

WEDGWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1st MARKING PERIOD NEWSLETTER

2008-2009



THE MUSTANG

PRINCIPAL'S NEWS



Dear Parents:

The teaching staff of Wedgwood School prepared the majority of this newsletter. We hope that it helps to highlight for you some of the activities and learning experiences in which your children are involved.

There are a couple of reminders that I wanted to take a moment to review with our school community.

Drop off and pick up procedures

If you are dropping off your children for school, please remember that students should be dropped off in the side parking lot, not in front of the building. Students can then enter through the side door, and parents should drive around the loop to exit. Please do not drop your children off in front where they would have to walk between the buses. The speed limit in the parking lot is 10 m.p.h. – please watch out for students. It is best to drop off between 8:55 and 9:00 am. That is when supervision is available. Also, for parents that pick up their children at 3:20 pm, please meet them in the side parking lot so that they are not involved in bus traffic. Please arrange your schedule to pick up students on time at the end of the day.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- 12/16 – Family Night
Market Day Pick Up
- 12/17 – PTO Fuddruckers Night
- 12/18 – Geography Bee
5th Grade Strings Perform at
Cardinal Village
- 12/23 – Student Sing-A-Long
Early Dismissal – 1:40 pm
Lunch Served
- 12/24/08-1/4/09 – School Closed
Winter Break
- 1/5/09 – School Re-Opens
Progress Reports
- 1/13 – Family Night
- 1/19 – School Closed
Martin Luther King Day
- 1/21-22 – Grade 2
Test of Cognitive Skills
- 1/27 – Market Day Pick-Up
- 2/6 – 2nd Marking Period Ends
Grade 3 – CBAC
“James and the Giant Peach”
- 2/10 – Family Night
- 2/13-16 – School Closed
President’s Weekend
- 2/17 – Report Cards

FIRST GRADE NEWS



Greetings from all of Wedgwood’s first grade classrooms! The students are doing an excellent job as they learn the daily routines and expectations of their new, longer day of school. They are now able

to choose a bought lunch, successfully enter their pin numbers, locate classrooms, the gym and the library and board their bus each day. We are proud of their independence!

First Graders are excited about reading and have learned many new skills and strategies. Students are being taught phonics through a program called Foundations. At this time, they are learning letter sounds and letter formation, capitalization, punctuation, sentence dictation and proofreading procedures, and many rules of spelling. You might hear your child talk about “trick words” (words that cannot be sounded out), digraphs (two consonants that stand together and make one sound), bonus letters (ff, ll, ss and zz words) and “glued sounds” (word families such as am, an, all.) This is an exciting new approach and we are amazed at how well it is working in each classroom. Children continue to point as they read from left to right, they “get their mouths ready” for beginning sounds and they look for picture clues. As high frequency words, sentences, and books go home, we appreciate the wonderful work parents are doing to reinforce these building blocks of reading. Our students are gaining self-confidence and seem to be able to take risks with their learning.

During our math lessons, we have been introducing and reviewing counting by ones, twos, fives and tens, counting money and telling time. We are using many tools to help bring abstract concepts to a concrete understanding, such as: number lines, number grids, analog clocks, coins, templates and calculators. We appreciate parents working with their children at home in reviewing these skills and in completing homework.

Our first grade students have participated in several school-wide activities. The Book Fair was a great success and many children bought books to read to parents and siblings. During Fire Prevention Week, the children participated in an assembly and were taught how to remain safe if they are ever in a fire situation. The children met Sparky the Fire Dog and then went outside to view a Washington Township fire truck. They were very impressed with the fire equipment, especially the huge fire ladder!

In October, the children studied the life of Christopher Columbus and his voyage to the new world. Historical and biographical accounts were read and writing/projects were used to reinforce this knowledge. Around this time, Wedgwood First Graders enjoyed celebrating Halloween, too! Our school parade was fun for all and the students proudly walked throughout the school and school grounds. They loved having family members and friends see their awesome costumes. Teachers in classrooms emphasized the safety aspects of the holiday and first graders learned the rules of having a safe but enjoyable holiday. Our students did a fabulous job decorating our halls with their Thanksgiving turkey projects. Each project is unique and special- just like each child!

