



News From Room 14

November 2017

Dear Families,

It was wonderful to see everyone at conferences! Thank you for taking the time to meet with me.

As we enter December, I want to take a minute to talk about winter gear. Once the snow flies (and sticks!) the kids will need snow gear in order to play in the snow. Your child should bring in a warm jacket, snow pants, winter boots, and a hat and gloves each day. I have found that the easiest way for them to handle all of this is to send it in a separate cloth handled bag. Stuffing it all into their backpack leads to wet folders and forgotten items that are still wet the next day. Your child should be able to dress themselves in their gear as well as pack and unpack it independently. Remember, there are 21 of them and only 1 of me!

In addition, your child should have shoes to wear in the classroom. Wearing their winter boots all day is discouraged as their feet get hot and sweaty, then get cold outside. It also tracks snow and dirt through the classroom. Feel free to have your child keep an extra set of shoes in the classroom so they always have a pair on hand! Thanks for helping me manage all that comes with Maine winters!

Sincerely,
Mrs. Sciacca



Mrs. McCormack's lesson on simple machines was a big hit! She will follow up with a read aloud on Friday.

Mark Your Calendar!

Early Release – Dec. 6th

Winter Celebration – Dec. 21st

Holiday Break – Dec. 25th – Jan. 1st

No School for MLK Day – Jan. 15th

What's Happening In...

Reader's Workshop:

Our little readers have been hard at work! Our unit on Word Detectives has been a big hit! We have learned multiple strategies for solving tricky words. The "Super Secret Detective Agency" has been leaving us messages with missions and the kids have been very successful. The focus of the unit was to build the bank of tools students use when they encounter an unknown word. We are wrapping up the unit and will be moving on to our Learning About the World unit where we will focus on reading informational books.

Writer's Workshop:

I hope everyone has had a chance to read the wonderful books in the hallway outside of our room! The kids did a wonderful job with narrative writing and are very proud of their published stories. We worked on editing and revising to make our work the best it can be. We are now working on informational writing (teaching books) and the kids are full of information! They have learned how to plan their writing using a table of contents, use a teaching voice and include lots of important facts. We will continue to learn about things authors can do to teach their readers through December. I will be integrating our "Families Now and Then" social studies unit with writing; the kids will write a book comparing family life in the past to family life now.

Word Study:

The kids are loving their independent word study time! We alternate between practicing our individualized spelling words and using games and manipulatives to focus on spelling patterns specific to each child's needs. If you hear your child mention "basket work", they are referring to their spelling pattern work! As a whole group we have done some work with blends and digraphs. The kids now have a variety of ways to work with their individualized word sorts as well; I have found these to be a very powerful tool. We do a lot of word study work using our morning message and through shared reading as well. Our handwriting practice continues. We have been practicing "circle stroke" letters and learning how to make our letters sit on the bottom line.

Math in Focus:

Our Geometry unit has been a ton of fun! We have been learning about plane and solid shapes, including a lot of hands-on work. The kids learned to name and sort various shapes as well as identify how solid shapes move. We worked on patterns with shapes and identified shapes in our environment with a classroom shape hunt. Geometry will be wrapped up this week and then we are on to numbers to 20! Our fact fluency practice continues and I am seeing a lot of growth in this area. Students are working at their own pace practicing addition facts to ten as well as periodically playing a game called "Knock Out" where two teams go head to head to solve facts quickly. This doubles as a great lesson in being a good team member and being a good sport, win or lose.

Science and Social Studies:

Our decomposing pumpkin project continues and we now have an extensive amount of mold growing. The kids are using what they know about the pumpkin life cycle to make predictions about what will happen next. They are surprised by how slowly things are happening!

In Social Studies, we began our unit on American Families Now and Then. We read a book set in the 1800's and looked for evidence to determine if it took place "now" or "long ago". This unit was enhanced through a lesson from our Talent Development teacher, Mrs. McCormack, where the kids did a lot of hands-on work with various items to decide what type of simple machine they were. We will continue investigating the similarities and differences between families now and long ago in December; look for a homework assignment about family traditions in the next couple weeks!