

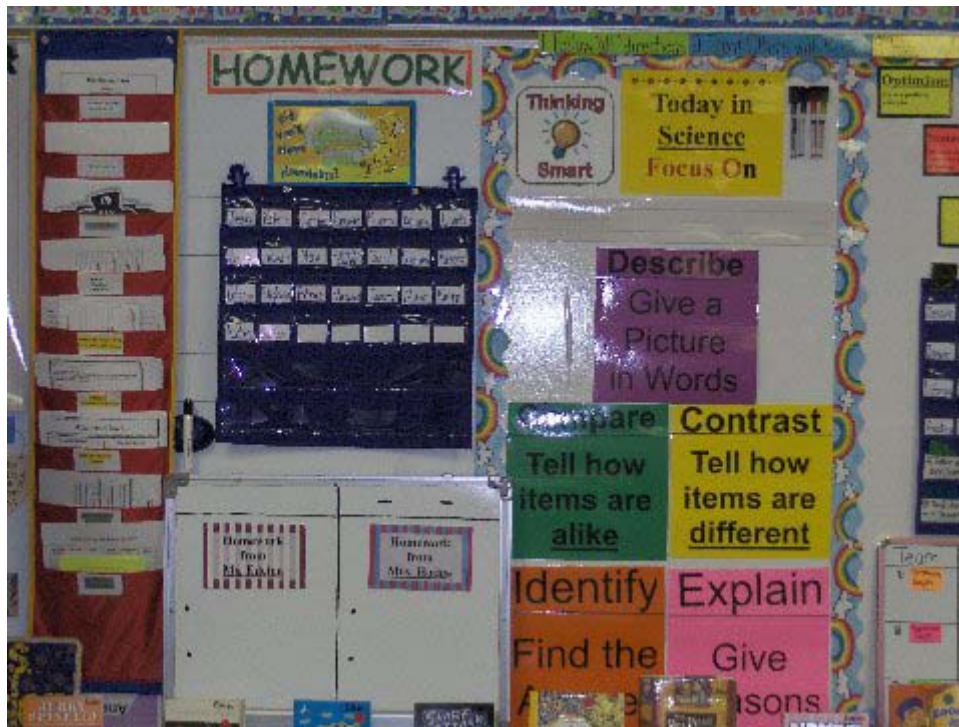
These are pictures sent to me on July 20, 2006, by a wonderful 4th grade teacher (science and reading) in Kentucky named Tiffany. She emailed the photos and there was just so much to see that I sent her back a list of questions (in bold below) about all of her incredible organizational ideas! She dutifully responded, so below you'll see the pics she took and captions she wrote, along with my questions and her responses. This woman is QUEEN OF ORGANIZATION and she has been kind enough to offer her email address to website visitors if any of you want to ask her additional questions (and I'm sure you will!!). Tiffany has also sent me classroom management documents which I'll be adding to the site soon, so keep an eye out for more from her. Thanks for everything, Tiffany! We're looking forward to seeing your site when it's up and running!

Angela,

I finally took pictures of my classroom for you to see. I am sending you a bunch of them, if you find any of them to be helpful, you are more than welcome to post them. I am including an explanation with some of them. Also, in order to cost you less money to host the pictures, if you decide to use any of my pictures, you can post my e-mail address, and if people are interested in seeing more they can email me directly, and I will send them more pictures. I am planning on getting a website up this year!

:)

Thanks,
Tiffany



What's in the folder pocket chart? The blue pocket chart? How's the HW thing work?

Folder Pocket Chart: Fax Forms, What Did I Do This Week in School (Newsletter kids fill out from your site), Removal of the Room Paper, Multiple Choice and Open Response Checklists (mandated from our district)

It is my assistant's job to write down the homework from my class and from the other class they go to. We record homework every day after lunch into their agendas. The assistant walks around to make sure that everyone has written it down, and it is on the correct day as well.

