

Ellis School Newsletter

JANUARY 23, 2015

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

I LOVE TO READ MONTH 2015

Special points of interest:

- *I Love To Read Month*
- *Fact Power*
- *No Name Calling Week*
- *Yarn Donations Needed*

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February is I Love To Read Month

Below is a line-up of the month's events for all elementary school students. We look forward to seeing you!

♥Friday, February 6th—Special Reader Day—A student from each elementary classroom will be chosen (at random) to read or share their favorite book with Mrs. Thomas, the Reading Specialist. Classroom teachers and students will be informed of who was randomly chosen on February 2.

♥February 9—12—Guest Reader Week—Volunteers Needed. During this week, community members, parents, administrators, and staff are encouraged to sign-up to read aloud to individual classrooms of their choice (Grades K—

4th).

If you would like to participate, please contact the classroom teacher directly via e-mail or voice mail to set up a time during the week of February 9th that works for both of you.

♥Friday, February 13th—Grandparents & Grand-Friends Reading Day—Volunteers Needed. We would like to invite Grandparents & Grand-friends to Ellis to read their favorite picture book aloud to an elementary classroom (K—4th). We will provide coffee & light snacks at 9 am and will then escort our readers to the classrooms to read to the students. Grandparents can read to their own grandchild's classroom or can volunteer to read to another classroom.

♥ To sign up, please call or e-mail Jen Thomas by Friday, February 6th with your prefer-



ence for a classroom, your name, and your contact information: jthomas@sau83.org, 603-895-2511 ext. 109.

♥February 19th—Vocabulary Parade—You are invited! On Thursday, February 19th from 9:30—10:10 all K-4 students will participate in a science-themed Vocabulary Parade in the Ellis gym. Each student will dress up as a vocabulary word based on their current science curriculum. They will then parade around with their class for all staff, community members and parents.

The Science theme for each grade level is listed below:

- Kindergarten—Weather
- 1st Grade—Careers in Science
- 2nd Grade—Land & Water Forms
- 3rd Grade—Nutrition & Wellness
- 4th Grade—Energy

More information will be available from your child's classroom teacher.

♥February 20th—Drop Everything & Read Day

On Friday, February 20th all staff and students are encouraged to wear comfy clothes to school, bring pillows, and read all day.

Contact Jen Thomas—call 603-895-2511 ext. 109.

Kindergarten is off to a grand start in 2015!

In Treasures, we are currently in Unit 5, which is all about animals and their families. We have been talking about how animals may look like their parents and how they change as they grow. Since this program is cumulative, we continue to work with all of the letters, sounds, and words we learned before Christmas.

In EDM, we have begun Unit 4. This unit continues our work in numbers and number sense. We have been working on different combinations to make five and 10 in addition and subtraction. As the number of days in

school has increased, the children are enjoying discovering greater than and less than.

Please continue to practice letters, numbers, words, and reading you've been doing at home. We appreciate it and your children are succeeding because of their hard work.

We will be looking forward to *I Love To Read Month* in February. Our main focus during the month will be discovering all the different ways and reasons to read. There will be a week set aside for guest readers for the classes; it is always exciting to hear new favorites from our readers.

The annual Vocabulary Parade is also scheduled for February, and the kindergarten students will be demonstrating their knowledge of weather words. Information will be sent home at the end of the month.



First Grade is Developing Fact Power!



Fact Power is the ability to recall math facts by heart! We are learning strategies to help us become very quick with our facts.

The Common Core Standards expect Kindergarteners to fluently add and subtract with 5. For first graders, the standards require students to “add and subtract within 20, demonstrating fluency for addition and subtraction within 10.”

