



WOODSTOCK NEWSLETTER

Date: February 29, 2008

WOODSTOCK SCHOOL OFFICE

Dear Woodstock Families,

I made a wish for a snowy winter this year...I wanted the kids to have plenty to play in. I am so sorry! I guess that saying about being careful what you wish for is true. I think we'll all be thankful for spring this year.

The Maine Educational Testing begins next week at WES. This is a very important time for us. We hope our students will try their hardest and truly demonstrate what they know. The students' tests get scored to see how well they are meeting Maine's Learning Results.

For the WES staff, this is a time when we can see how well we are doing with teaching to the standards set by Maine and also our MSAD#44 Curricula. Please help your child by making sure they are well rested and have good breakfasts each day. Urge them to work slowly and do their very best. When they come home, take a minute to ask about the testing. We'll begin with our MEA Kick Off Breakfast on Monday, March 3rd. Then Tuesday, we begin. It is important that students are in school on time each day because we start right off.

The WPTA will be meeting on March 6th. Our guest will be Dr. David Murphy. Please come join us for this meeting to get an update on issues that are affecting our district. There will be time for questions. We always welcome new faces and new ideas at our meetings. Hope to see you there.

The X-Country Ski Program will have a very busy month of March. We hope they have a great time at The Bethel Inn and at Carter's X-Country Ski Center. The skis, poles and boots will need to be returned on or before April 4th. Information will be coming home about our end of the season awards dinner.

I want to thank Mr. Andy Steck for a great basketball season. Our 4th and 5th graders learned so much from him and had a great time.

Think about daffodils, tulips and red-breasted robins!!

Sincerely,

Jolene M. Littlehale

Teaching Principal

KINDERGARTEN - Miss Wilkey

Hello everyone! It feels like we have hardly been at school this month. We enjoyed our Valentine's Day celebration and the 100th day of school. The students brought in 100 collections that were fun to explore. We discovered that 100 coins are heavy and 100 Cheerios are light.

The kindergarteners have been very busy learning about maps. We have made treasure maps and read books about pirates, who are known for map making. They have learned about the compass rose and map keys. We will begin to take a closer look at Maine and the area we live in.

In Math, the kindergarteners are measuring and will soon be focusing on addition. Measuring has been a lot of fun. We have been keeping track of our amaryllis plant. It was 9 inches tall on February 15th and after vacation, it was 21 inches tall. We had estimated how much it would grow over vacation. Most of us did not think that it would grow so tall! When we begin addition, we will play lots of games that teach how to combine two numbers. The students are already becoming skilled at figuring out word problems in their heads or with their fingers.

The students are making a lot of progress in Literacy. They are reading and writing very well. They are learning many strategies for figuring out unknown words. Chunking is a strategy that many now know. They like to look for little words or word parts that they know inside of a bigger word. We have been working with the word families '-ook' and '-un'. The students have become experts on finding these word parts in other words. We have also learned about blends, which make reading and spelling words easier. The students are gaining confidence in trying to spell words on their own while writing.

Students are writing more frequently in their writing folders and are able to write more sentences at a time. They are encouraged to add on to pieces of writing as much as possible. We will begin to look at story writing. Many students write wonderful pieces about things they have seen or done, but don't often make up a story. We will learn about the parts necessary to write a short story. This group is quite imaginative so the stories should be very entertaining.

Upcoming plans include a unit on weather. Many of the students are interested in weather and would like to know more. Over vacation many chose to keep a weather log so that we could fill out our weather graph for February. It will be an exciting unit for all of us! Have a great month!

GRADE ONE - Mrs. Wentworth

First graders have worked hard this month despite the fact that we have only been in school 14 days, including 2 delayed starts, one early dismissal, one morning field trip, an afternoon Valentine party and a full day of activities to celebrate the 100th day of school. Phew! Is it spring yet???

