

April 4, 2008

# News from Mr. Whiting's Class



**Dear Family,**

I'd like to update you on some of the latest goings-on in fifth grade!

## **Poetry**

Just look to the Nixon School fifth graders to find the next generation of Frosts and Dickinsons! In every classroom of fifth graders, you can hear discussions about what makes a poem poetic, how to create imagery, applying metaphors and similes, using descriptive language, the importance of sensory details, and tools of the poet. Revising and editing -- important steps in both poetry and prose -- are emphasized. Your children are enthusiastic authors, and the results are extraordinary. One poem has already come home, and you'll see the latest creation shortly!

## **Science**

In Mrs. Durkin's room, your child's class is wrapping up the Chemistry unit. Their final assessment for Chemistry is just around the corner. Next up will be a few hands-on and energetic technology and engineering lessons before starting reviewing for the Science and Technology MCAS test. Your fifth grader will be tested on all science units and information learned in third, fourth, and fifth grade. If you are interested in seeing what the test looks like, you are welcome to check out last year's test at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2007/release/g5sci.pdf>

## **Research Project**

We have just begun an exciting research project in social studies. Students have the opportunity to pick any topic learned earlier in the year to study more deeply. With books and pre-screened web sites as sources, students read, take notes, organize their information, and write about their chosen topic. All research and writing is done in school. In a few weeks, students will begin developing a creative way to present what they learned, whether through a slideshow, a board game, a short movie, role-playing, or any number of other ideas. Students will complete that part of the project at home. I am thrilled by how intensely every student has delved into the research!

### **MCAS Testing for Fifth Grade**

Thank you so much for helping your fifth grader perform his or her best by ensuring a good night's sleep, providing a healthy breakfast, packing a healthy snack, and getting him or her to school on time. We had three successful days of Reading MCAS testing. All students worked hard and took their time. Don't forget the rest of our **fifth grade** MCAS dates:

Math (Tuesday, 5/13; Thursday, 5/15)

Science (Monday, 5/19; Tuesday, 5/20)

Social Studies (Thursday, 5/22; Friday, 5/23)

Please be sure your child attends school on these days, unless ill, because the two to three hours spent out of class making up just one day's test results in missing precious time and important lessons.

### **Field Trip Chaperones**

Thank you to all of you who volunteered to be chaperones on the upcoming field trips. Unfortunately, we need only two from this class. They will be Denise Robillard and Karen Bowler.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss your child, please be in touch. At any time in the year, I am always happy to talk on the phone or meet with parents, including during the early dismissal afternoon on April 9th.

Sincerely,

Brian Whiting