made our final selection. Our motto is: "We're Swimming to Success". Our new class identity is reflected in our fresh newsletter name, and a sharp new class currency, "Sharkoins".
- **Spelling lists are coming home every Friday.** The first test of the year was last Thursday. As our returning fourth graders know, spelling tests consist of five or six dictated sentences, with each sentence including several of the pattern words from the children's lists. For our new third graders the first few tests will be kept simple. **The key to preparing for spelling tests is to remember the patterns!** Students in Ms. Black's group will also have several "Nifty Thrifty Fifty" words along with "Word Wall Words", while those in Mr. Smith's group will be responsible for a few "Word Wall Words" each week. More on these in the next newsletter. In addition to the two large groups, there are also two smaller groupings of students. This grouping is very flexible and students may move between them periodically.
- **Homework packet are also coming home on Fridays.** As in past years, these packets will include several assignments, **all of which are due the following Thursday.** This allows kids to schedule the work in a way that makes most sense for their families. Of course, students who finish before Thursday are welcome to hand in complete packets as soon as they wish. However, we ask that all assignments be turned in at the same time.

Curriculum Notes

- **We're going to be baking bread next week!** As we wrap up our first literacy unit, a whole class reading of the classic, "Sarah, Plain and Tall" we'll experience first hand one of the many chores for which the narrator, Anna, is responsible, in the time before Sarah arrives from Maine. **We'll need supplies and volunteers on Thursday, October 8.** Look for a form in your child's homework folder today that describes how you can help.
- **Students are in the process of taking a series of literacy tests.** These include the new "Dibbles" reading assessment, administered one-to-one by their classroom teachers, as well as writing from prompts. This week all of the children will take the standardized Gates/MacGinitie reading test. We'll share all of the results with parents at conferences in early November.
- **Our first two weeks of math instruction have included a quick review of concepts,** before starting a Place Value unit. All students also have basic fact practice as part of their homework this week. Olders will concentrate on multiplication facts through 12, while youngers will be reviewing addition and subtraction facts, using "fact family" cards.

Important Dates

- **October 5** - Professional Development Day for teachers, no school for students
- **October 8** - Classroom bread baking, **7 parent volunteers needed from each class!**