

# Our VERY FIRST Funderburk Room 18 Multi-Age Classroom Newsletter Vol. 1

## Weeks of September 24 – October 8, 2018

*Double Page Edition (typically only one page)*

### Upcoming Dates of Interest

- **CFC Read-A-Thon Fundraiser** –September 17 – 29
- **Picture Day** – This Monday September 25
- **School-Wide Open House** –Wednesday September 27, 6:00-7:00 PM
- **Scholastic Book Fair – October 1 – 4** (*Our class visit will be at 11 AM on Tuesday 10/2*)
- **No School: Professional Day/Indigenous People Day/Columbus Day** – Fri. October 5 – Mon. October 8

### Last Week, This Week (and Next Week) We're Working on...

- **Reading: We're currently Building Good Reading Habits and Growing our Reading Skills:**
  - We have been building our independent reading stamina and have picked up on skills that support good habits:
    - Take a sneak peaks in books
    - Do something with our books when we're done reading them (reading logs, use post-its, retell, etc.)
    - Setting goals, reading more and more and scooping up words in bigger scoops
    - Good habits for **partner reading** (partners don't just read to each other they help and remind each other)
  - **Shared Reading:** This is time for students to work together to choral read a short text, look for meaning in the story to decode words, track sight words and practice expression and fluency. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> year students (and some 1<sup>st</sup> graders) have done an incredible job building expression around the setting of the short stories we read together
  - Starting this week I plan to meet regularly with all students 1:1 & in differentiated groups based on reading skills
- **Social Studies/Study Groups:** Study groups are a way multi-age students dig deeper into our Social Studies and Science curriculum, oftentimes integrating literacy and Math skills along the way. This year we're taking a look at our four contents of Social Studies (Maps/Globes, Wabanaki, Cultures Around the World and Community) for the first half of the year, mixing students from our 4 multi-age classrooms together (roughly 5 students from each class x 4 class = 20 students) and meeting for 8 sessions for a duration of 4 weeks with 1 primary multi-age teacher to delve deeper into the units. Ask your child about what study group they're in. They'll eventually visit and study in all 4 classrooms.
  - **Wabanaki (Mrs. Erb)** –Learning more about the Wabanaki Native American worldview and way of life while practicing the skill of basket weaving
  - **Community (Mr. Funderburk)** – We'll get to know each other in our new community, identify our strengths/high interest skills, learn about the communities we're a part of, create a community motto and perhaps a flag, and eventually identify a problem at Coffin School we'd like to solve
  - **Cultures Around the World (Ms. Lowe)** – Learning about different cultures each week, starting with Africa
  - **Maps & Globes (Mrs. Stinson)** – Different kinds of maps, mapping in various ways, political boundaries and physical boundaries, the parts of a map, reading a map and how maps give us different kinds of information
- **Word Work/Handwriting/Spelling:**
  - **Making Words** – Every week we target a "Making Words" activity where we build words from a set of letters and find a secret word that would use all of the letters (i.e. **e,i,d,f,n,r,s**)– 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders have separate sets. We practice targeted skills for that week with whiteboards beforehand (i.e. word families ag or ig or vowel teams oa)
  - **Spelling** – We focus primarily on spelling words according to spelling patterns. All students currently have an area of growth to focus (ie. vowels, blends, digraphs {sh/th/ch}, long vowel patterns, inflected ending, etc.). We'll play word games and use word sort words to grow our specific spelling pattern of focus.
  - **Handwriting** – New program this year – [Handwriting without Tears](#)
    - We began the year with the basics: dropping and picking up a pencil to hold properly
    - Working on uppercase letters starting at the top left corner or the top middle (many children start from the bottom up or tend to make a P with a stick and circle – we'll learn the proper verbal path and practice all through the year using our HWOT app on the iPad)
  - **Spelling words: TBD-** Focus now with be on in-class spelling patterns, down the road we'll assign spelling words
- **Writing:** We are focusing on writing personal narratives OR small moment stories
  - Writing about something we've done or a thing that's happened to us – stories that are unique or interesting
  - The Process of writing: plan, sketch, write and then add more details
  - Now/Future: *Craft moves from mentor artists* – noticing what authors like Jane Yolen or Angela Johnson do (find ways to stretch out the moment across the pages, repeat in different ways, find endings that repeat phrases from the start or middle) – not everyone is at this point in the writing process but it is important to notice and connect to what mentor authors

## Newsletter Vol. 1 Continued

- **1st Grade Math:** Starting our unit on Chapter 2 – Number Bonds
- **2nd Grade Math:** Finishing up Chapter 1 – Numbers to 1,000

