

May 26, 2015

Dear Families,

It's hard to believe that May is already more than half over. At this time in the school year I just keep asking myself where the year has gone? It's been such a pleasure to teach your children this year, and I'm already thinking of how much I'll miss them when they head off to fourth grade!

Even though we are reaching the end of third grade, we still have many exciting things happening in class, so read on to see what's been going on...

Testing

As you know, we devoted a lot of time last week to taking the state test, the MEA/Smarter Balanced Assessment. This was a challenging test but the kids really tried their hardest and I am proud of their efforts. We are all looking forward to returning to a normal week this week!

Reading

Our book clubs are up and running and kids have been doing a fabulous job being members of their clubs! We have begun each week by deciding what book to read and assigning pages for the week. Kids are coming prepared to their meetings with their assigned pages read and a few things that they'd like to discuss jotted down on a sticky note or in their reading notebooks. We've been practicing how to have a conversation about a book, taking turns and discussing one topic at a time. We will be leaning about how to ask questions of book club members to push thinking and to get kids to elaborate on their ideas.

Our mini-lessons this month have focused on strategies that help us get to know our characters well. We have been doing a lot of thinking about our character's inner traits and motivations. We are also looking closely at how stories are structured and learning to anticipate what might happen next in a story.

Important Dates:

Mon., June 8: 3rd Grade Beach Day!

Wed., June 10: 3rd Grade Field Day

Thurs., June 18: Step Up Day

Fri., June 19: Last Day of School, Half Day



Writing

We finished up our unit on Persuasive Writing last week by recording ourselves giving speeches. Each writer chose a piece they'd written and worked on making it longer and stronger. Most of these pieces became longer essays containing several paragraphs, including a thesis statement and a conclusion. Pretty impressive work for our third grade writers indeed! Once our persuasive pieces were in top shape, we read them to one another in class. I hope to post the videos of this to the website sometime this week. Our last writing unit will involve fiction writing through fairy tales. It should be a fun way to end our year!

Math

Our current math unit focuses on measurement. We have reviewed units of measure in both the US Customary and Metric systems for length, weight, capacity and area. One new type of measurement was learning about volume. As always, we incorporate many hands-on materials when learning about these mathematical concepts. Kids enjoyed using a pan balance to weigh various items in grams, filling boxes with cubes to learn about volume, and exploring capacity by pouring liquids into different containers. The remainder of the unit will explore data collection and analysis. We will be making various kinds of graph and will be finding the maximum, minimum, range, median and mean of our data.

We continue to work on mastering our multiplication facts. We are the first class in our pod to have passed all of our individual fact tests and have earned "light bulbs" for each of the houses in "Multiplication City." Our next challenge is to be able to increase our speed and accuracy when completing mixed fact tests, so keep up that fact practice at home! :)



Science/Social Studies

We have nearly completed our unit on life in Early Maine. Your students have been learning about the Native tribes who have lived in Maine for hundreds of years, and also about life for the early European settlers. Our final science unit will explore our Earth and will focus on weather and natural disasters. We kicked off this unit with an amazing visit to the Sky Lab last week.