We enjoyed our special class trip to the Cape May Zoo. It was a wonderful day with parent helpers and classmates. We observed many animals in a natural habitat setting-from eagles to giraffes. Eating lunch outside in the pavilion was great, too. Our next class trip will be on December 11th, when we go to the Performing Arts Center to see “If You Give a Pig a Pancake.”

Thank you for all that you do to help your child succeed in school. From signing test papers, to helping with homework, to turning off the TV and reading with your child each evening, YOU make the difference. We appreciate all the extras you do each day to enrich and educate your child!

SECOND GRADE NEWS

Greetings from all second grade classrooms! As the season has changed from summer to autumn, our second graders are growing into independent students. Autumn has been a time of great learning. We, as teachers, are amazed by how much your children have accomplished in such a short period of time.

The children have done an excellent job of adjusting to writing in their assignment books daily. Please continue to sign these homework books each night. This is an important link between home and school and it also teaches your child the importance of being responsible for homework assignments. This is an example of being an independent student.

Our classrooms have been very active and busy. The growth that is taking place in your child's reading everyday is amazing. The skills that were

learned last year are beginning to grow and we are certain that you are enjoying the love of reading that your child is showing. Foster this love at home by reading together, frequenting the library and turning off the television to enjoy a good book. When you are sharing books together concentrate on vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension.

Math is full of new and exciting concepts. Everyday is packed full of learning. Please continue to oversee your child's nightly homework, practice counting money, telling time on an analog clock and play some of the wonderful games that your child has learned in class. Take the opportunity to reinforce basic addition and subtraction facts. Playing games such as Dominoes, War, and Dice will help to reinforce these facts in a fun way. Also, it gives your child and you some quality time together.

Social Studies and Science are the highlight of many second graders' day. Our curriculum is full of challenging vocabulary and concepts. It is exciting to learn about our government, voting, famous Americans, animals, light and sound. These are just a few of the many areas that your child will learn about this year. We hope that you have had the opportunity to talk about these areas at your dinner table. November brought an opportunity for our second graders to celebrate a Thanksgiving Feast. The children gathered together to sing, eat and to focus on thankfulness. This is one of the favorite memories of the year! We often find ourselves humming a little tune "We are thankful..."

On a final note, we would like to thank you for all that you do to make our job as educators so much easier. We appreciate all of the "little things", even down to making sure that your child is well rested and fed a healthy breakfast before coming to school. We are looking forward to an awesome year together.

THIRD GRADE NEWS

The third graders are off to a great start! We are so proud of how easily the students have adapted to third grade! There are so many exciting and interesting activities planned for them this school year!

Most of us start our day with Word Study. We enjoy the various games and activities which help us learn our new words and spelling patterns. Thanks to our second grade teachers, we know how to write in lower case cursive letters. We are currently learning upper case letters. Extra practice at home always helps.

Third grade has been busy exploring math in an exciting way through the Everyday Math program. This program uses various strategies to develop critical thinking. It provides the students with practice of basic skills through games and routines. In Unit 1, the class established routines and reviewed number patterns. In Unit 2, the class added and subtracted whole numbers, with special emphasis placed on basic facts and their extensions. The students learned about measurement, area, and perimeter in Unit 3. The children are currently working on multiplication and division in Unit 4. Please feel free to assist your child in studying their fact triangles every night. Your child can also benefit from playing Everyday Math games and computer games. This will make learning math concepts much easier, not to mention that they are a whole lot of fun!

We are reading many different genres of literature this year: realistic fiction, historical fiction, traditional literature, fantasy, mysteries, and nonfiction. The students have just completed their first book report with great success. We really enjoyed listening to their mystery book reports! They will be assigned a different book report for each marking period. We encourage your child to read chapter books and nonfiction books at home and in school. Reading nonfiction and reading for longer durations of time are important skills in third grade. We will also become better readers through our writing! This year we will write personal narratives, persuasive, expository and descriptive stories. The children can improve their writing skills by keeping journals/ response logs at home. You and your child can write to each other daily. This is a great form of communication!

Social Studies is so much fun! After learning about how to use, read, and write maps, we learned about the American Revolution and Washington D.C. We wrote our own third grade constitutions in honor of Constitution Day. The First Thanksgiving unit was a blast! Our culminating activity for the unit was a traditional Thanksgiving feast! We even dressed like the Pilgrims and the Native Americans!

