

News and Notes From Second Grade
December-January 2007-2008

It was a pleasure meeting all of our parents during Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences! We now know more about your child and can better serve individual needs and strengths as the year progresses. Please help us keep the lines of communications open by addressing any concerns, questions or comments with notes or messages.

Let's take a look at our curriculum for the next few months.

Language Arts - Second graders are developing greater reading fluency and comprehension. We still spend time working on decoding strategies for those difficult words, and learning how to read for meaning and understanding. Author studies are a favorite way to read for learning and for fun. Some authors we love are Kevin Henkes, Jan Brett, and especially Debbie Miller who visited our school in November. Through these wonderful books we learn about story structure, themes, character traits, descriptive language, and rich vocabulary.

We continue our daily work with Bradley Phonics. This program explores four different sounds each day and concentrates on some words that have those letters and sounds. English can be a complicated language that doesn't always "follow the rules". We find however, that the work we do with phonics really helps our young students develop skills needed for both reading and writing.

Writing of all kinds goes on in our classrooms on a daily basis. We sometimes write stories, written responses to reading, make lists, and keep journals for both math and language arts.

Math - In math we are developing the concept of place value to 100. This means the value of a number according to the "place" it holds. Counting by 10's, and 5's is essential for understanding how numbers progress up to 100. The math addition and subtraction facts 1- 18 should be thoroughly memorized by now and answers are expected to be given in 5 or less seconds. Now that we are working with higher numbers knowing the basic math facts is essential.

Learning about money and counting money is "a natural" in our study of numbers 1-100. Please be sure your child knows the name of all the coins and their value. Daily practice at home adding and subtracting coins will be of tremendous help to your child. Try making change!

Science - Our first Nature Walk which focused on plants, was a huge

success and most enjoyable with the warm weather. Our Nature Walk leaders are wonderful! We thank them for their time and enthusiasm!

All three classes are currently exploring a science unit called *Balance and Motion*. We balance arch-shaped, paper objects on a popsicle stick taped to the edge of a desk to find the “balance point” and to try and see if the objects are in a “stable position”. We learn that the use of counter balances (clothes pins) only stabilize an object if the clothespins are attached below the point of balance. The children love this exploration and the rooms are noisy with excitement as the kids discover how to make something balance! We will use toys and wheeled systems to further our understanding of *motion*.

Social Studies - Our fall study of map skills continues as we mail out our Flat Stanleys all over the United States! The children are very excited to see the Stanleys when they come back to us. Hopefully they will bring news about where they have been and the adventures they had while living with a “Host Family”. We will use our maps to show the places they have traveled!

In the New Year our social studies curriculum will bring us to a study of Kenya, Africa. We will explore literature, art, music, animals, geography, culture, food and crafts from this colorful and beautiful country. Our focus will be on comparing our life here in Acton with life in modern-day Kenya. The children will enjoy discovering many similarities and differences between the two countries. If you have any resources from Kenya to share with our classes we would love to hear from you!

We enjoy teaching your children! Your continued support both at home and in school is most appreciated!

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