**Words Their Way: Word Study Program** 

This year our students will be using ***Words Their Way***, a developmental word study program to support their spelling and word knowledge. The ***Words Their Way*** (WTW) program is a researched based system of instruction that allows teachers to use skills the students have already mastered and build upon those to expand their spelling and word knowledge skills.

 Below are the developmental stages of spellers with typical grade bands.

**Emergent Spellers**: (pre-k to mid 1st) spell words with random marks, representational drawing, mock letters or random letters and numbers.

**Letter Name Spellers**: (K to early 3rd) spell words with initial and final consonants and some vowels.

**Within Word Spellers:** (1st to mid 4th) spell words with initial and final consonants, some blends and digraphs, as well as long and short vowel blends.

**Syllables & Affixes Spellers**: (3rd to 8th) spell words that include consonant doubling, common suffixes and past tense endings.

**Derivational Relations Spellers:** (5th to 12th) spell using bases and roots as well as prefixes. Students begin to make connections between spelling and meaning.

What will the teachers do?

Teachers will assess the students at the beginning of the year with a spelling inventory. This inventory of skills will help place the student in his correct developmental stage of spelling. Teachers will assign students word sort lists within the student’s developmental range. Teachers will teach the word patterns as well as irregularly spelled words. The teachers will give students time to explore the patterns on their own (a blind sort), or give the students the pattern to look for (a closed sort). The teacher may also give students a variety of activities to do during class, including looking for the patterns in books they read during independent reading time. Teachers may have a variety of Word Sort groups going at one time.

What will the students do?

Students will investigate and examine word patterns, similarities and distinct differences with their assigned word sort list. Most students will have a Word Sort notebook to keep track of patterns they have worked on, jot down “noticings” or places they see the pattern other than on the word sort list, and other activities- such as vocabulary or grammar practice that may be appropriate for that word sort pattern.

Students may be assessed at various times on words they have on their word sort lists or words that have a pattern they have been taught. Teachers will have varying ways of assessing how the students are mastering the spelling patterns. However, transferring the spelling skills in their daily work will be a true measure of skill mastery.

What can parents do?

* Help your student understand the new pattern of words, work with words he knows and then transfer it to unfamiliar words.
* Help your student focus on words they are close to spelling correctly. If your child confuses a pattern that was previously taught, remind him of that pattern.
* Help your student notice their patterns in words read at home. Making connections between words on their lists and words they are reading will move the patterns into long-term memory.
* Help your student notice words that follow the pattern of the week as well as words that "break" the rules.
* Have your student sort their spelling words by the way they sound as well as the way they look.
* Help your student proofread writing for words they know how to spell. Proofreading helps your student understand the importance of spelling correctly.
* Have your student do a “word hunt” by looking for words with the pattern they are working on in magazines, advertisements, menus, etc.
* Play lots of word games including word searches, hangman, crossword puzzles, Scrabble, etc.

**Words Their Way Words to Know**

Sorting: Organizing words into groups based on patterns or meaning

Oddballs: Words that cannot be grouped into the word sort categories given

Sound Marks: // marks around a letter or sound pattern to signal that is the sound pattern to focus on, rather than the actual letters. Ie: /ow/ for c*ow* and b*ow*

V: represents a vowel in the word or pattern

C: represents a consonant in the word or pattern

**For more Information...**

Words Their Way: Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary and Spelling Instruction by Donald R. Bear, Marcia Invernizzi, Shane Templeton & Francine Johnston

[Word Study: A New Approach to Teaching Spelling](http://www.readingrockets.org/article/word-study-new-approach-teaching-spelling) [www.readingrockets.org](http://www.readingrockets.org)