

March 1, 2015

Dear Families,

It was great to have a full week back together this week. Everyone seems refreshed from their week off and ready to work hard. Please read on for a recap of some of what we've been working on and what's to come...

Reading

We brought our non-fiction reading unit to a close just before the break. We will be putting our skills to the test as we begin our Maine Animal Research Project next week.

Although much of our reading time in the next few weeks will be devoted to developing research skills, students will also be given time to read fiction texts each day. As we head toward the spring term, students will be expected to do more writing about their reading. Students will use writing to develop their ideas about their books, and they will be given time each day to discuss their thoughts with a reading partner. Having a short discussion with your child about the book he or she is reading at home can be very beneficial. Some questions you might ask are:

- Who is the main character, and how would you describe him/her? Why?
- Has your character changed at all through the book? How? Why?
- What was the most important part of what you read today?
- What part made you feel sad, scared, excited, etc. Why?
- What is a question you are reading to answer? What do you think might happen?

Writing

Students have been doing some amazing informational writing as they work to create their own non-fiction book about their chosen topic. We have been learning strategies to elaborate on our ideas and make our writing more interesting for our readers. Many students are working on adding text features such as charts, fun-fact boxes, and bold faced text in their books. Next week I expect that many

Important Dates:

March 9 & 10: Maine's Birthday Celebration

March 16: Dioramas Due

March 20: (Tentative) Date for Maine Animal Museum

March 20: Term 2 Report Cards Go Home

April 3: Student Led Conferences, No School

April 20-24: Spring Break

April 30: Maine Night

students will focus on refining and editing their work and will be ready to “publish” soon! Be sure to ask your child what their books is all about!

Math

What do right angles, quadrangles, parallel lines, trapezoids, dodecagons, rays, line segments, adjacent sides, and polyhedrons have in common? Geometry! This is the focus of our 6th math unit, which we assessed on Friday. This unit is very heavy in vocabulary and we have been creating a chart of new math terms as we go along. We use many concrete items such as 3D blocks, geo-boards, pattern blocks, and straws and twist ties to help us build our understanding of new math concepts in geometry.

Unit 7 focuses on multiplication and division. This is a great time to begin more fact practice at home, especially focusing on $\times 3$, $\times 4$, $\times 6$, $\times 7$, $\times 8$ and $\times 9$. Look for the Family Letter to come home on Monday with more information. In addition, we have now completed our first math journal, and I will be sending these home next week.

Science

In Science we have begun learning about Maine animals. So far our work has focused on animal classification, and learning about the the life cycles, food chain, habitats and adaptations of animals. Next week students will be choosing a Maine animal to research at school. Students will work in small groups and use school resources, both print and online, to research their animals. There is an important at-home component of this unit coming soon: students will be asked to create a diorama representing their animal using a shoe box and other materials of their choice. You may want to start thinking about locating a shoe box to use for this project, and look for additional info coming home in the next week or so.

Maine's Birthday

Maine became a state on March 15, 1820. Because third graders learn so much about Maine, we will be celebrating Maine's Birthday with some special activities on March 9 and 10. Students will learn about Maine state symbols, make a Maine flag, learn about some of the famous authors, artists and politicians who came from Maine, and more! Students will create and film Maine commercials in small groups, and we will watch these at a special culminating assembly.

