

October 2007

Dear Parents,

As I stated at Back to School night, each month you will be receiving a letter from either myself or your child describing the academic topics and social skill concepts being taught in fifth grade. After the first week of school I sent home a quick note letting you know about the assessments we had been working on, how we arrived at our class rules, and general academic information. Now, four weeks into the year, I have a lot more to say!

During Class Meeting, another format of Open Circle, we have been discussing inclusion and exclusion of others. The students brainstormed ideas of how to include everyone in a variety of settings throughout the school. My philosophy is "you don't have to have play dates with everyone in the class, but you need to be respectful and work cooperatively with each individual".

Factors, multiples, square, prime and composite numbers are mathematical vocabulary terms your child should be comfortable using to describe a number. At Back to School Night, many of you had the opportunity to solve your child's number puzzles. We have continued to create and solve more challenging puzzles while utilizing the correct terminology. Competence with these concepts is needed to be successful in upcoming math units this year.

Hatchet, by Gary Paulsen, is a novel about survival. During class literature, your child has been predicting and summarizing, answering questions for comprehension, and learning vocabulary through context clues. Ask your child to tell you about the main events in the book.

In social studies we began with a brief unit on latitude and longitude, as well as some other basic geographical terms. We discussed why it would be important for us to study this unit before moving on to learning about explorers. The students decided that latitude and longitude must have aided the men in their explorations. Did it? We will find out....

Our pilot writing program, Lucy Calkins Units of Study, looks promising.

After attending her conference with other Nixon teachers, I feel inspired. Narrative writing is our first unit, which will last approximately one month. We began our narrative by listing special people in our lives, and a "small moment", as Mrs. Calkins calls it, with that person. This will eventually become a published piece of writing. I can't wait to read them!

Weather is the hot topic in science. We switch classes on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays for one hour in the afternoon. Ask your child to describe the information he/she is learning with Mrs. Abdal-Khabir.

I hope that your child has already told you about the exciting topics he/she is learning in fifth grade. For those parents whose child says "we didn't do anything in school today", I hope this will assist you to initiate more conversations that will elicit more information from your child!

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please e-mail me at:

firstname_lastname@sudbury.k12.ma.us

or leave me a voicemail.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Deana Miller