With regard to fluency, Professor Mahesh C. Sharma of the Center for Teaching/Learning of Mathematics writes, “Consider an analogy. Suppose we want a child to read the word ‘cat’, and the child sounds out each letter but is not able to blend those sounds immediately. We would not call that child a reader. Similarly, when a child is asked to give the sum of 8 and 7, and the child gives the answer by counting out 7 from 8

(9,10,11,12,13,14,15) and then says the answer is 15, this is not automatization. He is a ‘counter.’ The child has constructed the answer. In reading, we want the blending of sounds to be automatic; similarly, in arithmetic, the number facts should be automatic. Without the smooth blending of sounds, we cannot become skilled readers. In reading, we want children to transition from decoders to fluent blenders of sounds with understanding. In arithmetic, we want children to move from counting to fluent blending of ‘numbernesses’ with strategies and understanding. Without automatic fact recall, we cannot achieve fluency in mathematical thinking. In both reading and arithmetic, fluency is achieved by learning effective strategies, by practicing and by getting continuous feedback. The basic facts are the words of arithmetic. One reads more and more to become a fluent reader and transcends the component skills involved in reading. A child needs to transcend constructing facts using strategies.”

The Common Core Standards require the use of “strategies such as counting on; making ten (e.g. $8 + 6 = 8 + 2 + 4 = 10 + 4 = 14$); decomposing a number leading to a ten (e.g., $13 - 4 = 13 - 3 - 1 = 10 - 1 = 9$); using the relationship between addition and subtraction (e.g., knowing that $8 + 4 = 12$, one knows that $12 - 8 = 4$); and creating equivalent but easier or known sums (e.g., adding $6 + 7$ by creating the known equivalent $6 + 6 + 1 = 12 + 1 = 13$).”



Each First Grade is very lucky to have a “Math Facts” parent volunteer who works individually with students each week. In the coming weeks, we will focus on practicing and assessing fluency within 5, +0s, +1s and +2s within 10, combinations for 10, and doubles. Please practice math facts at home as well to help your child to be successful in achieving fact fluency.

Third Grade News

The winter is bringing up lots of exciting education opportunities for the third graders. They are learning how to evaluate their multiplication skills with daily lessons. These math lessons allow each child to work on their times tables and master each one at their own pace.

Units such as the City Farmer are being implemented into the math curriculum to teach children how to do performance tasks. These tasks show children how to apply their math skills to everyday living.

Reading is informing students about cyber bullying. Understanding how to stay safe on the computer is a must. Educating our children to use a computer and the internet are all part of education in today's world.

February is I Love To Read month. Parents, relatives and friends are all encouraged to participate. Please look for the information that will be sent home, so that you can be part of your child's education.

The PTA has approved a

mini grant. The grant is to provide books on famous explorers. These books are to enhance the 3rd graders social studies curriculum. They have been carefully chosen and should arrive any day. Thank you PTA for all that you do!



No Name-Calling Week 2015

National No Name-Calling Week will be celebrated at Ellis School the week of January 26—30. No Name-Calling Week was inspired by a young adult novel entitled The Misfits, by James Howe. The book tells the story of four friends who grow tired of the constant teasing in their middle school. Based on their experience, they decide to run for student council on a “No Name-Calling” platform. Motivated by the inequities they see around them, the “Gang of Five” (as they are known) creates a new political party during the

student council elections and runs on a platform aimed at wiping out name-calling of all kinds. They win the support of the school's principal for their cause and their idea for a “No Name Day” at school. Motivated by this simple yet powerful idea, a coalition of over forty educators, youth advocacy, and mental health organizations have partnered to organize an actual No Name-Calling week in schools during the nation annually. The initiative was launched nationally in 2004 and involves a week long focus on educa-

tional activities aimed at ending name-calling of all kinds.

The goal of No Name-Calling Week is to help all students consider the weight of the words they use, and make school a safer, healthier place for all students. More information can be found at www.nonamecallingweek.org.

All middle school students will be learning and discussing National No Name Calling Week during Library classes the week of January 26th.

Yarn Needed



“The Knitting & Crocheting Club at the Ray-Fre Senior Center is in need of yarn donations,” says Yvonne Devine. Yvonne started the club several years ago to provide hats to the military deploying overseas. The hats are given to the Pease Greeters, who offer them to the soldiers. “Soldiers wear them at night to keep their heads warm.”

The group began with a few women and has expanded to over twenty. The club meets every Monday from 9 am till noon at Ray-Fre, 64 Main St. in

Raymond. The variety of items has grown as well and includes hats for school children, scarves, afghans, lap robes and chemo hats for cancer patients and Purple Baby hats. “Some of our items are given to the Senior Center to help support the Center.”