The blue pocket chart is for homework and agenda. I have colored sticks for agenda and homework. When students don't have them in, I put a stick behind their name. This helps me to remember who didn't turn in what on weekly evaluations.



How do you do books with a common theme? What kind of book baskets are those- where from?

The books with a common theme was an idea that I got from Mrs. Newingham's website (<http://hill.troy.k12.mi.us/staff/bnewingham/myweb3/Reading%20Workshop.htm>). At the beginning of the year, we just make connections based on our read alouds together. At the end of September I give them the "I Made a Thematic Connection" paper, and we practice filling them out together as I do read aloud. (That I Made a Thematic Connection is available for download at Mrs. Newingham's website.) After that, students make their own connections, and put the name of the book, author, and location on a post-it, so we can continue to build connections throughout the year. (Let me know if this needs more explanation, it may.) The containers came from K-Mart. They are an awesome size. **I love her site, I'm so glad you pointed it out to me!!**



(We have to be careful with furniture too, but our janitor lets these makeshift "sofa" fly below the radar.) I got them on clearance at Wal-Mart Garden section. **Great idea! I'm going to look for some.**

What are the containers on the left for? Can you explain your specific procedures for peer-to-peer books? I'm doing that this year and need ideas.

The containers on the shelves are just more book baskets. On top, the white container contains materials for their reading response journal: home reading log, reading tally, genre information, etc. I got all the materials I use for the Reading Response Journals from Mrs. Newingham's website too. (Downloaded it into word.)

I do not let them do peer-to-peer recommendations at first. I have a general recommendation board for fiction and nonfiction (It is in another picture, I'll point it out when I get to that question.) We practice together making recommendations based on the read-aloud books, so that I see they are writing more than "it's cool" or something very vague. After guided practice, I allow one table to start making recommendations. Each week I add a table onto it. Students may only check their recommendations before school starts. I also try to remind students to make sure that EVERYONE is getting recommendations.



I post our spelling words up here (we have to do content words). I also have how many times they go to the restroom up. Just a few kids were trying to really take advantage of RR breaks. I got that idea from a 1st grade teacher in my building.

What are the small wipe off boards for- bathroom?

There is one wipe off board for the bathroom. Every student has their name on a magnet. We don't take many "group trips" to the bathroom, so this helps to self-monitor. When they go to the bathroom they move their magnet down before leaving. This helps me to see how many times they have gone. Typically for 4th grade 3 a day is plenty. (We'll always have those few exceptions!)



I fill it up for the first two weeks, then it is the Star Student of the Week's responsibility to fill up the book display case.

I'm doing this too this year but my concern is that the books will always be checked out and the display will look empty. Does that happen?

A lot of the books do get checked out. The Star Student has the responsibility of keeping the display full all week. After reading workshop, they have to re-fill it if it needs replenishing. **That's a good idea- they can just come up with more recommendations- why didn't I think of that? ☺**



The books on display are actually held up by "Plate Display Holders" that I got at Big Lots for 99 cents! I keep a chime up front to get their attention, it is held by a magnet to the board. I have tried those expensive white board cleaners, but the general "all

surface cleaner" has kept my board the cleanest. **I just came up with that plate holder idea myself- great minds think alike!** I'll let you know how I use them.

What is the hanging file folder pocket chart thing used for? The baskets on top of the shelf to the right?

This is used for storing work for the week. It is broken down by class so it is specific, such as Science-Edelen-Monday, etc. Baskets hold blank ticket out the door papers, and the long basket is for any small materials I need to pass out that I want to keep out of the kids hands.



Some of the nonfiction section in my library. I divide books up into Science or Social Studies categories.



More nonfiction books-mainly Social Studies.



How do you do the book awards? Whats on the bulletin board to the right?

