

October News from Mrs. Miller

Dear Parents,

You will be receiving a monthly newsletter from me throughout the year, which will also be posted on the grade 5 website. Each newsletter contains information about the academic and social skills your child has been using throughout the month. It will also give you an idea of any important upcoming events for fifth graders. When you ask your child, "What have you been doing in school?" As we all know, usually the answer is, "Nothing!" Use this resource as a way to begin the conversation to connect home and school.

Your fifth graders have been busy this past month... Here is a glimpse of what they have been up to:

Reading: The book your child is currently reading is Hatchet by Gary Paulsen. This is a super book to begin the year with. The children have been discussing the book independently, in partners and also as a whole class. Vocabulary and comprehension activities have been coming home for you to see. These activities demonstrate your child's skills in interpreting the text and using context clues to understand difficult vocabulary.

Writing: The children are in the midst of creating rough drafts of a personal narrative. We have gone through many stages to get to this point. They began with a small, important moment in their lives, learned how to story tell, rather than summarize, and spent time with a partner expanding their piece. Next will be the revising and editing stages before publishing the work in the computer lab. You will be able to read your child's creation during the fall conferences.

Math: We started the year working on factors, multiples, prime and composite numbers. Ask your child what each of these terms mean and to give you an example! We then moved on to various methods of multiplication. Throughout the unit, the students have been asked to try all the methods to see why each one works. Partial product multiplication demonstrates the VALUES of the numbers being multiplied, while traditional multiplication is simply an algorithm to memorize. Solving problems using clusters is a useful mental math strategy. At the end of the unit, your child will be able to choose which multiplication method he/she finds most efficient, and will be able to use that method exclusively.

Social Studies: We have entered the Pre-Columbian Civilizations! Beginning with the Maya, your child will be learning about life in the Americas prior to Columbus “discovering” them. While the Maya have odd and sometimes cruel rituals, the class has been extremely interested to learn about this culture that most did not know existed. Next up... the Aztecs and Incas.

Science: “When do we get to do the weather report?” is a question Mrs. Abdal-Khabir is asked daily. The students are excited to learn about the differences between weather and climate, what various weather instruments look like and how they are used, what different fronts mean, and how precipitation is formed. They cannot wait for the opportunity to become junior meteorologists. I’m sure you will hear all about it when they get started!

Open Circle: The students have been amazingly vocal during open circle and we have gotten so many lessons accomplished already. Our class really seems to care about their learning environment and want to create a classroom in which everyone feels safe taking academic risks and asking questions. “Fair does not mean equal” is a phrase that the children in room 24 rarely need to hear. Each student happily accepts the challenge work or extra help that is given to them with a smile and a “thank you”.

It was so great meeting most of you at Back to School Night. As I said in my presentation, please email any questions or concerns you have throughout the year. The more I know about your child’s feelings towards school and the work he/she is given, the more productive our school year can be.

Thank you in advance for your support throughout the year,

Deana Miller