

March 25, 2015

Dear Families,

Thank you to all who came to our Maine Animal Museum today. We had such a great turnout and the kids were really excited to share all their hard work. We appreciate your support! With this big project behind us, we are ready to move on to some new endeavors. Read on to see what we've been doing and what's coming up.

### Reading

We have devoted part of our reading workshop time to our research this month. We practiced reading non-fiction books about our animals and learned to take notes on important facts we wanted to put in our presentations.

Next week we will launch our mystery reading unit. There are many wonderful mystery series written for this age group, and over the next few weeks I will be asking your children to read widely within the mystery genre. We will be learning about how most mysteries are structured, and learn vocabulary associated with this genre. Our study of mysteries will also help to deepen students' understanding of narrative structures in general, as well as learn some of the main differences between genres.



Another new element to our mystery reading unit is the introduction of book clubs. Students will be reading the same book or series of books with 2-3 other students in "book clubs." We will be doing a lot of work around learning how to have a meaningful discussion about a book. This discussion is key to deepening understanding of what's been read. Working together in a book club is no easy task, and we will continue our work on this throughout the rest of the school year.

### Math

As you know, our current unit focuses on fractions. Last week we reviewed basic concepts in fractions, and this week our work has focused on finding

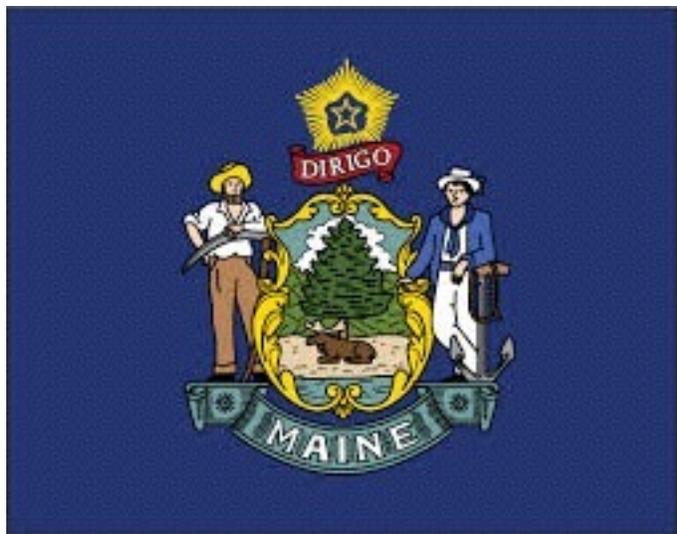
equivalent fractions and comparing fractions. We use fraction cards as a visual to help us with this work. Unit 9 returns to multiplication of big numbers, so don't forget to keep practicing those facts every night!

### Writing

With our informational books now published, and our Maine animal projects done, we will be launching a new writing unit on Persuasive Writing. Today students began by writing a mini-speech to give to Mr. Murphy explaining why we should have more recess time each day. Students began realizing today that they are natural persuasive writers because they already know a lot about how to argue for things that they want to see changed! We will be learning to choose important topics, how to write thesis statements that are "brave and bold" and how to organize our writing into paragraphs, using persuasive transition words.

### Social Studies/Science

This week we finished up both our current science unit on Maine Animals, as well as our social studies unit on our state of Maine. Your kids have learned a lot! Our last science and social studies units of the year focus on Life in Early Maine and Extreme Weather and Natural Disasters. More information to come!



### Conferences

I am looking forward to meeting with you all next week for Student Led conferences. We will spend time next week putting together a sampling of work for you to look through and reflecting on our progress so far this year. Conferences are a time for celebrating successes and for setting goals for the remainder of the year. If you have other concerns you'd like to discuss, please email me to set up a time to talk. Thank you!