Dear Families,

Did you ever notice your children study spelling words from Monday through Friday, take the test and ace it, only to spell the word wrong on Monday? It served as a source of frustration for all of us. I am incredibly excited about the opportunity to use a spelling program, often referred to as "word study", with your children where this problem is addressed.

The spelling program in Wonders, our comprehensive literacy program, may be different from what you are used to seeing. No longer do we have a pretest and a Friday test. Instead we will start with a preview and pretest of the skill. I will give them a short list of words that share common spelling patterns. Then for 4-5 days, we will work with those patterns, learning sounds associated with them.

At the end of our spelling instruction for that set of patterns, I will test the students on the skills. These words aren't necessarily the words that they saw at the beginning of the week, but will be based on the skills taught.

For example, if the skill is the patterns of -er, -ur, and -ir, the words used will be testing those specific patterns. The words that your children miss become their word study focus at a Practice Station or in small group the next week. The neat thing about that is, over the course of the year, your children can continue to practice these words. In traditional spelling, if your child misses the word, oh well...the class moves on. Now your child will be given more opportunities to learn these words.

No Monday list? As parents, that's the way it's always been done! What can your role be? That's easy! Your involvement is still very much needed! Each week I will send home a study skills sheet that tells you what skill/pattern we are working each week. Starting today, you can help your child begin to learn these words, focusing on the specific skill of the week. I welcome your involvement.

Your children will benefit greatly from the spelling skills that are taught. Learning these phonetic patterns will not only teach them the grade level words they need to be able to spell, but your children will learn far more words, because they will have generalized skills and patterns for spelling in their every day writing. That is incredibly exciting!

Tests will be graded on two criteria: correct spelling of the skill we have been working on (1 pt. each word) and the correct spelling of the entire word (1 bonus pt. each). Remember, a test may motivate your child to study, but their use of these skills/patterns in their written work in class on a regular basis is what matters most. As we go along, please give feedback if parts of the word study process are confusing or need clarification.

Thank you. As always, please contact me if you have questions.

~ Mrs. Jane Doe, 3rd grade teacher