



News From Room 14

December 2017

Dear Families,

It is hard to believe we are already heading into our holiday break! December was a quick month for us at school, but we made a lot of progress.

This is the first year in my seven years of teaching first grade that ALL of my students can put on their snow gear without help! You have no idea what a gift this is! Thank you so much!

Speaking of snow gear, we end up with at least one hat and/or glove daily that nobody claims. If you can find a way to mark your child's things with their names, it will go a long way toward keeping track of all the items! I write on my classroom extras with metallic colored Sharpie, which seems to work well. We could use some extra sets of waterproof gloves as well as a pair or two of snow pants for students who forget their gear; gently used items are fine!

I hope you have all had a chance to log your child in to Raz Kids and IXL. The kids really love these programs (at least they have in years past!) so they are a great way to work in some extra practice. Once our computer lab is up and running they will have a chance to use them at school as well.

Wishing you all a wonderful holiday season filled with laughter and love!

Warmest wishes,

Mrs. Sciacca



The food drive was huge success! Thank you for helping your child feel the joy of helping others.

Mark Your Calendar!

Winter Celebration – Dec. 21st

Holiday Break – Dec. 25th – Jan. 1st

MLK Day, No School – Feb. 19th

Arts Are Elementary

Catherine Worthington, a local fabric artist, will be working with our class from 2:00 to 3:00 on the following dates: January 8, 19, 22, and 29.

What's Happening In...

Reader's Workshop:

We are currently working on learning about reading informational books. Nonfiction reading can be very different from fictional reading. Reading with purpose is an important part of becoming a strong reader and students especially need to learn skills and strategies to learn from what they read. We have been working on studying our books closely, both the pictures and the words, to "get super smart about a lot of topics" most recently. The kids have done an amazing job so far! Nonfiction books tend to be harder to read because of the content vocabulary; it is absolutely fine to help them decode and pronounce these tricky words.

Writer's Workshop:

Informational writing has been a big hit! Our writing has been helping us show what we have learned in social studies about how family life has changed over time. Each child wrote an informational book about Long Ago and Today using what they learned across our unit as well as what they know about informational writing. These kids are experts on a lot of things! We will continue working on informational chapter books when we return from the break. The kids have been writing up a storm about things they know a lot about so far and I know they have a lot more to teach!

Word Study:

This month we did some work with contractions and compound words since these words are showing up more frequently in the books the kids are reading. We continued our work with digraphs and began looking at blends. I am seeing some nice transfer to writing with these skills! Our handwriting practice continues. We have been practicing "short line down" and "long line down" letters and working on using the handwriting lines to make our letters the correct size and shape. While this is easier for some children than others, I am very happy that so many of the kids are trying very hard to use the lines to improve their handwriting!

Math in Focus:

Our focus this month was on numbers to twenty. We learned how to read, write and build the numbers. One of the big concepts for this chapter is place value; understanding how to break numbers into tens and ones is extremely important and the basis for much of what is to come in later chapters. Another important skill that we spent time on is more/greater and less/fewer. Being able to quickly determine the number that is one or two more or less than another number is very important to strong number sense. Some of us can do this quickly in our heads already, while others of us are using number lines and manipulatives to support our understanding. Ask your child to do this with numbers to 20 every now and then to see how he or she is doing! While the kids seem to be making big gains in their addition fluency, subtraction fluency is not as strong. Be sure to help your child practice subtraction facts within 10 with the goal of knowing them automatically.

Science and Social Studies:

Our study of how family life has changed and stayed the same over time has been very enlightening; the kids have made some really important connections to how technology has changed the way people live and they seem very grateful that chores are much easier for us today! We have shifted our focus to how family celebrate and pass on traditions. Thanks so much for helping your child complete the traditions homework. We have been enjoying hearing about the great family traditions that happen in our own community with our friends' families. Each child stood up in front of the class and practiced their oral communication skills by presenting their family tradition. They did a great job speaking "loud and proud" so we could all hear them

and learn from them. Our Arts are Elementary sessions will enrich our unit in January as we learn about quilting. In science, we began talking about winter and the changes we see at this time of the year.