



November 25, 2009

An Update from Mrs. Durkin's Class

Dear Families,

We've had a very busy couple of months. Thank you to all parents for either coming in already or scheduling conference times to discuss your child's progress and set goals for the next trimester. Your support and dedication to your child's education is greatly appreciated.

In **Math**, we've reviewed a variety of computation algorithms and have chosen our favorites based on efficiency and accuracy. We have begun a challenging, yet important unit on Fractions and Percents. We'll be learning several games to assist in adding and comparing fractions. Another main focus of the unit is on identifying equivalent percentages for halves, fourths, fifths, sixths, eights and tenths. So far, they've been doing a great job using what they know to figure out what they don't know. Anytime you can have a conversation about fractions and percents you come across in your every day life, the easier these skills will come.

In **Reading**, we are focusing on drawing conclusions. We are using several Chris Van Allsburg books, which are perfect to practice this skill since he incorporates a lot of foreshadowing clues throughout his stories and usually leaves it up to the reader to infer what happens at the end. We also just started a new read aloud, 11 Birthdays by Wendy Mass, which the class is really enjoying. Ask them about the plot and which movies or other books it reminds them of.

In **Writing**, we have begun our new study on personal essays. Students are working on noticing small details around them and coming up with big ideas regarding these things. They are creating a thesis to state this big idea and then describing three examples/reasons to support their big idea. One example that I modeled for the class was how weather can affect people's moods. Discuss your child's ideas with them over the long weekend and brainstorm some examples they can use to support their thesis!

In **Science**, we have continued learning about weather systems, with a focus on the water cycle and types of clouds. Students went on an 'Incredible Journey' through the water cycle as a water molecule and wrote a story about their experience. The students will be very excited that New England Cable News weather forecaster Matt Noyes will be here at Nixon on Thursday, December 10! We are looking forward to his presentation - thanks so much to the Nixon PTO Cultural Enrichment committee for setting it up!

In **Social Studies**, the focus has been on explorers and students have been working on their explorer projects which they will have the opportunity to present to the whole class. Students also had the opportunity to become archaeologists and went on a diving exploration to a sunken ship searching for artifacts.

Have a safe and relaxing Thanksgiving break!

As always, feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Amy Durkin

amy_durkin@sudbury.k12.ma.us

978-443-1080 x 4126