

Notes from the Nixon Library Media Center Fall 2007

Greetings from the Library Media Center! It seems like just yesterday that we were coming back to school and now it is December. I so look forward each year to seeing how your students have grown over the summer. One of the joys of being a Specialist is being able to watch your students grow and mature both personally and academically from year to year. You really do have extraordinary children who are a joy to work with each week.

Again, I have to say THANK YOU for your incredible support of the Fall Book Fair. Thanks to you the school was able to qualify for \$500 in free books which were split between the teachers and the library. This allowed us to add some popular titles to the collection, which the students have been very excited to read.

Again this year, the Library Media Center is focusing on our Information Literacy curriculum which is designed to help students become successful students and researchers in the 21st Century. As a way to expand student access to on-line databases, I would like to call your attention to wonderful FREE resources which are available from either the Goodnow Library in Sudbury (<http://www.library.sudbury.ma.us>) or the Boston Public Library (<http://www.bpl.org/>) Both libraries offer access to on-line databases such as World Book Encyclopedia, Kids Info Bits (which serves the research needs of students K-5) and Infotrac Junior (which allows access to full text magazine articles). In addition, you can e-mail a librarian 24 hours a day, seven days a week to have reference questions answered. This service "24/7" is staffed by professional librarians who answer your Email questions and give you the web sites so you can follow up on your research. How do you access this wonderful service? All you need is a library card (available from your local library) and a computer and you have access to these and other great resources.

If you are interested in Sudbury history, the Sudbury Archives can be a great source of information or just a way to satisfy your curiosity!. Again, you can access this from the Goodnow Library web site listed above.

Of course, both sites also allow you to search their catalogs to see what books are available. Happy searching!

Now for the update of what we are doing currently in our Information Literacy curriculum at the General John Nixon School. Information Literacy starts with an understanding of books and the development of critical thinking

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skills. We have designed a curriculum which advances these skills year to year.

KINDERGARTEN students have been learning all about the library and are now taking a 'tour of the library' which allows them to explore new authors as well as reread old favorites. We are almost finished with the Fiction Section and will soon move on to the Non Fiction section. You might want to ask your child if they have discovered a new 'favorite' author.

FIRST GRADE students have been trying to compare and contrast character in different story books. At the moment, we are reading stories with Pigs as the central character. You might want to ask you son or daughter how Mrs. Pig changed her children's eating habits, (Clue, she fed them only Ketchup for a few days - ask you child what happens next).

SECOND GRADE students have spent many weeks listening to mystery stories which they loved and we are now reading the books of Chris Van Allsburg. The students seem to love both the stories and the illustrations. Some of your students were very surprised at how different the book *Jumanji* was from the movie! One student even commented that the pictures in the book were "wrong" until I pointed out that the book came before the movie.

Understanding how to use the library successfully has been the major focus of the year so far for the **THIRD GRADE** students. We have been talking about how FICTION books are files by the author's last name while NON FICTION book are filed by categories so that all the Non Fiction books on one subject are together on library shelves. When you take your child to the public library, encourage your son or daughter to try to find books without using the OPAC. It might be interesting to see if they can find the books that they want this way.

Using the Dictionary and understand how Guide Words can help us find information is the major focus for the **FOURTH GRADERS** at the moment. As part of this unit, your sons and daughters will be introduced to both print and electronic dictionaries so that they will be able find out how to spell words, check on the correct pronunciation, find out where words come from or check on the parts of speech whenever they need this information.

The Almanac has been a big hit with the **FIFTH GRADERS**. They have all been fascinated with who shares their birthday but also discovered that there is some serious information in an Almanac as well. We are also now beginning a

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unit on WEB EVALUATION, a topic that is very important for all students to understand. As I tell the students, when they use a book in the library, it has gone through many steps to make sure that the information is correct but none of these safeguards are place on the internet so THEY have to be able to judge how accurate the information is that they find on the web. This is a difficult concept for most students but I hope that this unit will help students begin to think about how they acquire information.

We hope that this overview of the Information Literacy program proves helpful for you.

Enjoy the winter season,

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