

November 16, 2014

Dear Families,

We've had a very busy and productive month at school. Next week we will take time to reflect on our work so far in third grade as we put together portfolios to share at our student-led conferences. I look forward to this time to connect with you and your child. We will celebrate achievements and will set goals for the rest of the year.

Here's a break-down of what we have been working on lately in class...

Reading

We recently embarked on our second reading unit which focuses on character study. Students are learning ways to get to know their characters well. As readers, our job is to use our mental movies and our own memories to try to step into the character's shoes. We work to build connections between our own lives and the lives of our characters. As we continue in this unit, we will be learning how to pay attention to character's thoughts, words, actions, and feelings in order to build big ideas (or theories) about our character's personality traits. As your child reads at home, you can foster conversations about characters by asking your child...

- What is your character like? How would you describe him/her? (brave, shy, smart, lucky, sneaky, etc.) What makes you say that?
- What kind of problems does your character face?
- Does anything in your character's life remind you of your own life? Of another book or character?
- How does your character react to problems?

Math

Our third math unit focuses on measurement. We are learning to measure the perimeter and area of shapes, and have been using different units of measurement from the Metric and US Customary Systems. Students are also working to become more proficient with adding and subtracting multi-digit numbers. It is still very important to practice basic addition and subtraction facts at home, as adding and subtracting bigger numbers rests in students' automaticity with their basic facts. I recommend practicing a few minutes each night.

Writing

Our unit on personal narratives is coming to a close. Students have picked out a favorite personal narrative from their writing journal and have brought this piece through the writing process of revision and editing. Many students are now working on publishing a second piece. These "published" pieces will be placed in your child's portfolio. They are by no means perfect pieces of writing, but instead represent your child's growth and development in the writing process. We look forward to sharing our writing with one another and with you!

Science

We have begun exploring our new science unit on Force and Motion during our last two "Science Fridays." Last week we conducted three different experiments involving cars, ramps, and balls of different masses. Students are not only learning about force and motion, but are also practicing using the scientific method as they design and conduct experiments. We are integrating our science curriculum with our language arts and math curricula. On Friday, students made math connections as they measured and recorded data. We read a story about a girl who learns a lesson about force when she goes bowling for the first time, and we used writing to explain why a marble will roll farther when it is pushed on a wooden floor instead of on carpet.



We learned a lot about York during our visit to the Town Hall last week. Check out the website for more photos of the vault and map-making!

Looking forward to seeing you at conference time next week! Remember that these conferences are student-led.