There are many other interesting topics to explore, like the Anasazi Indian tribe, Immigration, and Holidays. We are also learning about the customs and cultures of various countries through our country project. Thus far, the students did a wonderful job with the first phase of the project. We cannot wait to hear their final presentations in the second marking period!

FOURTH GRADE NEWS

Fourth graders are off to a fantastic start this year! The students have become accustomed to the procedures and expectations of fourth grade. They are making tremendous strides toward becoming responsible and organized individuals.

In Language Arts this year, students will be learning many new concepts. We focus on small group instruction as well as large group lessons to reinforce skills. Novels are incorporated into the instruction as well as using the anthology. Students will complete book projects at home to reinforce the value of reading. Students will spend a lot of time improving their writing skills during Writer's Workshop. Some examples of writing projects will include picture prompts, narrative, persuasive, and descriptive writing. Each student keeps a portfolio of their writing samples to see their individual progress during the year. We're looking forward to our fourth graders having a positive attitude toward reading and writing.

In Math, we focus on problem solving and relating concepts to everyday life. The curriculum is very hands-on enabling the students to grasp ideas easier. You can practice problem solving strategies at home by asking your child questions relating to everyday experiences (grocery store, paying bills, cooking, etc.). Our goal is have math become more meaningful to their everyday lives. It is a great motivator in the classroom for the student to appreciate the value of their efforts at home.

Social Studies will be taught during the 1st and 4th marking periods. Our curriculum focuses on the growth of New Jersey and its

importance in United States history. Students will learn about the colonization and conflict in our state. The social studies curriculum provides the students with factual information relating to such an important part of our history.

Our Science curriculum is taught during the 2nd and 3rd marking periods. The units include Systems and Cycles, Forces and Motion, and Rocks and Minerals. A constructivist approach is utilized for added reinforcement in learning the concepts. Students are asked to predict, hypothesize, and draw conclusions based on the information provided.

As we look forward to meeting these new challenges with your children, we thank you so much for your efforts at home. The signing of the Friday Folders, monitoring of homework and signing of homework books and the priority you give to school are some of our greatest assets.

FIFTH GRADE NEWS



Fifth grade is off to an exciting and fun start this school year, and we are all getting settled into our routine of being back to school. Time is truly flying by because we are so busy learning new and interesting things!

All the fifth graders are filling their days with lively literature! In Ms. Gelzunas' class students are currently reading the novel Slake's Limbo. Students are having rich discussions about the novel, as well as, making connections with the character. To end the novel, Ms. Gelzunas' class will write an epilogue taking place five years in the future. In Ms. Mallett's class, her marvelous readers are beginning the class novel, Number the Stars by Lois Lowry. This novel is a Newbery Award winner about two ten year old girls living in Denmark during World War II. The students will discover a connection with the novel and topics that they are learning in Social Studies. Coincidentally, Mrs. Evans' energized readers have just finished the novel, Number the Stars. They concentrated on the theme of bravery and the importance of helping others. As they finished the novel, students interviewed family and friends about their ideas on bravery. To demonstrate these ideas, they designed stars for a bulletin board display. The

class will begin literature circles in the next month. Ms. Smith's class is very busy reading their class novel, In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson. The students in Ms. Smith's class are working in literature circles to discuss their novel, while learning about the life of a character very different from their own life! The story begins in China and then takes place in Brooklyn, New York, and they are eager to find out how this story will end! Mrs. Amendt's class is diligently finishing up reading their class novel, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory! The students are being introduced to many different characters with unique personalities, especially Mr. Wonka, a creative candy inventor. As a culminating activity, the students are creating an individualized report for each character in the novel.

In Math, fifth grade has successfully completed the first three chapters in the Everyday Math Program! We have learned how to use the Geometry Template, which is a specialized tool for angle measure and construction. Next, we are moving onto Unit 4 which focuses on Division! Just a reminder to please keep the Family Letter that is sent home at the beginning of each chapter close at hand. The Family Letter has some answers to the Math homework and should be used as a reference if your child is having trouble with their Math homework. We will continue to be working hard in Math, and using games to reinforce the skills taught! Also, continue to practice Math facts!

