

Mathematics is much the same, especially when arithmetic is involved. While certain terms change, I learned to borrow when subtracting, today we regroup, but the process is pretty much the same. Over the summer, while going through some of my parents papers I found my kindergarten report card — from Farnsworth Elementary School in Chicago, Illinois. My teacher was Mrs. Smallwood. What was kindergarten like back then?

I remember very little of my kindergarten experience. I remember the day I learned how to skip. I was so proud that I skipped just about everywhere I went for the next several weeks. I remember the day that the boiler burst and the teacher told us to stand on our tables as water came into our classroom. I had never been allowed to stand on a table before and was sure that was not a good idea. But I did what the teacher told me to do. I remember that some firemen then arrived and carried us out of our classroom. But that is about it. No reading, writing, math at all. So I looked at the report card to see if it could tell me what I was supposed to be learning that year. Here is what it said:

*Kindergarten gives the five-year old child a wide variety of experiences planned to promote development appropriate for his age and to provide a background for further school learning. As a result of kindergarten experience you may expect your child to evidence growth in:*

- *Group living by respecting rights and ideas of others, taking his turn, and doing his share.*
- *Poise, self-direction, and self-control.*
- *Physical well-being through exercise and practicing health and safety habits.*
- *Vocabulary, ability to express himself well in speech; and interest in stories and books.*
- *Interest and understanding of his immediate social and natural environment through observation and discussion.*
- *Ability to enjoy and express himself creatively through art, music, and handwork activities.*

That was the entire scope and sequence for kindergarten.

Throughout Lafayette this past week we have been working on these same skills. Reviewing school rules both in the classroom, cafeteria and on the playground. We started our special subjects schedule and have begun art, music and physical education. We have been talking a lot about self-control, sharing and taking turns. Some Golden L's have already been earned. Our summer reading projects have led to discussions about the books that were read. The exact same things that I worked on in kindergarten so long ago. The Common Core Standards can wait a few more days. We need to set up our background for future schooling first.

As I looked at the last page of the report card, I was amused when I read what my 'strengths' were back then. Rhythms for the first marking period, creative handworks for the second. Many of you know that I sing with the Choral Arts Society and was in band and orchestra throughout school. Still do lots with rhythms. Others know that I love to sew, knit, etc. and make a quilt each year for the school auction. Creative handworks on display. Mrs. Smallwood sure hit the nail on the head when she listed my strengths. The same will happen with your children. We will have students good at rhythms and creative

handworks. Many will be outstanding athletes or will take the messages of Peace Class to heart and become great counselors. Others will find an interest in science or math. With the number of students bugging Mrs. Echave about *The Bear Facts*, journalism will continue strong in the future even if more and more it is found on the internet. Elementary school is pretty much the same as it was in 1956. A place to provide all children *a wide variety of experiences planned to promote development appropriate for their age and to provide a background for further school learning*. Glad to know that in this era of what seems to be fast paced change, new standards and new assessments, some things are still constant. For over 80 years Farnsworth and Lafayette have been anchors in their neighborhoods doing what their founders thought was important and still is today. Giving your children a place to grow and explore, observe and discuss as they start a lifetime of learning.