



## Second Grade Newsletter January/February 2012

### **Literacy**

In our Reader's Workshop we will begin a Non-Fiction Unit. The initial focus is on learning about the text features, their purposes, and how to gain information from them. Following this are a few strategies tied to the DRP (Degrees of Reading Power). The activity in Lesson 10 (using context clues to solve unknown words) will be used repetitively for DRP practice. It is beneficial to use science and social studies texts in the creation of such activities. The remaining lessons focus on necessary comprehension skills for the reading of informational texts and align with expectations on the DRA.

In Writers Workshop, the Second Grade students will learn how to write a friendly letter, which will tie nicely to the upcoming Second Grade Post Office. Students will also learn about the format of a letter, for example each letter has a certain structure: heading, body and closing. Other interesting things we'll be learning in the upcoming weeks will be how to write a postcard and how to address an envelope. After learning how to write letters, we will focus on writing detailed paragraphs using topic sentences and supporting details.

**Help at Home:** Encourage your child to write letters to family members or friends. Talk about the reasons we write and send letters, for example, to thank someone, to send recent news about your life, or just to keep in touch with someone you don't see often. Make sure they include all the parts of a letter that they have been learning about; the date, greeting, body of letter, closing, and signature. In the next few weeks, the children will be writing letters to friends at school, as well as teachers and administrators. They would love to get a letter from you, so please come in, buy some stamps, and send a letter to your child! They will be so excited!

### **Science**

It's time to get dirty in Grade 2! We have begun our study of soil, and worms are a huge part of this unit of study! During this unit of study your children will have a real opportunity for hands on learning. They will learn where soil comes from and will explore different types of soils and the different properties of the soil samples. They will learn about a worm's life cycle and how worms help the soil. Each classroom has a terrarium of red worms and the children are able to watch how the worms create tunnels as they move through the soil, just like they do outside. They will watch how the soil is made richer as the worms consume the decayed plant matter that we add periodically. This unit leads into our study of plant growth and development where we will grow our own plants.

### **Social Studies**

We will begin our unit on "Where We Are in Connecticut and the United States". The children will look at the geography of Stamford and Connecticut in relation to the United States. We will study locations on a map, bordering towns/states, capitals, and landscapes. As a specific extension to our study of products, goods, and services, the children will run our annual school-wide **Second Grade Post Office!** They will be writing letters to one another and working as postal workers. They will be collecting, stamping, sorting, bundling, and delivering mail throughout the school. A more detailed letter will follow.

## **Math**

This month we started Unit 6. In this unit we will review earlier work with addition and subtraction and begin formal work with multiplication and division. The three main areas of focus will be:

- To introduce and practice array models
- To review strategies for solving addition and subtraction problems
- To develop procedures for multiplication/division problems

Next month we will be working on Unit 7. The students will be exploring number patterns to reinforce numeration skills and develop readiness for multiplication and division. Computational skills are extended to addition of several 1- and 2-digit numbers and subtraction of 2-digit numbers from multiples of 10. The three main areas of focus of this unit will be:

- To describe patterns that result from skip counting by 2s, 5s, and 10s
- To build mental arithmetic skills for adding 1- and 2-digit numbers
- To make frequency tables, line plots and bar graphs from real-life data

Unit 8 will be introducing the students to fractions. This unit emphasizes fractions of regions and collections of objects, as well as relationships between fractions. While the focus of the unit is on fraction notation and equivalences, multiplication and division concepts are touched upon. Unit 8 has four main areas of focus:

- To review basic fraction concepts
- To use fractions to name parts of a whole and of a collection
- To find pairs of equivalent fractions
- To solve number stories involving fractions

**Help at Home:** Please practice counting by 2's, 5's, and 10's. Rather than starting at 0, start at a larger number which is what we will be working with in school. Discuss the patterns that your child notices, such as when you're counting by 2's all the numbers are even, or when you count by 5's, one number ends in 5 and the next always ends in 0. If you have a calculator at home that your child can use, they can "play" with it while exploring addition, subtraction and even multiplication, which we have begun teaching. We use a lot of math games in school to extend our learning. Ask your son or daughter to teach you some of the math games such as Addition Top-It (2 or 3 cards), the Number Grid Game or the Digit Game. We have also learned a new game called the Fact Extension Game. The students enjoy applying their math knowledge through these various math games. In Unit 5 the students were introduced to various aspects of geometry. Have your children find shapes, line segments, parallel lines and symmetrical objects throughout the house or when they venture outside.

## **Homework**

As part of their homework students are to read at least 20 minutes every night. Your child can use a book from home, a media center book or a book from the Ferguson Library for their reading log. Please remember to sign your child's reading log in their homework folder.

The students have also been receiving vocabulary words each week. These words are taken from the science, social studies, and math curriculum. The students are familiar with these words. The vocabulary sentences are due on Friday and the quiz is also on Friday.

Each Friday your child has a spelling quiz. The spelling words for the quiz are taken from the phonics program. For example, if we are learning about plurals, the students will get words that are plurals. The words are used regularly during the week's phonics lessons.

## **Miscellaneous**

- Please be sure your child knows whether he or she has home or school lunch. Also, please review the lunch menu selections with your child.
- The weather is starting to get colder. We will still be having outdoor recess, so please make sure that your child is dressed appropriately for the colder days.
- Help your child practice tying his or her shoes.
- If your child is not feeling well, please keep him or her at home.

\*\* Donations to our classrooms are always welcome and appreciated! We always need tissues, Clorox wipes, paper towels, Purell, and plastic cups.

## **Important Dates**

January 30<sup>th</sup>-February 15<sup>th</sup>

Second Grade Post Office

February 9<sup>th</sup>

California Pizza Kitchen Fundraiser

February 15<sup>th</sup>

Early Dismissal at 1:20

February 16<sup>th</sup>

Parent Exchange – 9-11 am

February 20<sup>th</sup>-February 24<sup>th</sup>

Winter Recess – No School