



Samarco News

Nixon School

Can you believe that your child is about 75 days away from being a middle schooler!!

Reading

After reading individually with each of the children in the beginning of the month, I was very pleased with the improvements that ALL of the children have made in their reading, comprehension, and fluency abilities. I have restructured the reading groups and we have been looking at legends and myths. The children have read a series of legends and myths and are answering multiple choice type questions as well as planning a thoughtful open response answer with relevant evidence from the text. We are then taking that plan and writing a complete, cohesive open response. The children are really improving with their abilities to determine the important evidence from the text to prove their thoughts/ideas as well as enjoying the reading of the fun legends and myths.

When your child is doing his/her weekly independent reading (two and a half hours PER WEEK minimum!) you should sit with them from time to time and have s/he read aloud to you for a little bit. Then you should be able to ask some pointed questions that can always aid them in understanding what they read....

1. Why do you think the author used that word to describe _____.?
2. Have you been able to do any detective work about what may really be going on here?
3. What do you think the author is implying here?
4. Let's stop and make an inference together at the end of this chapter!

Writing

We have begun our poetry unit. What budding little poets we have in our room! We have looked at free verse poetry as well as examples of show not tell poems. We have discussed how poets choose their words carefully in order to create pictures and moods for the reader. They already have so much knowledge of figurative language and it greatly shows in their poems, thus far.

Be on the lookout for an email regarding a "Poetry

Jam" where we will invite you to come in to listen to some of the wonderful poems that your children have written. They are working hard and I know you will be as proud of them as I am!

Secret Pals and Special Person

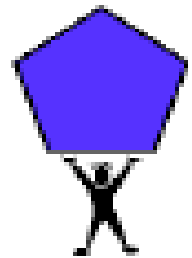
The students in this class truly went above and beyond when writing a special letter and valentine card for their secret pal. I hope they shared them at home! I think it made everyone in this class feel a little bit more special and cared for - especially appropriate when the secret pal was NOT necessarily a close friend. I think somehow it always means a little bit more when it comes from someone you don't know as well!

Also, don't forget about our weekly feel-good opportunity of "student of the week" We continue this on a weekly basis and at the end of the week the "special person" brings in a special guest. Thank you to those of you who have taken time out of your busy schedule to share something about yourself; the class loves it! Ask your child when his/her turn is coming up.

Math

We've just begun digging into our Geometry unit! In this unit, we have worked with important mathematical ideas about two-dimensional objects by exploring polygons and coordinate geometry. Your child has been exploring plastic shape pieces called Power Polygons to increase their knowledge of polygons and their properties. As the unit unfolds, your child will work with:

- polygons with different numbers of sides, from 3 up to 10.
- polygons (particularly triangles and quadrilaterals) whose angles and sides follow certain rules.
- regular polygons (with all sides and angles equal)
- similar polygons (of different sizes, but same shape and proportion).
- congruent polygons (exact size and shape the same - but different orientations)



When your children have assignments to work on at

home, talk about them together and participate when asked. For example, how does your child find and draw a polygon that is “hidden” on a coordinate grid? When you and your child try to draw angles of a certain number of degrees - without any tools, just estimating - how close can both of you come? Is a square a rectangle? Is a rectangle a square? What *are* the rules for these polygons?

The children have been doing an excellent job of creating our Geometry Junkyard Bulletin board in the room. It is so interactive and I find the children using it often to recall a vocabulary word or to define a word or concept. I urge you to continue to be on the lookout of Geometry in the world around you...and have your child bring in any examples that they may find!

Social Studies

The month of February was filled with discussions about King Phillip’s War as well as the Pequot War. Did you know that the King Phillip’s War was fought nearby? Do you know who King Phillip is? Ask your child, as they should know.

We also looked at slavery. The children were very engaged in this topic. We looked at it from the point of view of a slave. The children learned what it was like during the West African slave trade, how it was on the slave ship from West Africa to America, and then what life was like for a slave in America.

Lastly, we have begun to discuss the disagreements that are brewing between the colonists and the British Parliament. Your children have looked at the different acts or laws that the British Parliament passed in order to contain control over the colonies as well as make money in order to pay off debts that were obtained in the French and Indian War. Wow...February was a busy month in Social Studies.

Science

Students continue to enjoy Mrs. Durkin’s chemistry unit called “Mystery Powders and Crystals...” The six household chemicals that they have been testing and manipulating are:

salt, sugar, citric acid, plaster of paris, baking soda, and cornstarch. They have talked about the different properties of these substances and are now learning about the different *indicators* that can be used to test for the presence of these different items. For example, vinegar can be used to indicate the presence of baking soda! Each of the powders is identified (for now) with a different color sticker dot. The students will eventually discern “which is which” by comparing the different indicators with the properties of the six different powders. Very hands-on and **VERY** fun!

DARE

We had our very first DARE lesson with Officer Rocky during the last week of February. The children are excited to work with Officer Rocky to learn important ways to say “no” when faced with difficult situations

in the future. DARE will meet every Tuesday for 10 weeks. There will be an essay that the children are asked to write at the end of the program. Be on the lookout for the requirements and dates that drafts will be due. As always, we will also have a DARE graduation that you will all be invited to attend. I will be informing you of this date and time as it draws near.

Spelling

Based on our mid-year assessments, we have structured new spelling groups. Your child may continue to meet with the same teacher that they started off the year with, however might be meeting with a new teacher for spelling. We based these groups on the needs of the children based on the children’s strengths and weaknesses evident on the mid-year assessment.

Report Cards/Conferences

Spring conferences are just around the corner! If you would like to meet with me to discuss your child's progress, we have two scheduled conference days on Early Release Wednesdays. Those dates are March 10th and March 24th. These fifteen minute conferences will run from 1:15-3:30. Please let me know via email if you are interested in having a conference and what time during above time frame is best for you. Once I hear from you, I will schedule you a conference and email you the day and time.