I got the book awards idea from Mrs. Newingham's website. I would highly recommend this!!! I have so many books, this really helped my kids to search for high-quality books. They have sign ups for each genre of the month. They write down nominations of books that they think should win, and other kids read them so that they can be informed voters. At the end of the month, we vote (on a paper ballot). The librarian comes in for 15 minutes, we make a big production out of it, Students walk down the "red carpet" with the nominated books, and we have an envelope that we pull the winner out of for each category. The kids LOVED this!!! **I'm excited about starting that this year!**

The bulletin board to the right is a general recommendation board. If a student thinks the book is good enough for the whole class, they fill out and post their recommendation there. At the beginning of the year, this is the only place they can post recommendations.





These pocket charts are actually HOT GLUED to the wall! It really keeps them up well, and it peels right off if you need it to. (I have cinder-block walls, not sure about dry wall.)



Instead of making curtains, I bought a shower curtain to hang up. It is much better than our ugly shades. I have sorted out my highlighters and post-its by color, because I want to be able to find them easily when doing a particular activity. I always keep a picture of the current class I have, and my very first class I taught in my room. The big blue container is for lunch boxes, I got tired of finding them on the floor, so that is their designated home.

Yes- the lunch box idea is good. What are the other containers for?

Highlighters sorted out by color. A container for Science Test Prep, Science Vocabulary Sheets, Science Graphic Organizers, Post-Its sorted out by color, general supplies, such as staplers, big erasers, a box with "Tools We Use as Readers" with different

graphic organizers I use a lot. On the right is where they turn in their work, and at the bottom the "workstations" when we do centers, each group knows where to pick up their work

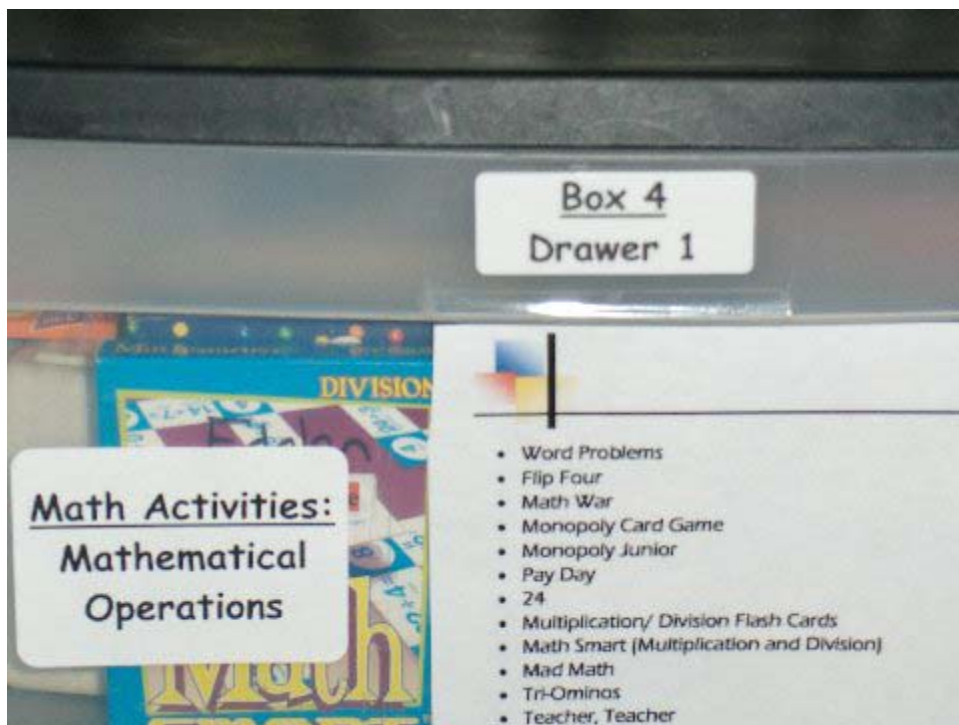


Organization central! Here I have my games which I have sorted by content. The picture frames at the top will be changed every month, a student has the job of being the classroom photographer. I love taking pictures of them really absorbed in reading, or a science experiment!