The big news in Miss Mallett's and Mrs. Evans' Social Studies classes is that they have just finished working on The Explorers Unit. In Miss Mallett's classes, the students will begin their unit on Colonial Times in America. They have many new projects in Social Studies! They are also looking forward to researching the beginnings of America on our Computers on Wheels (COWS) in the near future. Mrs. Evans' Social Studies classes ended their theme of Explorers and Native Americans with a tasty celebration, which included tasty treats similar to the foods of Native Americans. Much thanks to the wonderful parents; the children enjoyed the pumpkin pie, pumpkin bread, succotash,

squash, and corn muffins. They are currently learning about the settlement of the 13 colonies. They began writing a news article about the lost colony of Roanoke. Using the computer lab, the students began researching trade jobs and then selected the most interesting job. During American Education Week a Colonial Trade Job Fair was held, students dressed the part and demonstrated the everyday work each job entailed. Students also created a sign for their shop and then wrote a report describing their trade job! Next, they'll be headed into the American Revolution.

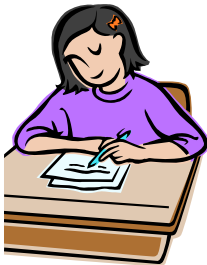
Sensational things are happening in the Science classes! Mrs. Amendt's classes have been working on Ocean Explorations. These students have completed an activity which entailed the construction of an ocean floor model made with a shoebox and playdough. In addition, the young scientists also conducted many experiments that tested the various properties of salt water, fresh water, and water temperature. As this Science unit comes to an end, the focus shifted to learning about ocean life. Students researched a sea creature using the program, "Field Trip to the Sea" and many lovely books from the library (Thanks, Mrs. Ponter, for all your help!). Then students wrote a research report about their selected sea creature! As a culminating activity, students will build a habitat for their sea creatures and then do a presentation about their sea creature! Next, Mrs. Amendt's classes will be studying Space! In Ms. Gelzunas' Science classes the students are finishing up their unit on Space. They are completing their Space Exploration Time Line Project in which students selected the top five space discoveries/missions that have occurred. This project also included their opinion, and their importance/meaning to mankind; students used the COWS and reference books to do their research. Students will present their timeline to their class and defend their top picks!

Lastly, Ms. Smith's young authors have been working very hard on publishing some extraordinary writing pieces. They began the year with their writer's notebook, and then moved onto a descriptive writing piece. Currently, they are working on their Feature Article, which includes facts about a researched topic!

On a final note fifth graders participated in a community relations project in cooperation with Duffield's Farm Market. Each class created a scarecrow based on a particular person, literary

character, or historical character. The teachers would like to thank all the parents and family members who came to help us with this project!

B.S.I. READING NEWS



The BSI readers are working hard in class to build vocabulary, decoding and comprehension skills. Most of them are also busily reading self-selected books at home to not only help increase these skills, but to earn free pizza as well. Pizza Hut is once again sponsoring the Book-It program which enables children to meet monthly reading goals in exchange for a Pizza Hut coupon. The coupon can be redeemed for a free personal pizza at a participating Pizza Hut. The program runs from October through March. Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Pote, along with the generosity of the PTO, host a pizza party at the end of the year for all the BSI students who met their monthly goals for at least five out of the six months. All participants agree that filling the mind with books in order to fill the tummy with pizza is a win-win situation.

Reading Tip – Using Fix-Up Strategies

There are times during reading when stumbling blocks occur; something that's read doesn't make sense or an unfamiliar word occurs. This means that good understanding of the story has stopped. Good readers will use fix-up strategies in order to regain their understanding and get back on track. The following is a list of fix-up strategies parents can use to help their children with various reading challenges:

- Have your child go back and reread.

- Identify what it is that they don't understand (a word, a sentence, or a concept.)
- If it's a word meaning –tell your child to read beyond it and see if its meaning can be clarified through context clues and/ or pictures. Help your child think of synonyms that would make sense in place of the word. If that doesn't work, have your child look the word up in the dictionary. If you tell your child the word's meaning, make sure he or she can retell the meaning in his/her own words.
- If it's the meaning of a whole sentence – let your child look to see if there's a picture that will help with the sentence's meaning. Guide him or her to think about what has happened so far, then reread and read ahead to see if understanding comes. If there's still confusion, tell your child the correct meaning, but again, have him or her retell the meaning in his/ her own words.
- If it's a concept – check to make sure your child has the correct background knowledge for the topic. It may be necessary to build up that background knowledge by using an encyclopedia, going onto the Internet, or doing research at the library. Let your child know that these are additional tools that help better understanding take place.