In honor of dental health month, we spent one morning at Dr. Mason's office. Dr. and Mrs. Mason, and a hygienist showed the children what each of their jobs entailed. First graders especially enjoyed being squirted by "Mr. Thirsty" and learning how a filling is made. They were very good listeners and learned a lot. I was very proud of them. I'd like to thank Mr. Prentice and Mrs. Southworth for going with us as chaperones.

In reading, we have continued to focus on reading strategies and different comprehension techniques. We are now using reading response journals where the children use story maps and draw pictures during read-aloud time to help them remember important parts of a story. They are also responding to what they read to themselves with different activities such as making a *Cool Cone Scoop*, *A Give Me 5* hand, and a *Story Puzzle*. We finished our Read-Aloud book called *Sarey by Lantern Light* which we enjoyed very much. Many of the children are hoping that Susan Beckhorn will write a sequel to this story. Our new read-aloud is *Trumpet of the Swan* – another one of my favorites.

In writing, we did a series of mini lessons on "Painting Word Pictures." Students brainstormed some "picture words" (nouns) for a poem, then went through a revision process by adding on details at the end of line with a verb and a where, when or how word/phrase. The name of their poem was *I know it's winter when...* Everyone did a super job. Our new focus is learning how to write "how to" stories.

In Social Studies, we have been working on a mapping unit. With all the missed days and special interruptions, it has taken us longer to do everything we need to. However, the children completed a project that helped them visualize and understand the different names for the places they live. At the same time, they have had a great time studying different maps, learning directionality terms and the names and location of all seven continents. We will continue with this unit to learn more about mapping symbols and keys, and how to use these things when drawing our own maps.

We finally made it through our subtraction unit with everyone doing well on the final test. At the same time, we anxiously counted down the days to the 100th Day of School – finally reaching it on the 15th. Everyone brought in a collection of 100 things consisting of pennies, paper money, cars, crayons, dried hot peppers, beads, cereal, M&M's, candy hearts, and a toothpick poster. Some of the day's activities included a 100-heart scavenger hunt, walking 100 steps from our classroom, putting together 100-piece puzzles, making a 100-bead necklace, writing our first names in a 100-grid chart and coloring the resulting pattern, counting different ways to and from 100, and numerous movement exercises. The day concluded with all the first graders posing in front of 100 Valentine balloons. Everyone had a great time. *Now only 71 more to go...☺*

It's hard to believe that March is upon us already. Though I think we are all more than ready for it. Let's hope Mother Nature is more cooperative so we can get more accomplished. Please be sure to sign those reports cards and send them back to school. Have a great weekend and keep your eyes open for those welcome signs of spring.☺

GRADE TWO - Mrs. Meisner

February has just flown by and it's going to be March! March is one of my favorite months because it's "PIG MONTH"! We will be doing lots of fun activities this month around "piggy" things and I'm hoping we can write some "Pig Poetry" and put it in book form to share! We'll see!

March is also "Good Nutrition" month and so we'll be discussing healthy foods and snacks.

February is/was "Dental Health Month" and we will be keeping track of how well we brush our teeth for one week. Slips and more info about this will be coming home soon. We will keep a chart in our classroom showing how well we do! We will be writing about all the steps to brushing our teeth as a writing prompt for this quarter.

We have been doing a lot of studying about Abraham Lincoln and George Washington this month. We've read lots of stories, made books and had lots of discussions about them. We will be doing a venn diagram to compare them as one of our last activities about them.

We continue to work on "money" in math, along with regrouping/trading, and soon we will be working on "telling time". Get ready to do some extra practice at home!

We are still working on "Solids, Liquids, and Gases" in science. I hope you had a chance to do the "water drops and coins" experiment with your child. It's very interesting and fun to do too!

This is another very busy month! We have workshops coming up and a concert! The Second Graders have their Friday meeting presentation on February 29th! We will be sharing our Paper Bag Book Reports. Hope you can come!

GRADE THREE - Mrs. Burke

This has been another crazy chopped up month, but despite that we have managed to accomplish a lot. I have to give the kids a lot of credit. I know that for some students it is difficult to stay focused when the schedule changes around so much.