Can you give more detail about the containers on the bottom (the carts)? Do kids get the drawers out or do you? How do they know which they can use?

Two containers contain "Friday Only Activities." These are more of a reward, so we don't do them as often. One 6 drawer compartment has Literature Circle Jobs so kids can get their materials easily. At the beginning of the year, only I get out materials. I have a lot of games that they are not familiar with, so they need a great deal of practice. After we get into the swing of things, I will tell them they can pick out a math game to play, and they can pick out what they want. If I really need to save time, but want to allow them to play some, I will lay out the games they have to choose from on the floor. They put away all the games themselves by following the labels. I also love that I have them separated out by subject area and sometimes more specific such as "Geography." It makes it easy for me to explain why we are playing these games if I am ever questioned.

Exactly- we as teachers can do our jobs pretty much how we want to, but we need to be able to justify everything!



No more searching, drawers are specifically labeled, and I can find what I need easily for each skill! Students can put them up easily too, because I teach them to read the labels.



I do my centers like you do, not during reading time, but almost more so as a "treat" or an early morning activity. They are sorted by skill too. **These are so cute, you will probably have readers emailing you asking for copies of the labels.**



I have markers sorted out by color because of some of the technical drawings we do in Science class. I also keep band-aids and safety pins back here for the students to get without asking. I have behavior contracts back here, and students who have them get a new one each day independently, and return the previous day's contract.

Which containers are used for which things?

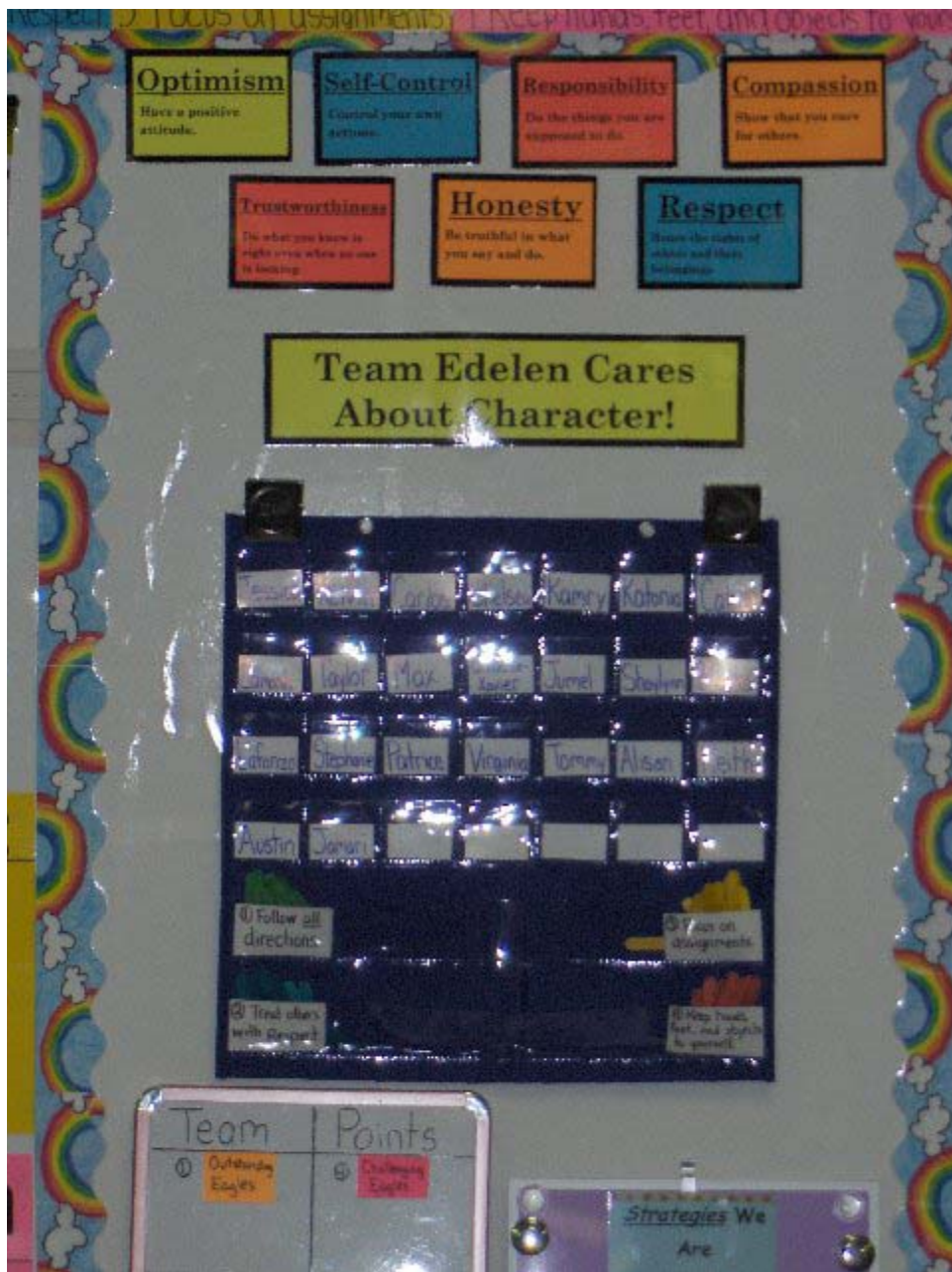
The black container is for blank behavior charts, the two empty drawers below it are where the filled out ones are turned in. The white container above it is for index cards, they are sorted out by lined, color, or unlined. The small plastic container has band-aids and safety pins.