Using fix-up strategies help to ensure that children gain the full understanding of what they are reading. They are often pleased to hear that adults need to use fix-up strategies, too. When reading aloud with your child, model using a fix-up strategy or two. Turn the table and see if your child can help you figure out your mistake!

RESOURCE ROOM NEWS

Mrs. Leary has enjoyed working with 5th grade this year. The students are learning and practicing daily on how to become effective writers. At the beginning of the year, the students explored how words can motivate, create and build bridges. Words can also destroy, hinder, and tear down bridges. It is our goal, as good citizens, to build bridges with our words. The eight sentence paragraph was introduced and students practice writing supporting sentences and closings.

Identification of good sentence structure is needed in writing; therefore the students identified and practiced declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory sentences. The students all keep a rule book in which each objective and skill taught by Mrs. Amendt is reinforced by Mrs. Leary and logged for future reference. Some sample rule book pages are: Narrative Writing Ideas, Descriptive Writing Samples, Samples of Good Leads, Elaborations, and Good Closings. Word Study Words are reinforced by spelling rules: syllable division, and open and closed syllables, to name a few. The students are practicing daily on becoming great readers. The model of Metacognition was added to the rule book. Students are learning to think about their thinking. TEXT + THINKING = REAL READING. Recently the students have been reading *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. To ensure total comprehension of the story, the students have been jotting down their personal connections to the story, questioning the author, practicing visualizations and inferring what the author implies. Mrs. Leary has a special treat upon the completion of the story where the students will get a chance to create their own invented treat.

The second grade students working with **Mrs. Sanders** are practicing the many skills needed to be good writers. They are brainstorming, creating lists, organizing their ideas, sharing their works in progress, and expanding their writing. They enjoy finding the mistakes that the teacher makes when the group works together on a writing piece.

The students are using the skills they are learning in Foundations to help them read and write more difficult words. They are learning to use a variety of comprehension strategies. They are applying their knowledge as they read books and stories. Recently, after reading a story about a hedgehog that baked a cake, the children used a recipe to practice following directions. They created butter and honey sandwiches shaped like hippos and took them home to share with their families.

The math students have been working with money, base-ten blocks, clocks, and diagrams to solve problems. Please continue

to practice the addition and subtraction facts using the Math Fact Triangles. Knowing the basic math facts is as important to math as learning sight words is to reading. Help your child develop *fact power*. By the end of second grade most children should master the addition and subtraction facts.

COMPUTER NEWS



Keyboarding is stressed in third, fourth, and fifth grades with the typing programs: "Type-to-Learn" and "Type-for-Fun". Students learn to access their computer stations for a broad spectrum of skills. Each successive year, their knowledge base of Computer Literacy is strengthened through progressive lessons. Students gain skills in word-processing.

Third graders use Microsoft's "Scholastic Keys" as an introduction to the components of word-processing through acrostic poems, stories, letters, and other projects. Introduction to Microsoft Word begins in fourth grade. Skill-building and familiarity with this program continues in fifth grade which culminates in creating PowerPoint presentations using a MultiMedia approach.

Other aspects of Computer Literacy include the use of data-base and spreadsheet programs. Students also enjoy being creative in a popular drawing program – "KidPix". In accessing the Internet, they also learn about proper ethics and safety when navigating the web. They use safe Internet sites to do research for projects.

The computer lab is also used for classes to come in with their teachers in the afternoon and type up reports, poems, letters or other creative activities and do research on the web to coordinate and enhance the classroom curriculum.

Students will have access to the Dell Laptops that were purchased with the grant from the New Jersey Governor's School of Excellence awarded to Wedgwood School. The Computers On Wheels (COWS) will go into the classrooms with wireless connectivity so that research or projects can be accomplished in large group settings.



