



February 1, 2008

## An Update from Mrs. Durkin's Class

Dear Families,

Valentine's Day is quickly approaching. Students have shown much excitement and enthusiasm about the tradition of "Secret Pals." As a class, we have discussed the procedures and expectations of this activity and have agreed upon a couple of ways to celebrate each other through simple yet sincere acts of kindness. I have attached an explanation along with "due dates" for this activity. Please sign and return the bottom portion by Tuesday so I know all families have the necessary information.

MCAS is also quickly approaching and I just wanted to remind families of the dates so you can ensure students are present.

ELA (March 24-April 4)

Anticipated 5th Grade Dates: (3/24, 3/28, 4/1)

Math, Science, Social Studies (May 12- May 23)

Anticipated Math Dates (5/13, 5/15)

Anticipated Science Dates (5/19, 5/20)

Anticipated SS Dates (5/22, 5/23)

As we have reached the halfway mark in the school year, the rigor and difficulty of the material being covered has continued to increase. We have started our Chemistry Unit in Science, carrying out a variety of experiments to discover properties of matter, along with physical and chemical changes that occur when chemicals are combined. In Math, we have begun our Fractions/Decimal/Percent Unit, and in Reading and Writing our Poetry study is off to a great start. Students have been working on identifying and understanding figurative language used in poems, and have been writing their own



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poems incorporating these poetic devices. Needless to say, it has been a very busy couple of weeks.

As I'm sure most of you are aware, the flu season has hit our class hard this year. Many of you have been proactive regarding these absences and your efforts at home to catch students up when they are out are appreciated. On top of extended illnesses, there has been a considerable increase in absences and dismissals since winter break, and the actual numbers were quite surprising.

In the past 18 school days (in just our class) there have been:

32 absences, 5 tardies, and 16 dismissals

This totals 53 times that a student has missed some or all of the school day in the past 18 days! I am hoping as the flu season settles down and with our combined efforts, we can have a healthier 2nd half of the year with an improved attendance rate.

Thank you for your continued support, it truly makes a difference in your child's continued success as learners.

Sincerely,

Amy Durkin