### Classroom Updates

- Class interviews – Classmates are learning more about each other as we interview each student during these first 20 days of school. We'll create a book of our interviewees (including Mr. Funderburk ☺)
- **Classroom Volunteers** – Our community (including you) are welcome! So many options! FIRST, all volunteers must fill out this [District Volunteer Form](#) each year. This must be filled out annually before volunteering.
  - [The Brunswick Rotary](#) will join us soon on Thursday afternoons to read with students 1:1 for about 30 min.
  - [Spindleworks](#) volunteers will weave with students 1 x per month in the late morning before recess on Tuesdays
  - **Brunswick High School Students** –We'll have two High School student from Rick Wilson's High School Community Service/School to Career program to help in our classroom every other day for about 60 minutes in the afternoon.
- **Wednesday September 26 Open House** - This is an exciting time for your child to show off their classroom to the whole family. It's more hands on for your child and gives them space to show off their room. Have your child show you what's happening in their Study group room (starting this week). It's a great chance for your child to introduce you to classmates and where they spend 6 ½ hours every day (more like 4 hours☺)
- **Read Aloud Books** –We're starting with a classic, *Catwings* by Ursula Le Guin
- **Choice Time** – On Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays, students will be given the option to have some structured but flexible social interaction choice activities with peers such as art, building, games, and puzzles of different varieties. We have been learning about different games and challenges over the first few weeks. Much of this time will ultimately allow me to work with students in particular areas of academic or behavioral focus. We're also integrate some new games that push student thinking. Many of these are STEM focused. We will also look to move toward having a bi-monthly "Friday Fun" Day on Friday afternoons with the other multi-age classrooms.
- **Homework**
  - ***Outdoor play, healthy eating and reasonable bedtimes/rest are # 1 priority- I understand the post-school moments are precious and short***
  - Homework this year is really about carving time to read nightly with your child. Sometimes there will be occasional light Math skills to work on. If you'd like a reading log to keep your child accountable, let me know
  - In the coming weeks 1<sup>st</sup> graders will bring home a bag of familiar books from their book bag in class to read at home throughout the week. These can be returned weekly on either Fridays or Mondays – coming soon!
- **Classroom Celebrations** – Every 4 – 8 weeks, we'll find a way to celebrate how well we've work together as a classroom community. These can come in many forms and are typically decided by the students in a democratic voting process. Anything from chewing sugar-free gum, lunch in the classroom to PJ day to extra choice time or recess are options. I'll let you know in advance if there's a celebration on the forefront.
- **Wellness Policy**

Our school district has a policy on healthy food choices for celebrations, non-food options for celebrating & considerations for those w/ food allergies and/or special diets. [HERE](#) is the link to the wellness policy from the school district's website.

***As you all know, we have a tree nut allergy in the classroom. To play it safe, we limit the snacks of any nuts in the classroom to save for cafeteria lunch.*** Students have done an excellent job asking about ingredients in certain products if they're unsure. Most (if any) food celebrations will be planned and communicated – ***please let me know of any additional allergies/diet restrictions*** as students receive snacks at school when they don't have one. We also have an occasional option of sugar-free gum as a celebration. Feel free to communicate reservations regarding the sugar-free gum option as a class incentive. If your child would like to celebrate an upcoming birthday, there are many ways – contact me!
- **Brain Breaks/Mindfulness** – We're constantly focusing on promoting movement throughout the day through choice seating (standing, floor, cushions, movement stools, yoga ball), regular motor breaks, yoga poses, mindfulness and the emphasis of maintaining curiosity in everything we do. One website we've used that goes hand and hand with our 2<sup>nd</sup> Step Social/Emotional program is Myla Kabat-Zinn's coaching on sitting still like a frog (found [HERE](#))
- **Toys** – Students have been doing fairly well with keeping toys, stuffed animals, and small knick-knacks in their backpacks during class time. I have been open to letting them hold on to things in their backpacks. Things like necklaces, rings, bows, hairclips, etc. are considered toys if they're taken off and misused. Children will be asked to be return it to their backpacks immediately if they turn something into a toy. Multiple offenses will likely lead me to hold on to the toy for up to a week.

*A Shorter Newsletter will be provided in 2 weeks. Thank You!*

**Questions? Contact Mr. Funderburk at [efunderburk@brunswick.k12.me.us](mailto:efunderburk@brunswick.k12.me.us) or 319-1950 or by note. All class newsletters are also available 24/7 at <http://www.brunswick.k12.me.us/efunderburk/classroom-newsletters>**