

October 20th, 2014

Volume 6, Issue 2

Ms. Drummer's Monthly Dish

Mark Your Calendar

10/17: Geometry
Map Rough Draft
Due!

10/21: Parent
Teacher
Conferences; 4-7

10/24: Scholastic
Book Orders Due

10/29: Parent
Teacher
Conferences; 4-7

10/31: Geometry
Map Project Due

11/3: Parent
Teacher
Conferences; 4-7

11/4: No School;
Remember to
Vote!!

11/6: Parent
Teacher
Conferences; 4-7

11/19: Picture Re-
takes

11/24: Report
cards go home!

From Ms. Drummer's Desk

Dear Families,

We have successfully completed the first round of the NWEA and SRI Testing! This week begins our first round of Parent Teacher Conferences. If your conference has been scheduled for Tuesday, October 21st or Wednesday, October 29th, a reminder letter was sent home with your child last week. Parents with a November conference date will also receive a reminder letter within a week prior to conferences. If for any reason you are no longer able to keep your scheduled day and or time please contact me prior to your scheduled conference so that we can reschedule your conference.

Please make sure that you are monitoring your child's homework nightly. Each child has a red Homework Folder that he or she is expected to bring to and from school **everyday**. Please check the folder and their Homework Assignment Sheet regularly. There are important school announcements and classroom materials that come home everyday. It is still very early in the school year, and unfortunately many students have already been inconsistent with returning homework. Homework reinforces the concepts and skills that we are learning at school. Regular practice at home with parental support is strongly encouraged.

The cold weather is quickly approaching! Please make sure that your student comes to school dressed appropriately for the weather. Please contact me by Sunday, November 2nd if you are interested in being a Room Parent. I am interested in having at least two parents to assist with hosting and arranging our

classroom parties for the school year. I would like to have a Fall Harvest Party next month prior to Thanksgiving Break!

Internet Essentials is a program offered by Comcast Xfinity for families with at least one child who qualifies for free or reduced lunch. Those accepted to the program will receive Internet access for under \$10 a month and will have the opportunity to purchase a computer for just under \$150. For more information, please visit: <http://www.internetessentials.com> and/or call 1-855-846-8376.

Lastly, I am very excited to share that our classroom website is almost complete! Next, month I will send home a short note that will let families know how to access our class site. The class newsletter will be on the website to view important news. However, a hard copy of the newsletter will be sent home to parents who would like to continue receiving a hard copy of the newsletter.

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

Your Child's Dedicated Teacher,
Ms. Drummer

Curriculum Highlights



The Book Nook In the upcoming weeks we will continue to talk about how good readers think about their reading and consider various reading strategies, such as summarizing, predicting, inferring, asking questions, and making connections. In addition, we have learned how to record our books on our reading lists. We spent time discussing characteristics of different kinds of fiction and nonfiction. We have started writing our reading response letters, which provide the children, and I with the opportunity to have ongoing dialogue about our reading through weekly letters. Also, we have started our guided reading groups, during which students will work with me in small groups to tackle more “just right” texts. In the coming weeks, we will continue to build our reading stamina by spending more time engaged in independent reading. The fourth grade reading level target for November is Level P. In order to obtain the most accurate data, students will be reassessed in November closer to the end of the marking period. Your child’s reading level will be reported on the November 24th report card.

Please continue to encourage your child to read at home – this is an excellent accompaniment to our work in the classroom! Please encourage your child to read fiction and nonfiction books. Thank you to all the parents for participating in the Scholastic Reading Club. Your book orders provide more books for our classroom library! As stated in last month’s newsletter I have enrolled our classroom in the Pizza Hut Book-It Reading Program. I have provided each student with a calendar. It is your child’s responsibility to keep track of their daily reading using the reading calendar. Your child will receive a certificate for a free Pizza Hut personal pan pizza for each month that he or she meets the required reading goal! Please encourage your child to actively participate!



The Pencil Is Mightier We have launched our first unit of writing! Students are writing personal narratives. We began by studying mentor texts. We generated story ideas by webbing meaningful people, places and things; thinking about first, last and important times in our lives; and considering moments associated with strong feelings. Our writing mantra will be “I’ll just do the best I can and keep going,” with the emphasis of getting our ideas down on paper and worrying about revisions and edits later. We spent a good amount of time distinguishing “seed vs. watermelon” stories and how to build our story in a step-by-step way. Next, we’ll be considering how we tell a story by maintaining our point of view and embellishing with details that make sense. We’ll also think about the message in our stories. We’ll finish our unit with some revising and editing in preparation for our author’s celebration. We are utilizing a writing curriculum based on materials for grades 3-5 written by Lucy Calkins, an established author of writing instruction. In the meantime, please support your child’s writing by encouraging him or her to add regular entries to his or her writer’s notebook at home. And feel free to ask your child if you can peruse the notebook – it’s a great way to learn more about what creative thoughts fill his or her mind!

