

DECEMBER 6, 2013

Miss Sprouse
Second Grade News

Dear Parents,

I hope you had an enjoyable Thanksgiving break! I really enjoyed meeting with all of you to discuss your child's progress. Please let me know if you would like a copy of the notes I went over with you and I would be happy to give you a copy!

Today you should have noticed that I stapled the November Pizza-Hut Book It coupon inside your son or daughters blue reading log folder. In just a couple of weeks I will be attaching the December one, so please continue to keep the copies in the folder until the end of each month.

I am very excited about the holiday season, and I have many fun activities planned for the students! I am currently in the process of planning the holiday party with a few parents and information should be sent out next week with what items we will be in need of! Just a reminder that we have 24 students if you are planning to send something in! The holiday party will be on Friday, December 20th from 8:45-9:45. In addition, as I mentioned at parent night at the beginning of the year, we will also be having our "Polar Express" party that same day! Students are able to wear their pajamas to school that day! I will send a reminder when it gets closer. As always, any questions or concerns feel free to email me at Samantha.Sprouse@d300.org

Highlights from the past two weeks:

- Thanksgiving Feast-The students had fun being pilgrims and Indians at our feast. Pictures are now on my website from that event!
- Aria and Leilani were students of the week!
- Jacob's High School buddies came to read with the students for the last time. The second grade students received a certificate, bookmark, pencil, and a book for their participation in this great program!
- Students went "shopping" at the SPOT store and bought many great items! I had a pizza lunch with Tyler P, Sienna, and Alan.
- The Lake in the Hills president came and was a mystery reader for the whole 2nd grade team on November 20th. We enjoyed listening to him read and asking him lots of questions!
- Happy birthday to Leilani and Emma ☺
- We visited the holiday shop and the students were able to get a lot of their holiday shopping done early!

Here is what we have been learning...

Reading: This week all students had the winter benchmark assessment for reading. This is a measure of their fluency and reading speed. I cannot express to you how happy and proud I was with our class score and all the individual scores. The growth that has occurred since the fall benchmark has been very impressive! We will continue to have our "Fluency Fridays" where we focus on pace, phrasing, expression, and punctuation, and students will continue to graph their scores each week! Please continue to have your child read to you at home for 20 minutes a night. As I mentioned to you at conferences, it is great to have them re-read a text a few times to work on fluency and expression. It is with these best practices in mind, that their speed and reading abilities will only continue to increase! Our whole group reading focus this week was fables. We read several fables and discussed the different story elements and the moral. Starting next week and leading up until the holiday break, we will be reading folktales. Folktales are stories that have been passed on from generation to generation and explain why things are the way they are. Our phonics focus this week was vowel teams. As mentioned at conferences, students are expected to be applying the phonics strategies when they read as well as when they write.

Writing: This week we began a 2-week personal narrative writing piece about family traditions. Students learned what it means to have a tradition and they created their own lists of family holiday traditions early on in the week. We spent the rest of the week completing a graphic organizer and focusing on the details about their tradition. The end product will be a 4 paragraph personal narrative about their favorite family holiday tradition. We are focusing on writing short paragraphs, using transition words, and converting information from a graphic organizer into full sentences. We will continue to work on this project next week. Our focus next week will be writing the introduction and conclusion. Be sure to ask your child what his or her tradition paper is about!

Math: Right before break, we finished up our 2-digit addition and subtraction unit. You should have received your child's test at conference time if you attended! This week, as explained in my common core guide for parents, we began our next unit, which is all about 3-digit addition and subtraction. This unit is similar to the last and therefore is a shorter unit. Within this unit, we will continue to work with place value and understanding what value each of the individual digits has. We will continue to try different strategies such as the "open number line", "split strategy", and "traditional way" for solving problems. Be sure to ask your child about these ways and see if they can show you how to do all of them for a problem such as: 245+314. Students are encouraged to draw a visual and explain their thinking when solving problems. Students learned this week how to do mental math in their head. This involves adding and subtracting multiples of 10 and 100 up to 900 using different starting points. Next week, our focus will be 3-digit subtraction and a continuation of mental math. Our next math assessment will most likely be December 17th or 18th. I was VERY pleased with the huge increase in scores for the timed math fact fluency tests. I am confident that with the extra practice at home, even more gains can be made before the end of the quarter!

Social Studies: Right before break, students learned about Native Americans and the Pilgrims in celebration of Thanksgiving. We have finished our unit on "energy" and this week we began our next social studies unit on "Holiday Traditions Around the World". This unit will cover different countries and their holiday traditions and customs. The two countries we focused on this week were the United States and Mexico. Next week, we will be learning about what traditions exist in China and Germany. With each country, we learn some non-fiction information and make a souvenir to help us remember the unique facts.

Is your child tired of reading the same books at home? Are they lacking motivation some nights? I have a great resource to solve these problems! Please be sure to check out www.wegivebooks.org
This is a free website that has access to thousands of digital stories that can be read online.

Save the Date!

Early Release Day 12/13	End of the 2nd quarter 12/20	Winter Break 12/21-1/5
Students will have an early release day on Friday, December 13 th . District staff will be working in the afternoon on 2 nd quarter report cards.	The end of the 2 nd quarter is Friday, December 20 th . Report cards will be sent home on Wednesday, January 15 th .	There will be no school from 12/21-1/5. School will resume Monday, January 6th. I hope you have a wonderful break!