

February 5, 2016

Dear Families,

Hello and happy snow day! I thought I'd take advantage of a little extra time to update you all on class happenings. Thanks for reading!

### Reading

We are nearing the end of our unit on non-fiction reading. Over the past week or so we've moved on from reading for the main idea/supporting details, and have focused on growing ideas about the texts we read and between two different texts. We've been using "thought prompts" to help us think about our texts and to develop our thoughts into bigger ideas. Some of these prompts are...

- I can picture how this goes...
- The weird thing about this is...
- This makes me think that...
- But I wonder...
- It's important to notice that...
- This reminds me of...

Next week we'll begin looking at narrative non-fiction (biographies) to notice how these non-fiction texts differ from informational texts. We will be working on summarizing biographies by focusing on story elements such as character, setting, problem and solution. This work will continue for another week or so after the February break.

### Writing

Students have continued to work on writing their informational books over the past few weeks. Many have now completed a first draft and are working hard on the revision and editing process. A big part of revision is encouraging kids to elaborate on their writing by adding text features, quotes, statistics, vignettes, or descriptive detail. Our goal is to "publish" these books next week or during the first week after break. Our next writing unit will focus on persuasive writing.

### Math

As you know from the Unit 5 family letter, our current math unit focuses on fractions and multiplication strategies. We have been using fraction circles as a hands-on manipulative to help us understand fractional parts and equivalent fractions. Earlier this week I sent a letter home about the importance of daily fact practice at home to

### Upcoming Dates:

**Feb. 15-19:** February Break, no school

**Feb. 26:** Musical Instrument Projects Due

**March 1:** Dioramas Due

**March 4:** Maine Animal Museum (tentative-details to come)

**March 18:** Professional Development, No School

**April 7:** Maine Night Concert

support your child's fluency with his/her multiplication facts. Thank you for your support with this. I will send home a set of fact triangles next week.

### Science

Yesterday we enjoyed a fantastic visit from the Center for Wildlife—pictures below. We met four animal ambassadors (Byron the barred owl, Henry the porcupine, Freyja the peregrine falcon and Zipper the corn snake) and learned a lot about their stories as well as the adaptations these animals have to help them survive. We will be starting our group research project next week. Students will use various texts to help them learn about the habitat, physical characteristics, adaptations, food web, and life cycle of their animal. Students are also asked to create a diorama of their animal and its habitat at home. These will be due on March 1. A letter about this project went home in blue folders with your child's report card.

