

December 15, 2016

Dear Families,

I hope that you've been enjoying your December so far! There is a lot of excitement in the air, yet our class has still been working hard at school. We are looking forward to a few fun festivities on the 21st and 22nd (see the end of the newsletter for more information).

Here's what we've been working on....

Reading

Our current reading unit on mysteries has given students the chance to "read like detectives" as they collect clues, think carefully about suspects, and try to solve the mystery before the crime solver in their book does! The students have really loved stepping into the detective's shoes in this unit. Although the unit focuses on mysteries, it really is a unit that teaches important reading comprehension skills such as prediction, identifying story elements and retelling/summarizing text. We'll be finishing up this unit before the break and moving on to nonfiction text in January.



Writing

Our current writing unit is focused on writing informational text. Students recently began a long term project of creating their own informational book. They spent last week organizing a table of contents and beginning to plan their chapters using outlines or other graphic organizers. This week kids have been doing a lot of drafting and have also been learning about elaboration and revision strategies.

Math

As you know, we have been working hard in math to learn strategies for multi-digit addition and subtraction. Although several strategies are taught, kids will eventually be encouraged to find the method they prefer and to master that method. The second half of the unit focused on developing conceptual understandings of multiplication and division. We assessed Unit 3 this week and begin the first few lessons of Unit 4 before the break.

Science

We have been exploring our Force and Motion unit with many different experiments to help us understand how force (pushes and pulls), gravity and friction affect objects in motion and objects at rest. Last week we explored

Upcoming Dates

**Dec. 22: Class Holiday Party,
10:15-11:25
Book Exchange
Last day before break**

Jan. 3: School Resumes



magnetic force, and we will do a few experiments involving static electricity later this week. We have been exploring the scientific method as we design and conduct various experiments. I love seeing how excited kids get as they engage with hands-on science activities, and even better is hearing them use new vocabulary like “hypothesis” and “observation” as they discuss their findings with one another.

We participated in Computer Science Education Week last week with “An Hour of Code.” There is a link to code.org to our website. This is a fun site that engages kids in code building activities. Feel free to enjoy these with your family at home—no passwords needed!

Fun Stuff

Our pod has a few fun activities planned for the 21st and 22nd. On Wednesday the 21st we will rotate through the pod doing some gingerbread math activities. On the 22nd we will have our class holiday party from 10:15 to 11:25. You are welcome to join us for games and a craft if you’d like.

As part of our party, we will do a **book-exchange**. Each child will be asked to bring in a new or used book for another student. I encourage children to “shop their shelves” and give away a book from home. This is a great way to pass along books we’ve already read and enjoyed, and is also a fun way to recommend books to others. Books should be wrapped so that everyone has a present to open on Thursday the 22nd. I will send a letter with more information about this in the next few days.

We will be doing a craft on Thursday the 22nd. I have all the toilet paper tubes I need, but I could use a few paper egg cartons.

