

SEPTEMBER 2015

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# Readers Workshop

We have launched our Readers Workshop with the introduction of choosing reading spots, and shopping for “just right” books. I am evaluating student reading levels with ongoing informal assessments. We will be introducing our reading binders soon.

Readers Workshop is a program that began at Columbia University’s Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. Burr teachers have been trained by TC educators the past few years. Readers Workshop helps children become better readers through direct instruction in mini lessons, modeling in read aloud lessons and plenty of time to immerse themselves in independent and partner reading to build stamina. Kids will confer with teachers to identify their own goals for becoming more proficient readers. Peer conferences will build their discussion and collaboration skills.

Please encourage your child to read *at least* 70 minutes each week (Just ten minutes a day). They can select a variety of genres such as fiction, poetry, non-fiction, humor, adventure, and biography. Students should log their home reading as part of their homework. (Starting soon!)

Mrs. Harkin’s Classroom Newsletter

### Burr Elementary

Higganum, CT

September 2015

Volume 1, Issue 1

# A letter from the teacher…

Welcome Room 11 families!

I am very excited to work with your children this year! My goal is to build community and create a warm environment where kids can take risks and try their best every day.

It has been a pleasure getting to know your children and finding out about their Hopes and Dreams for second grade. I have a great group of kids this year! Our first two weeks were spent getting to know each other, learning routines and procedures, and establishing our classroom rules. We’ll focus on developing organizational skills, working in cooperative groups, and being responsible citizens.

Curriculum Night was this week. It was great to talk with many of you. If you were unable to attend, I sent home the information that was handed out in your child’s folder. If you have any questions about the curriculum itself and would like to set up a time to talk to me, just let me know! I had a sign up for October conferences as well. If you didn’t make it, I will be contacting you to set up a time. Conferences will be held on Wednesday, October 28 th and Thursday, October 29th.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.

at (860) 345-4584 (ext. 111) or email me at r[harkin@rsd17.org](mailto:harkin@rsd17.org). I am always happy to discuss your child’s progress!

Warm Regards,

-Becky Harkin ☺

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**Writers Workshop**

In writers workshop, students will learn and practice writing stories (personal narrative and fiction), persuasive and opinion pieces, poetry, fairy tales, and information (non-fiction).

Your second grader has received a small notebook to decorate and personalize. This “Tiny Topic” notebook will be used to collect writing ideas. You can help your child spell the names of important people, remind them of their favorite places, or list treasured memories. This will be returned to school decorated and with a few pages of ideas so they’ll have plenty of inspiration for writing personal narratives! If you haven’t returned it, please do so next week!



Mrs. Harkin’s Classroom Newsletter Page 2

## C:\Users\Guest\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\LNYQ0U2U\MC900229237[1].wmf Math

We will teach children how to master math concepts by explaining and defending their answers, linking math to real-world experiences, and using a hands-on approach to solving math problems. Our focus in the first month is fact strategies such as 0+ and 1+ facts, counting on, doubles facts (6+6=12), doubles +1 facts (I know 6+6=12, so 6+7 must be 13), make 10, and addition and subtraction word problems.

Second graders should practice addition and subtraction facts to 20 to improve “fact fluency.” Kids should “drill” by practicing adding and subtracting *quickly and automatically* so they can correctly answer 40 problems in 2 minutes.

## C:\Users\Guest\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\FAQ3FIC4\MC900239417[1].wmfScience

We will begin our first unit on soils soon. Students will compare and contrast different types of soil and we will compost organic material. Fall raking is a great time to go out into the yard and dig your own local soil samples.

## Social Studies

Our first (and ongoing) unit in social studies is map skills. Second graders will study maps and globes and learn how to use a map key, identify directions, and use a compass rose.

You can help your second grader deepen their understanding of map skills by showing such real-world tools as road maps, GPS unit, or a computer program such as Google Maps.

## Upcoming Events

**September 2015**