Can you tell more about the behavior charts?

The Behavior charts came from "The Tough Kid Toolbox" (Canter). Our library had a copy of it. I made one based on examples they had, and this works for the majority of kids who need a contract. Only a few kids need to have a special one made up for them because of their severe needs. **That's a great book I read when I was student teaching and still use!**



My desk area. I have reading manipulatives at the bottom, I store these back here because they are fairly expensive, so I don't like to leave them out.



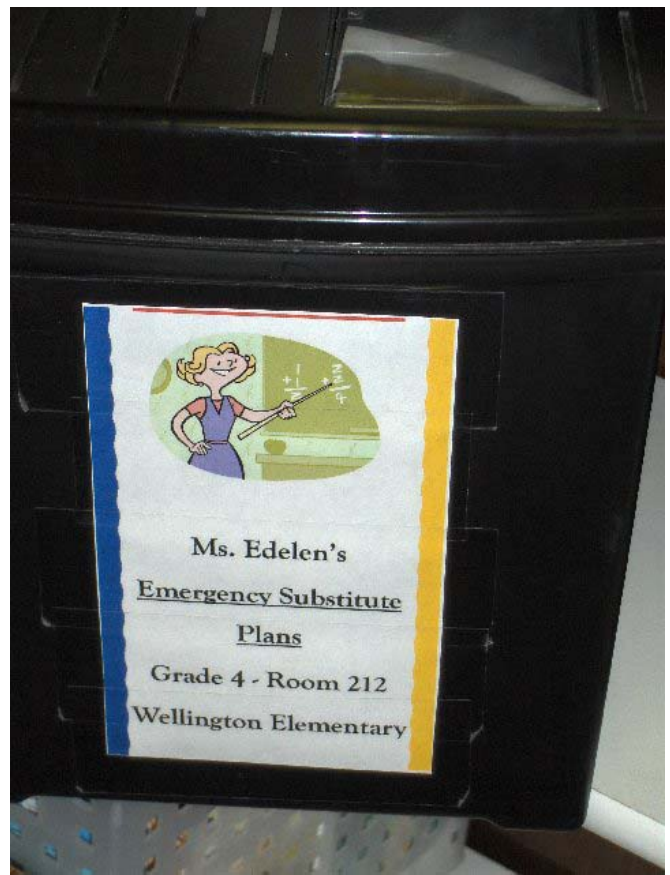
This is our team behavior system.