We have spent quite a bit of time this month getting ready for the MEA testing that starts next week. I am feeling pretty good about how the class is doing with that. We have done a lot of the prep work in small groups or as a whole class. Then we've been going over how the responses would be scored by MEA standards. The kids really enjoy looking at some of the released student samples and scoring them. Boy, are they tough graders too. Some of the sample questions that I have given them have been fourth grade released items, so if they do well on those they feel super smart. It also makes them think that the third grade questions are "really easy". I am hoping that all of this exposure to the testing format will help them feel comfortable and capable when they actually are taking the tests.

Officially in math we are working on multi-digit subtraction, and learning how to check answers by adding the "pieces" back together. Most students are fine with this except when there are 0's in the number. For example $907 - 268$. Once they get to the 0 in the tens place they are not sure what to do next. If you get a chance to practice at home, this would be a great skill to work on.

Our reading groups finished up earlier this month and we have used the rest of the time to practice for the MEA's. Next week we will actually begin our inventor biographies, with some kids reading with me in a small group while others read independently. Our final project will be displayed at the Curriculum Fair in April, along with some inventions of our own.

One of the MEA practice reading passages was a great introduction for our next writing prompt, which is to write a persuasive essay. This article was about whether or not dress codes in schools should be required. As a constructed response the kids had to write a letter to the principal of a school that was trying to decide if he wanted to introduce a dress code to his school, stating their opinion and citing specific reasons from the article as support. Next we will study the format of a persuasive essay, and then I will ask the students to write one of their own on a topic of their choice. Some students in the class already have ideas of what they are going to write about.

I hope that you are still enjoying this beautiful Maine weather and, if not, spring is just around the corner.

GRADE FOUR - Mrs. Ferland

February is always a quick month, but with all this snow it went by even faster. In fourth grade, we have been using every minute to work because we have so much to do.

In reading, we have started novels about the Midwest region, which is our next region to study. The novels are *Moose Tracks*, *Twisters on Tuesday*, and *Sarah, Plain and Tall*. All these books are set in the Midwest and describe history, weather, jobs, and land.

In writing, we wrote letters to soldier serving our country. We have only one response so far, but hope to get more back soon. Then we wrote tall tales about an amazing character. These are fun because the kids get to exaggerate about someone and made them do unreal things. Next week, we will start a new writing piece.

In math, we continue to learn about geometry. Recently, we have been learning about rotations, translations, and reflection. Then we moved onto solid figures and coordinates. We reviewed the names of the solid figures and then we counted the faces, vertexes, and edges. We also did an activity about the silhouettes of solid figures.

In science, we finished our unit on the human body and started learning about eating healthy. We reviewed the five food groups and looked at what we eat in a day. We also discussed how many calories that we should eat in a day.

In social studies, we finished reading about the Southwest region. Then we watched a video on the Midwest to see what we are going to learn about in that region.

Don't forget the MEA tests are next week! A good night's sleep and a good breakfast will be very important. Our annual MEA kickoff breakfast will be first thing on Monday morning. Have a great weekend.

GRADE FIVE - Ms. Wilson

Fitting in a regular schedule, with all that mother nature has offered us lately, has been a bit tough. With cancellations, delayed openings, and vacation, it doesn't seem as though we have gotten too far since our last newsletter!

Our studies in math have moved on to decimals. We have used our knowledge of fractions and percents to figure out decimals and decimal place value. We have learned how to convert a percent into a decimal, and the reverse. We have also learned how to use a calculator to translate a fraction into a decimal and then into a percent with the use of division. We related this to how I grade papers, and students were really excited to learn how to calculate their own percentages for their school work.

This month in science, we have mastered the phases of the moon, and we were delighted to put our science knowledge about the moon into application when the moon had an eclipse during vacation. Since learning about the moon, we have been learning about constellations, and how constellations have stories attached to them. We have also been learning about how stars have been important in navigation over the centuries. Currently, students are inventing their own constellations, and developing a story behind it. We will share these at our next Friday meeting.

