**First Graders are Fantastic!**



**Important Reminders -**

**Uniform:** As the weather is getting cooler, please make sure you write your child’s name on all red sweaters. If they happen to be misplaced, names inside clothing makes it easier for us to return clothing back to you. Also, there is a **Lost & Found** in the cafeteria by the school store, and one in the staff room by the first graders’ lockers. Please check the lost & found for missing items. Additionally, please make sure your child is wearing sneakers or rubber-based shoes. We go outside twice a day and students have PE daily. The proper shoes are imperative for safety reasons and eliminate distractions in the classroom.

**Library:** We have library on Wednesdays. Please help students remember to return their library books on Wednesday so they may check out new books.

**Family Fridays:** Please feel free to pop in on Friday mornings from 8am to 8:10am. We always welcome families into the classroom, however if you wish to speak one-to-one with us, please schedule a conference or a phone call since our main priority at this time is greeting all of the students to ensure a successful Friday.

**Important Dates –**

**Tuesday, November 26th:** Join us for our second Authors Celebration from 9:30am to 10am. Please feel free to bring any out of town family who may be visiting for the Thanksgiving holiday.

**Wednesday, December 4th**: Make-up picture day and sibling picture day (an opportunity for a child to take a photo with any siblings at the school).

**Wednesday, December 4th:** Lower School parent coffee at 8:15am.

**Friday, December 6th:** The whole school is invited to wear pajamas in lieu of the regular uniform.  Students choosing not to wear pajamas may wear free dress. First graders need to wear sneakers or hard-soled shoes that are appropriate and safe for PE and recess.

**Wednesday, December 11th:** Congressional night at Red Robin at Seven Corners from 5pm to 8pm. Proceeds will benefit Congressional Fund.

**Wednesday, December 18th**: Field Trip to Mary Riley Styles Public Library – Students brought home application slips to get library cards. Please help your child fill out this slip so they can receive a free library card when we visit the library. We will be leaving school at 8:30am and returning around 10:00am. The library is closed to the public until 10:00am, so we will have our own personal tour of the library as well as story-time with the librarian! **Please let me know if you would like to be a chaperone!**

**Friday, December 20th:** Winter concert at 10:30am. Noon dismissal.

**Look at all we’ve learned! –**

**Pictures**

Now you can see a variety of pictures from our different lessons! Follow the link to our class’ Google Drive account to see your child in action!

<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B3s_OUk45AJ0bjBxdDVlZXJrU2c&usp=sharing>

**Social Studies**

Our Italy unit is in full swing! This week, we read a book as an introduction to Italy. Then, we “traveled” around Italy with a 10 minute video showing us the highlights of Venice, Florence, Rome, Amalfi Coast, and the small town of Lucca. As we watched the video, we kept pausing to reflect how life in Italy is similar to our lives and how it is different. As one student exclaimed, “You mean this is happening right now??? Really? Other people are living life like this?!” After traveling around Italy, students had the opportunity to use the IPads to explore Italy apps. One app called Italian allows students to click an English phrase (such as Good Morning) and the app says the phrase in Italian. Students brainstormed what they would like to know more about in Italy, such as the food, gondolas, artists, and more!

**Science**

This week in Science we discovered the differences between coniferous and deciduous trees! Students used iPads to take pictures of leaves from the two different types of trees.  We then identified the characteristics of deciduous and coniferous trees.  Coniferous trees have pointy leaves called needles. Coniferous trees keep most of their needles though the winter, protect their seeds in cones, and remain green all year. Deciduous trees have broad leaves that change colors in the fall. Coniferous trees protect their seeds in flowers, and they lose their delicate leaves during fall and winter.  While you’re out and about, or driving around this weekend, help your little scientist point out which trees are coniferous and which trees are deciduous!

