April 3, 2016

Dear Families,

Hello and happy spring! We have a busy week ahead with MEA state testing, a visit to the Museums of Old York, our Maine Night Concert on Thursday evening, and a performance by the high school Jazz Band on Friday morning. We will also begin working this week on preparing our portfolios for our upcoming student-led conferences. I am looking forward to time with each of you soon to celebrate your child's progress in third grade. Please read on to see what else we have been working on.

Maine Night Concert
Thursday, April 7

Students should arrive in the classroom at 5:45 wearing their purple CRES t-shirts!

Reading

Our current reading unit has us focusing on getting to know the characters in our books well. We are learning to pay attention to character's words, actions, and behaviors, and to use these to build ideas about a character's traits. We are working on building bigger theories about our characters by noticing patterns of behaviors as we follow characters through the book. We will also be using our theories about characters to help us make strong predictions as we read forward. The unit's next bend will focus more on story structure—identifying the character, setting, problem, events and resolution in stories, and using these structural elements to help us understand characters and the struggles they face or lessons they learn. This will lead us to thinking about the life lessons that our character learns, or identifying the theme of our books. As we progress through this unit, we will also move from reading partnerships to book clubs. Students will select books within "clubs" and will be learning to have meaningful discussions about their books with one another.

Writing

We continiue to work on persuasive writing. Children have been writing many different persuasive speeches, but have now selected one to take through the writing process. Again, a large focus of our writing time is on revision strategies that help us elaborate on our ideas. We are learning to consider our audience as we determine what to keep (and what to delete) from our writing. A big focus has been using paragraphs within our speeches. In this unit, students really are writing their first multi-paragraph essays. I hope to record students reading aloud

their completed speeches and will try to post these on our website for you to view.

Math

We recently completed our 6th unit in math and are now moving on to unit 7. This unit will include an exploration of liquid volume using milliliters and liters, number stories involving volume, mass, and length, and a more in-depth study of fractions. Students will be using many hands-on materials to develop these concepts. For example, students had the opportunity to measure water using many different sized beakers on Thursday. They enjoyed working together to determine the liquid volume of various containers. Please continue to have your child study his/her multiplication math facts daily at home. I am seeing a lot of progress with fact power here at school!

Maine Studies

Our study of Maine continues this week with a visit to the Museums of Old York on Wednesday. They have put together a new program for us this year entitled "The Farmer and the Sailor," based on symbols found on our Maine flag. We look forward to our visit there! If you signed up to volunteer, please plan to be in our classroom by 10:00 on Wednesday, April 7. Thanks!

Questions to ask your third grader…

- What's your favorite Maine Night song?
- What have you written a persuasive speech about?
- What have you learned about adding a new paragraph when writing?
- Our recess schedule recently changed. Have you played with any new friends at recess?
- How many miles have you run?
- Can you describe someone's musical instrument project?
- What's going on in the class read-aloud, Because of Winn Dixie?
- What's the best book you read this week? Why?
- How would you describe the character in your book? What makes you say that?
- Have you written a "bright spot?"
- What's your favorite morning meeting greeting?
- Have you played any math games this week?