

Dear Parents,

It's so hard to believe that the year has come to an end and this is the last newsletter I will be writing to you all. As can be imagined, this week has been an emotional one as I prepare to leave Plato. When I told the children my news yesterday, the responses ranged from hugs, drawing sad faces on our whiteboard, a few tears and one child who said, "Can we go to recess now?" I managed to keep my composure until tonight when I was able to watch for a second time the wonderful slideshow that Taija put together for me that included pictures of our class from the past two years. When she showed it to us in the lunchroom, we all sang along to "You've Got a Friend in Me" and did all the motions from our seats!

We have spent much of this short week practicing for the end of the year program. The students are prepared seasoned actors/dancers/singers. I, on the other hand, only have two lines and managed to mess up one of them during our rehearsal at The Bridge yesterday. The students all stopped and stared at me and as soon as we were leaving the stage, I heard all about it. I was advised by more than one student to go home and practice my lines.

Thank you for helping your children memorize their lines and come up with costumes. We couldn't do it without your support and encouragement. Tomorrow will be a lot of fun and you will get to see the end result of weeks of hard work by the children. Hopefully this year no one will fall off the stage! Sometimes we do seem to have a flair for the dramatic in our class. :)

We managed to fit in other things this week besides practicing. The students have been cleaning out their cubbies and helping to take things off our walls, and helping to pass out artwork and figuring out what belongs to who when we find something without a name. In all of the excitement today, I completely forgot to hand out journals so I will bring them tomorrow and give them out at The Bridge. We had a lot of fun at Field Day Tuesday. The weather cooperated and it wasn't as hot as we expected. Our class game was Noodle Hockey Relay Race, which was basically using a noodle to hit a beach ball into a goal and then racing back and

having the next person on your team take a turn. After dealing with the wind blowing the beach balls every which way, the kids asked if we could just play soccer instead. We played a spirited game of girls against the boys until we were interrupted when it was time to switch activities.

We received our yearbooks and were able to meet up with a couple classes to sign each other's books. Today we returned our library books to the library and it felt like a sense of normalcy in a crazy week. The children are so attuned to our daily schedule and last week when Ms. Steph came for a visit on Thursday, we were not able to do our weekly library visit. Several students asked why we weren't going and were confused. Today we went and stepped away from all the activities at school and just took a breath. I was able to read two really good books by Rebecca Doughty to the children called *Before You* and *Oh No! Time to Go!: a book of goodbyes*. The first one is about how we enrich each other's lives. From the text: *I was a flower with no pot, I was a polka with no dot. I was a tail without a wag, Just a bean without a bag*. The message of the second book is that for each goodbye, there's always a new hello. We had a good discussion about the meaning of the books and one student said, "I know why you picked that book. It's because you're saying goodbye to us." They're so young but they're so wise.

I haven't even said my final goodbye tomorrow and I'm already thinking that maybe we should plan a picnic this summer so I can see everyone again. Letting go is not easy, especially when I have only love and gratitude for Plato and the time I have spent with your amazing children. You and your children have been the greatest blessings to me. It's been an amazing journey and I wouldn't have missed it for the world.

With sincere thanks,
Leslie