The list keeps growing, as does the charities involved. “This year's demands have far exceeded last year's, and our supply of donated yarn is nearly depleted. We depend on yarn donations. We have some funds, thanks to a generous Raymond citizen. Yarn is expensive and we use the funds as needed for the military. If you can donate any yarn to us, please call the Center at 603-895-3258 or Yvonne at 603-895-5294.” Thank you, Yvonne Devine

7th Grade Language Arts

Happy New Year! Students in 7th grade language arts are working on the short story, “The Necklace” by Guy de Maupassant. Students are creating journals, working on sophisticated vocabulary from the story, learning about plot diagrams, identifying figurative language as well as point of view.

Students continue to work on analogies. Earlier in the year we learned about analogies that contained synonyms and antonyms. We are now learning about homophones—words that sound alike but have different meanings and spellings. Students can expect to have a test on Unit 3 in the very near future.

During lab class, students will be writing an argumentative essay. Students will read sample argumentative essays and use them as resources to help them draft their own essays. Students will choose their own topics, fill out a graphic organizer to help them plan their essay, and research their topic to provide evidence for each of their reasons.

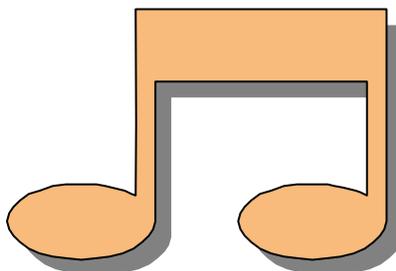
Music News

January is an exciting time in Music Class. Each class level is working on composing a song.

Kindergarten through second grades are learning to identify the piano keys and playing games with “Music Tech Teacher.”

Third and fourth grades are working on jazz and blues music. They are identifying the different styles of New Orleans music. They are also learning the lines and spaces on the staff, as well as different note values.

The fifth and sixth graders explore jazz and blues by learning about musicians of that time. They are currently studying Louis Armstrong.



The seventh and eighth grades will be composing songs using a rubric to assess their knowledge of all the musical elements we have been learning since fifth grade.

The chorus is beginning a spring repertoire for their festival in May. More information will follow for chorus families.

7th Grade Math News

Seventh graders are working on their Algebra skills by studying expressions, equations, and inequalities. We cover such subtopics as the distributive property, combining like terms, adding, subtracting, and factoring linear expressions, as well as solving various types of equations and inequalities.

All 7th graders are working on making choices that will benefit their learning. This year I have started handing unit maps out with all the required work listed in order. Students may progress through the increasingly difficult work at their own pace, meaning less whole group instruction takes place and more individual/small group time is available. I have also provided students with choices on their homework and routinely ask students to “negotiate” with me if they need less (but more challenging” problems, fewer problems because of a sport or other commitment that will be taking up time that evening, or easier problems (I don’t want them practicing problems they don’t know how to do). Students are also given chances to choose who they work with and where in the room they can concentrate best. All of these choices are made within guidelines set by me to ensure students are continuing to learn and challenge themselves while also learning to take on more responsibility for their education.

Students continue to be drilled weekly on math facts (we are currently focusing on multiplication and division facts) and nightly practice is important for increased fluency and accuracy. Math fact progress reports have been sent home approximately every 3 weeks. Please let me know if you have any questions on these. You can contact me at any time at 895-2511 x 308 or kkane@sau83.org. Sincerely, Mrs. Kane

News from the Nurse

Ellis students in grades K—6 received in classroom dental education provided by Nancy Snow RDH to meet the health education curriculum guidelines set by the Department of Education. This school based dental program is offered to Ellis as free community service by Lamprey Health Care. Students learned about healthy dental habits, how to keep teeth clean, and the importance of good nutrition. Dental screenings were performed on 151 students providing a brief visual check of the teeth and mouth to identify if a student is in need of interventions to treat and prevent tooth decay. I would like to thank Ms. Snow as well as the PTA parent volunteers who assisted with the dental screenings to make this such a success for the health and well-being of our Ellis students. Carla Smith, MSN, RN, CEN