Check out these sites:

<http://guest.portaportal.com/maharris1>

<http://mharris.wtps.site.eboard.com>

SPEECH NEWS



Mrs. Navan, Mrs. DuBray and Mrs. Camporeale would like to welcome all our students back to another school year. As the Speech/Language Specialists at Wedgwood Elementary School, it is our job to help children develop age-appropriate communication skills. The areas we address include: fluency (such as stuttering), voice (such as hoarseness), language development (such as difficulty with listening or expressing themselves orally) and articulation (such as difficulty producing speech sounds like r, s, sh, etc.).

Students are identified to us either through their classroom teacher or by parent referral. Please note that although speech (articulation) errors are very common among students in elementary school, they are no longer developmentally appropriate once a child is 8 years of age. Children with multiple speech errors may need intervention earlier.

We are looking forward to another great year of providing fun, yet beneficial, Speech and Language Services to the children of Wedgwood School. If you have any concerns about your child's speech or language skills, please do not hesitate to contact us.

HEALTH OFFICE NEWS

**Deborah Sernicola, RN
Wedgwood School Nurse**



I would like to take this opportunity to welcome everyone back for the 2008-2009

school year. It is hard to believe this is already my second year, and I am looking forward to working with everyone, and remind you to feel free to contact me should you have any concerns related to school health.

This is a busy time of the year in the health office. We are in the process of completing our annual health screenings. All children grades 1 through 5 will be having their height, weight and blood pressure taken. Children in grades 2 and 4 will have their vision screened and grades 1 through 3 will have their hearing tested. Scoliosis screening will be done in grade 5 later on in the school year. Please note that if a teacher or a parent feels any child is having vision or hearing difficulties and they do not fall into these grades, they need to notify me and they will be screened. You will be notified of any problems should they arise. I do enjoy this time of year because it gives me the opportunity to get to know the new students and reacquaint myself with the returning students.

I would like to remind all parents that all medications (prescription and over-the-counter) that are to be administered during school hours may be done so only with compliance of our Board of Education policy. On file in the health office we must have all of the following:

- 1) specific written instructions from the **physician** (medication permission forms can be obtained in the health office).
- 2) written permission from the **parent or guardian**
- 3) the medication brought in by a **parent/guardian** in its **original** container and **labeled** by the pharmacy.

It is hard to believe that the holidays are already upon us and with it comes the cold weather and cold and flu season. Just a friendly reminder that if your child exhibits any symptoms prior to coming to school i.e. fever, sore throat, malaise (general not feeling well) please do not send them to school. This and good hand washing are the best defenses of spreading illness. It is common courtesy and I know you all expect the same. So far we are doing well in that area and hopefully we can make it through this season healthy

This is a reminder regarding the lost and found. The cold weather has just begun and already we have coats and sweaters piled high in the attendance office. If your child is missing items please check this area which is located outside the health office. **Be sure to label all coats, jackets and lunch boxes with your child's name** to help insure their return. I can not express that enough! This would save a lot of time on everyone's part!

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone in advance for all of your cooperation and support now and throughout last year, my first year at Wedgwood. I am proud to be a part of such a wonderful community.

I hope you all have a happy, health, and safe holiday!!!!

ENRICHMENT NEWS

PEP (Primary Enrichment Program/ Grades One and Two) began the year learning key traits to enrichment. We use several 'bees' to remind us of key ideas for critical and creative thinking. They met Smooth Move, the Bee Friend that reminds students to be fluent, with flowing written and verbal expressions. Next, they met Flexi, reminding them to be adaptable to new and different learning situations. Joining these two were Fancy Do, the bee friend that always adds more (elaboration), P.S., the Problem Solver, and Uno, the one-of-a-kind bee. These 'friends' are constant visitors to remind students of ways to expand their creative and critical thinking.

Enrichment classes for grades three, four and five are actively engaged in learning. We are investigating the five traits of competent learners in Grade Three., Students in Grades Four and Five focus on the complexity of our environment and apply discovery to investigate American history mysteries. All students that participate in this program work on affective behaviors incorporating critical thinking skills. These skills include applying, synthesizing, analyzing, evaluating and creating.

Learning assessment is an ongoing process in each avenue of enrichment.

Students produce evidence of learning through their classroom participation and incorporation of thinking skills in their daily work. If you are looking for ways to connect depth and complexity in learning for your student, check out teacher e-board pages. At Mrs. Mongiardo's you will find that there is a Portaportal set up for every enrichment group, with easy access available.