**Readers Workshop**

This week students worked on reading stories like story tellers. Books are much more exciting when one reads with expression and fluency! In order to achieve a story teller’s voice one must be an expert at tackling tricky words. On Monday, students received a decoding strategies chart to put in their reading and poetry folder. Here is a link to a similar chart: <http://media-cache-ec0.pinimg.com/originals/7a/16/13/7a16130b8f91e118a7a1d6218a836ab0.jpg>. When reading at home, if students come upon a tricky word, help them use one of these strategies! After students have decoded the word, have them go back and re-read the sentence again to make it smooth. Re-reading is the key to fluency! As students re-read texts, their familiarity with the words increases, which allows them to add appropriate expression and inflection. Encourage students to re-read their favorite books to make their voice sound like a story teller. You can help by modeling fluency as you read to your child. The more expressive you can be, the better!

**Writers Workshop**

Students were busy this week preparing for our second author’s celebration on **Tuesday, November 26th at 9:30am**. This week we worked on fancying-up our stories! Students peer-edited each other’s work by asking questions that allowed the author to understand what details he or she needed to add. We have worked with self-assessment rubrics which allow students to monitor their use of punctuation and capitalization. They are excited to share with you next week!

After Thanksgiving break, students will be parting ways with the small moment narratives and begin writing all about books. We will work on all about books until Winter Break. After Winter Break, students will create how-to books. This is an opportunity for students to be the teachers about something they are an expert in or something they are interested in. For all about books, students will write about something they know very well, and will write everything they know about that topic. We will be visiting the library to do some research. For how-to stories, students will write all the specific steps on how to do something they know how to do very well, whether it is how to score a soccer goal, make a nutella sandwich, do a cartwheel, play Skylanders, etc. The possibilities are endless!

**Math**

Subtraction is under way here in first grade! Students have been working to understand the relationship between subtraction and addition. We have been looking at number bonds to figure out how the number bonds relate to subtraction, which is different than how they relate to addition. When students took the pretest in subtraction, students showed that they understood the basic concepts of subtraction; however Singapore Math pushes students to really think about numbers and apply memorized addition subtraction facts in multiple ways. We are tackling a very tricky concept where students must identify the missing part of a number bond, and then write two addition and two subtraction sentences (fact families) using only the numbers from that particular number bond.  It requires multiple steps and is very tricky for many students. For example, if a number bond has a whole of 5, with one part being 3, and the other part being 2, students should be able to write the four correlating addition and subtraction sentences:

2 + 3 = 5 5 – 3 = 2

3+ 2 = 5 5 – 2 = 3

 

Common mistakes include:

 5 + 3 = 8 or 1 + 4 =5 (Since the number bond contains 5, 2, and 3, students must use only those numbers: 2+3 = 5 or 3+2=5.)

3 – 2 = 1 or 2 – 3 = 0 (Subtraction sentences must start with the whole, which is 5 for this number bond.)

At home, you can help students by having them draw number bonds and then write the 4 number sentences (2 addition and 2 subtraction) for the numbers in the number bond.

Mrs. Quinn visited first grade to teach students the “taking-away” method of subtraction. In a number bond there is one whole and two parts. One part is considered the part that is left behind and the other number is considered the part that is taken away.

When we return from Thanksgiving break, we will be teaching the students the count-back strategy, to subtract numbers 1, 2, and 3 from a number within 10. The goal at the end of the subtraction unit is for students to recall all subtraction facts within 10. Please work on the addition and subtraction facts from 0 to 10 with your children at home, while encouraging them to explain their thinking. The next big unit is addition and subtraction facts with numbers to 20.

**Special Events**

**Buddy Classes:** First grade’s buddy class is sixth grade! This week sixth grade came down to our classroom to play holiday charades! After some entertaining charades, first graders shared books from their book baggies with the 6th graders. First graders impressed the 6th graders with their awesome decoding strategies!

**Readers’ Theater:** Students enjoyed a short Readers’ Theater performance by the 6th graders! It helped students understand how stories come to life, and it was a great chance for students to see how proficient readers read like story tellers.

**Dr. Jean:** We were lucky enough to have the famous Dr. Jean come perform for us today! During morning meeting and closing circle we use some of Dr. Jean’s songs to improve reading fluency. For more information on the phenomenal Dr. Jean, please visit her website - <http://www.drjean.org/>.

**100% Participation!:** Thank you so much for your contributions to the Congressional Fund! Because of your donations, students were able to choose an ice cream treat from the ice cream truck that visited our campus today!