“Once children learn how to learn, nothing is going to narrow their mind. The essence of teaching is to make learning contagious, to have one idea spark another.”

-Marva Collins



Can I Have a Word with You?

The students have been working to develop a list of “Words to Learn” based on their own individual spelling challenges. They will continue to build on this list as they encounter words that they don’t know or can’t spell in their reading and writing. Each week throughout the year, students will learn eight words from this list through a process that entails building the words with magnetic letters, repeatedly saying and writing them, doing “buddy tests” during which partners take turns testing each other, writing sentences, making connections, and taking a final test. The goal behind the process, part of the district’s literacy program, is to help students formulate good spelling strategies that will not only help them learn to spell *these* words but also become better spellers overall!



The World Around Us

We have started our Nature’s Recyclers science unit. The students have enjoyed observing our composting worms, which we returned to nature last week! We also read the book Diary of a Worm. During the read aloud we were able to make some connections to our classroom observations, and identify some facts from the book. We have discussed decomposition and studied the sequence of the decomposition of trees and bison. The students have also viewed visuals of scavengers and discussed how various scavengers make decomposition occur. Before returning our worms to nature we set up decomposition cups to compare how quickly cucumbers and newspaper would decompose with worms in the cups and without worms in the cups.

This week we are setting up our next investigation to see whether or not plants in organic material grow differently than those grown in inorganic material. While we wait and observe our plant investigation we will be introduced to another one of nature’s recyclers, fungi! Students will compare a bare wooden plug to a plug covered with fungal mycelium, and then set up an experiment with both plugs to observe how the mycelium plug covered with coffee grounds obtains nutrients from organic materials. Our other experiment with fungi will involve growing bread mold! We will see which conditions are best to grow mold! Our science curriculum continues to be very engaging by offering many opportunities to learn!

We have also started Social Studies Alive! Regions of the United States. In the first part of our curriculum we have been practicing basic map skills such as using a map key, compass rose, and locating specific places using lines of latitude and longitude. We have also used special purpose maps that include annual rainfall, population density, and elevation. We will have the opportunity to study the different geographical features of each region as we progress through the rest of our social studies curriculum.

*“The mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be ignited.”
- Plutarch*

Curriculum Highlights continued



Sum News As explained in the Unit 1 Family Letter, our first unit of the year reviewed geometric concepts, including parallel, perpendicular, intersecting lines, lines, line segments, rays, and polygons. To reinforce these concepts and compliment the math unit, each student will complete a Geometry Map Project! This assignment will be completed at home. Parental supervision is strongly encouraged. However, the student must complete this project. It would be helpful to assist your child with time management and to ensure that they complete all of the requirements. The students will have the opportunity to share their projects in class and then I will display them in the hallway! Please make sure that your child brings their completed final project to school on **Friday, October 31st**. If for any reason your child will need a poster board donated to them to complete the project, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am looking forward to seeing the students display their knowledge and creativity!

Last week we completed unit 2 which covers place value, adding and subtracting multi-digit numbers, making ballpark estimates and organizing data by reading graphs and finding “landmarks” such as the minimum, maximum, range, median, and mode. Students took the Unit 2 Test this morning, and they will take the Unit 3 Pre-test tomorrow. Unit 3 will cover multiplication and division. Students will solve number sentences, and practice identifying factors, multiples, products, quotients, dividends, and divisors. We will also practice measuring to the nearest quarter inch. We will spend a considerable amount of time in class practicing multiplication and division facts, in addition to homework skill drill practice in all four operations!

Finally, we’re continuing to work to master quick recall of basic addition and subtraction facts. Please continue to do so at home as well. Unit 3 will bring the added challenge of securing multiplication and division facts. Please continue to watch for Math Study Links and Unit Family Letters to stay connected to what we are doing in the classroom! A letter with directions for Xtra Math, which provides more practice with fact fluency, was sent home a few weeks ago.

Lastly, I am once again strongly encouraging families to utilize eSuite! 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 everydaymathonline.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.

October Birthdays!

- Ms. Drummer 10/25
- Balan 10/26



