

March 16th, 2015

Volume 4, Issue 7

Ms. Drummer's Monthly Dish

Mark Your Calendar

3/17: Winter report cards go home

3/20:
Reading/Art Activity with U of M Student Athletes;
1:30-2

3/25: Spring Pictures

3/26: UMMA Field Trip;
10:20-1-30

3/31: Dress up your favorite book character Day!

4/1: March is Reading Month Calendar due

4/1: March Pizza Hut Book-It Reading Calendar due

4/3-4/10: Spring Break

4/13: School resumes

Dear Families,

From Ms. Drummer's Desk

Spring is right around the corner! We have a lot of exciting and fun filled events approaching as we progress through the remainder of the school year.

Another **HUGE "THANK YOU!"** to our Room Parents Mrs. Francis (Faith's mom), and Mrs. Powell (Brianna's mom) for volunteering their time to organize our fabulous Friendship Party last month! The students really enjoyed sharing Valentines cards and making crafts for their classmates. We had a great time, and it was nice to have other parents attend the party and help out as well!

The M-STEP is replacing the MEAP. Students will be tested in the areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. Students will be assessed next month and the test will be given online. In preparation for the assessment we have been going to the computer lab on Wednesday afternoons to familiarize ourselves with the online tools that will be available for students to use during testing. We have also been identifying testing vocabulary and strategies as we are completing some of the online practice tests. More information will be shared as the new state assessment approaches.

Next week all fourth graders will visit the University of Michigan Museum of Art! **Please sign your child's permission slip.** Students will be provided with a docent led tour of the museum, and then complete a Korean ceramic art project. We will depart school around 10:20 after having a morning snack, and return to school around 1:30 to eat lunch. **Please make sure that your child brings a healthy morning snack, and a bag lunch to school on Thursday, March 26th!**

Tomorrow March 17th your Cougar will bring home their winter report card. Please spend time with your child to review their effort and progress since the fall marking period. This is a great opportunity for your Cougar to be recognized for the progress that they have made. It is also very critical for all students and parents to continue to set goals in areas that need more attention and improvement. I hope that I have your support in continuing to motivate *all* students to always do *their* personal best in *all* social and academic efforts. Also, please make sure that you sign the white report card envelope and have your child return it to school as soon as possible.

As the weather is changing please make sure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather. We want to ensure that all students remain safe and healthy!

As a friendly reminder our class website can be found at <http://msdrummer.weebly.com> All newsletters will be posted on the class website.

It is imperative that you check your Cougar's Weekly Homework Assignment Sheet and their Homework Folder daily. Please sign your Cougar's Homework Assignment Sheet after you have seen their completed homework and please remind your Cougar to return all of their homework to school on the appropriate due date.

As always if you have any questions, comments, and or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me.

Educationally yours,

Ms. Drummer

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Curriculum Highlights



Stuck in the Book Nook This week new guided reading groups will begin now that winter reading levels have been assessed. We will begin new books while continuing to use important reading strategies to strengthen overall reading comprehension! Some reading strategies to reinforce at home include asking questions, making connections, visualizing, and inferring. We will continue to focus on reading nonfiction books, which is a great reinforcement for the nonfiction reading that students are doing for their research/biography projects. Please know that the end of the year reading target is a level R.

This week students will begin giving book talks! Book talks are similar to television commercials. Students are to present a short two minute mini-talk that advertises a “just right” book that they have read. The goal is to entice their classmates without giving away surprising parts. Students are to practice their book talk ahead of time and they are allowed to write out what they want to say. For two weeks I modeled how to give a great book talk and I provided students with clear and specific expectations. Please ask your Cougar about their book talk and encourage your Cougar to practice ahead of time. ☺

As a class we are currently reading, the award-winning book The Watsons go to Birmingham-1963 by Michigan based author Christopher Paul Curtis. This is one of my favorite books that I always enjoy reading with students. The book is full of humor and some real life situations that many families and children encounter. Please ask your child to tell you a little about the “Weird Watsons” if he or she has not done so already!

Please encourage your child to read “just right” fiction and nonfiction books at home and at school. All students are required to read for at least **20 minutes** each night.

This is the last month for the Pizza Hut Book-It Program! Our Pizza Hut Book-It Reading Goal for this month is 450 minutes! Please encourage your child to track their nightly reading on the Reading Calendar! We have a few students who have participated each month since October and they will be recognized next month! ☺

Additionally, to celebrate MARCH IS READING MONTH all Cougars have a calendar with different activities to complete this month. After completing four activities in a week, please initial your Cougar’s calendar and have them return it to school to be checked by Mrs. Burau or Ms. Kelly-Sell for a special prize! **At the end of the month students can bring in their completed calendar and enter to win the GRAND PRIZE!**

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

-Nelson Mandela



The Pencil Is Mightier Hopefully your Cougar has been buzzing about the African American they are researching for their research/biography writing project! We began this project by first reviewing the characteristics of biographies. To practice the skill of note taking while reading a published biography, our class read the book The Real McCoy: The Life of an African American Inventor written by Wendy Towle and illustrated by Wil Clay. For the last two weeks in lieu of our weekly reading response letters, students have been reading their biographies and taking notes to learn about their subject's early life, childhood, family, education, interests, talents, achievements, and obstacles. With the help of Mrs. Bureau students have also been using reliable online resources during their media center time to research their subject!

In the coming weeks, during our writing workshop time we will use our notes to practice writing topic sentences, drafting body paragraphs, writing strong introductions and powerful conclusions for our biographies. Students will also spend time in class using an editing and revising checklist to self-revise and proofread their drafts before publishing their final drafts.



It All Adds Up In our Everyday Math curriculum we have completed unit 6, and we have started Unit 7: Fractions and Their Uses. The Unit 7 Family Letter was sent home last week. Some of the concepts and skills that will be taught include: locating fractions on a number line, comparing fractions, ordering fractions including improper fractions and mixed numbers, using models to explain why equivalent fractions are equal, writing improper fractions as mixed and whole numbers, and adding and subtracting fractions with like and unlike denominators.

Prior to beginning unit 7 students spent time completing math re-assessments. Students were re-assessed on math concepts and skills from Unit 1-Unit 5 in which he or she was not yet secure. Essentially, I wanted to give students the opportunity to show all areas in which they may have progressed since their first math assessments. You will see this reflected on the math portion of the report card for the winter marking period.

I strongly encourage families to utilize everdaymathonline.com. Each student has been provided his or her login information and password. I have taped this information inside of their Homework Folder. The directions were included in your Curriculum Night Parent Folder on how to access eSuite on everdaymathonline.com. Students can practice their fact fluency, play math games, and access the student reference book to assist with homework. In addition, there are online animations that model how to use math algorithms taught in the math curriculum.



The World Around Us In science we are still studying matter. We have learned about different properties common to all matter that include weight and volume. In the coming weeks we will investigate how heating and cooling can change solids, liquids, and gases from one state of matter to another. Students will learn about evaporation, and condensation as we conduct investigations in class about matter changing states.

In social studies we have completed our study of the Southeast region, and have begun learning about our very own region, the Midwest. While reading about the Midwest region we learned about specific landmarks in the Midwest that include Mall of America, Detroit, Wrigley Field, Mount Rushmore, and the Gateway Arch. We also discussed why the Midwest has been nicknamed “America’s Heartland” and “America’s Breadbasket.” Students are currently learning about how farming has changed over time in the Midwest region.

March Birthdays!



- Mr. Brooks 3/1
- Ryleigh 3/17
- Savannah 3/25