I have carefully tried to hide my microwave and refrigerator! Magazines are on the rolling cart.

What are the papers in the big gray/black paper containers on the top right side of the pic? How do you organize your 'teacher papers'? (ones the kids don't see)

I have a few file folders that are at my desk. I have a high-priority folder, a student teacher folder, ECE paperwork folder. I try to file immediately, or else I'll end up tossing it. I have drawers for "professional development" etc, for papers I'm not quite sure if I need them, or how to implement the idea. I store most of my papers in the filing cabinet. The folders are labeled very specifically to help me find what I need easily.



I LOVE these shelves!!! No more messy desks EVER!!! (I got them at Garden Ridge, but have also seen them at Rite-Aid, Wal-Mart, and Target. I paid \$7.99 for them.) I do not have tables, so everything goes here for the kids, Science Notebooks, Reading Response Journals, Agendas, Whiteboard, Clipboards, a box with markers, crayons, and color pencils. On the top in the container is white board markers, erasers, scissors, tape, and glue sticks. They cannot get in that container without permission. I also put any handouts that I need to give them for the day on their top shelf. They don't touch the top shelf except for pencils.

This emergency black box has been my lifesaver many times! I have a COMPLETE week of lesson plans in there. Everything is ran off and ready to go. This makes me feel good, because if something happened to a family member, I would not have to worry about planning for school. It took a lot of work, but was well worth it. I only use it on those days that are truly an emergency.



What's in the jar?

The jar has multiple choice Science questions cut up in it. I ask them when we have a few minutes of time to kill, or sometimes use them as a review game. Below the jar is my classroom suggestion box.



I organized my most commonly used office supplies into these divider containers. (I got them at Target in the sewing department.) The binders hold student work from the three classes that I teach Science to. I did have big tubs to file work, but they took up too much space, so I may not keep as many work samples this year, but they are very easy to assess. These supplies are hidden behind a large calendar.



On each day's drawer, I wrote something specific I was going to try to focus on, so as I plan I can remember it!

Can you tell more about these?

The labels on the daily drawer help me to focus when I am planning. For example, last year, there were a ton of awesome Science Videos that my kids did not get to see, simply because I didn't have the time. Now, on Monday's drawer, it says "Content Video" so I can remember to make sure I am using that resource that we have available in our building. Another drawer says, "content vocabulary", "foldables" (<http://www.dinah.com/>), another day says Science experiments. In general, I guess I have the labels to help me be more well rounded and to remember to include all different aspects in my planning. When I go to put the work in that drawer, I want to make sure I have aligned something up with those labels.



Do your magazines tear up easily? I had parent volunteers tear apart the magazines and laminate them, then bind them back together. They stay in AWESOME condition now. What is great is that most of the magazine topics will be current for many years, i.e. Zoobooks. Check with your librarian..my librarian gives me old issues to add to my library when he is done with them. (I've heard some local libraries do that as well.)



What's in the bags? How does the treasure chest work?

The bags have "Leap Pads", but for the older kids they are called "Quantum Pads." Our district bought them, and I have kids who daily get to use them.

It's a "book" treasure chest. Since the students do most of the recommendations throughout the year, I put my recommendations or books that I have blessed into that chest. Students are allowed to check out from there as well.



I was tired of posters falling off my walls. I teach science to three classes, so I divided this board up for the three areas of science. (We are allowed to keep any posters that we made up during the test.) I thought by having clear areas for each content sub-area, students may be more likely to reference them.

FABULOUS!

THANKS SO MUCH FOR SHARING!!!