Our social studies time has continued to focus on exploration. We have begun reading a historical fiction text about what it may have been like aboard one of Columbus's three ships. We have been having small group discussions about the events in the book, and students have been forming their own opinions on Columbus.

Our reading unit continued to work on the books, Hatchet and Sign of the Beaver. Students continued to participate in discussion groups about the books. We have worked on vocabulary building, drawing inferences, making predictions, evaluating the author's style, identifying the theme, and challenging each other's ideas about the book.

Students finished their draft writing of a narrative autobiographical piece this month. The focus of this assignment has been the development of the setting, as well as how to describe characters in subtle ways. Students are currently completing their final drafts, and publishing their stories by turning them into keepsake scrapbooks.

We finally were able to go on our field trip to the Gulf of Maine Research Institute in Portland this month. While at the institute, students had to gather and analyze data about a fish to identify it. They recorded videos of their observations, and drew conclusions about their fish. The students loved this trip, and it got them excited about science in the field.

So we are 105/176 of the way through the school year. The fifth graders could calculate that to be 59.6% of the way through the school year, or 0.596 of the way done. We will keep plugging along, and hopefully we can get some regularity back after we are done with MEA testing in March.

RESOURCE ROOM - Mrs. Robinson

The month of February has seemed to fly by. We will be starting on MEAs next week so the schedule in the resource room will be a little varied for a while. It is important that everyone gets lots of rest and tries their best during testing.

Mrs. Dillman came in to sub for me this week while I was having some IEP meetings and she has offered to help us with the Grow Lab sometime after we get the MEA testing completed. She was saying that she has a bunch of different kinds of sunflower seeds that she would be willing to donate. The students are looking forward to playing in the dirt. We will keep plant journals to document our progress with the whole process. It is a lot of fun to keep records of how our plants grow.

I hope that everyone has a healthy, happy March.

ART - Miss Ingraham

Due to the weather this month, there has only been one art class.

On Wednesday, March 26th please plan on enjoying the Art Show, the same evening as the Music Concert, 6:00 p.m. at Woodstock School.

INSTRUMENTS - Ms. DeVore

It seems impossible that we're at the end of February already! Snow days and vacation limited the number of band classes this month, but both the fourth and fifth grade bands have been hard at work getting ready for the Woodstock School concert on March 26th.

The fourth graders are doing an awesome job learning to play band arrangements with several parts going on at the same time. The fifth graders have learned lots of new notes and rhythms, and I am very impressed with how much they're progressing.

Congratulations to all of our players, and be sure to keep practicing!

MUSIC - Mrs. Stowell

Please mark your calendars for Wednesday, March 26. Woodstock School will be presenting a SPRING concert at 6:30 p.m. All students as well as band members will perform.

NURSE – Mrs. Chris Cole, RN

Flu Season is here!

Please remember:

Keep sick children at home until they are fever free for 24 hours.

Teach children to:

Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or their upper sleeve. Not hands!

Wash hands with soap and water after coughing and sneezing.

Put used tissues in the wastebasket.

Please refer to the medication policy in the student handbook if you need to send medication to school or contact the school nurse's office at 824-2136 ext 312.

Make sure the school office has the correct contact information in the event your child becomes sick at school.

Think Spring!!

Chris Cole, RN
District Nurse

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – Ms. Russell

All students spent the month of February jumping in preparation for the Jump rope for Heart event. Kindergarten-One spent time jumping in patterns and changing directions as well as over a moving rope. Two-Three students did some of the same and added jumping rope to their set of skills. Four-Five improved their rope skills from last year, increasing the number of consecutive jumps and adding tricks like crosses, kick swings and touches to their repertoires.

During this time, many students collected donations to send to the American Heart Association for research to help prevent heart disease and stroke. Their hard work culminated in the event, held the week before February vacation. All money was turned in after vacation and will be tallied and reported as soon as possible. In the meantime, we've moved on to tumbling!