

Wolf Times

Volume 13, Issue 7

March, 2016



From the Desk of Mrs. Norcel, Principal

Dear Frenchtown Families,

It is said March “comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb.” This year grade 5 students will be taking their Science CMT on March 15 and a practice test on March 14. Grades 3, 4, and 5 begin SBAC testing on April 26. We will have pep rallies for Grades 3, 4 and 5 on Friday, April 22. We will celebrate the end of testing on Tuesday, May 17 with our chocolate chip muffins purchased by our PTA (non-allergic muffins will be purchased also).



T.R.A.C.K.S. helps us develop good character. Remember, the development of good character is a process. You are building character one day at a time and often the path is two steps forward and one step back. The ongoing efforts you make will be rewarded, as your child becomes a person of good character. The T.R.A.C.K.S. value to be highlighted for March is “honesty.”

March 26th is the anniversary of the women’s movement in the United States. Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott were abolitionists who organized the first convention to discuss “social civil and religious rights of women.” At the convention, the “Declaration of Sentiments” were read. The Declaration said women should have these specific things:

- The right to own property.
- The right to earn money.
- The right to custody of their children.

- The right to equal pay for equal work.

March is recognized as Newspapers in Education Month, National Nutrition Month, National Women’s History Month, and Music in Our Schools Month. During the month, the areas of social studies, science, poetry, nutrition, and music will be highlighted. The Educate America Act of 1994 recognized the arts as a core area of study in which American children are expected to achieve competency. In response to this challenge, Frenchtown School is committed to improving the climate of our school by promoting the arts as a way to help all students achieve high levels of academic, personal, emotional and career success.



A renewed interest in arts education has been stimulated by public concern, the quality of American schools and the performance of our students, as well as both basic and advanced thinking skills. These skills instruct children in diverse models of thinking and learning.

March has traditionally been “Music in Our Schools” Month. Music is part of the school day, and it supports other areas of learning. Each child grows through music as he/she becomes a participant to some degree in every phrase of the program. The music program at Frenchtown involves presenting to pupils many musical experiences: singing, listening, moving to music, performance, creating, and playing rhythm instruments. Our music educators are Mrs. Debra Hawkins and Mrs. Marie Tavella, as well as Mr. David Turechek, band and Glen Ullman, strings.

Beginning in grade three, students can start string lessons with Mr. Ullman and fourth and fifth graders can participate in either strings, or band instruction with Mr. Turechek. These programs have not been supported by the education budget, but are a “Pay for Play” Program. Last September the district began to cover approximately one third of the cost. The goal is to eliminate pay for play in the 2017-18 school year. Children must also rent or

buy their instruments. Dr. Cialfi, Superintendent of Schools, can be contacted concerning scholarship support. (203-452-4301)



During the week of March 14th we will discuss with our students the customs and traditions of the Irish and their major reasons for emigrating to the United States. Students will be encouraged to wear green on Thursday, March 17 in honor of the Irish, St. Patrick's Day, and to welcome the season of spring. This year's spring theme will make each child aware of their role in saving the earth's resources. Let's all remember to **reuse, reduce and recycle.**

We will focus on the preservation of the wildlife of our planet as an important responsibility of all citizens. We hope to teach our students a respect for all wildlife and encourage protection of our natural habitats.

On Friday, March 18th from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. we will sponsor our ninth Multicultural Pot Luck Dinner. Come join the fun. There will be entertainment including our Irish Step Dancers. We will also have our D.J. Seth Carley, dancing, good food, a raffle and our opening March of Our World's Flags.

As we begin the last few months of school, it is important to remember your partnership with your child's teacher is paramount to his/her success in school. Your child's teacher needs your support at home. Read with your child, practice math facts, help to organize projects, and monitor homework assignments. Your child needs to know that you expect his/her best effort every day.



Coming on April 8, 2016, we will have our "Jump Rope For Heart Day" to be held for all students during school hours. Watch for specific information from Mr. Bourque and Mr. Strychalsky.

Each year we recognize volunteers who help our school flourish. The award is presented from the Connecticut Association of Schools. This year we are recognizing Meredith Chamberlain, Zdena Quinn and Mathias Rysse. They will be honored at a banquet held at Aqua Turf on Monday, March 7th. Outside the main office is a plaque with the names of the people who have been recognized since 2004.

Get Kids Involved

Talk to your kids about the importance of breakfast every day, but especially during testing periods. Let them help you choose breakfast foods when you go shopping and if time permits, let them help you make breakfast, too.



Serve as a model. Eat a good breakfast yourself.



Character
Corner—

Honesty

Examples of honesty include:

- Honesty means you don't say things about people that aren't true. You are not being honest if you make up rumors about someone.
- Being honest means you admit to your actions, even if you'll get in trouble. You are not being honest if deny you did something wrong when you really did it.
- Honesty means you explain how a situation really happened. You are not being honest if you say something happened one way when it really happened another way.



Kindergarten News...

**Mrs. Bershefsky, Mrs. Buswell,
Mrs. Capone, Mrs. Crawford**



The children have been busy beavers this past month! The shortest month of the year arrives and it is jam packed with snow days, exciting events like the 100th Day of School and Groundhogs Day, as well as several holidays that continue our understanding and appreciation for celebrations around the world. We enjoyed learning about Valentine's Day, President's Day and Chinese New Year in social studies. This February was particularly special as it is a leap year! The children were fascinated to learn that this calendar year will be longer than a normal one! They were very curious about the date, February 29th and how people born on this day celebrate their birthdays from year to year!

In Reader's Workshop, the children have been working on retelling a story. It is very important for readers to understand what they read and be able to talk about the characters, setting, problem and solution in order. At this point in the year, many children truly take off in their recognition of our high frequency sight words and are doing a great job figuring out other words as they read. Because of this, they sometimes think that their only job as a reader is to "figure out the words." We are helping the children to realize that good readers also need to understand what they read. They show this by talking about a story in sequence. Please be sure to talk with your child about the books they read to you at home and to have them orally retell the story. You can probe them by asking them to identify the characters, setting, problem and solution. In addition to retelling, the children have learned another strategy good readers use called, "visualizing." We had so much fun reading many stories and poems without pictures and creating our own mental images that matched the author's words.

In Foundations, the children continue to work in Unit 3 and are becoming more automatic in "tapping" to read words. We also learned to use this same strategy to help us spell words that follow the CVC pattern. When your child writes at home, hold them accountable for spelling CVC words they can tap (such as mom, cat, bed). They have really come so far, but do need occasional reminders. In

addition to tapping, the children have been learning that vowels can make two sounds: The short sound learned previously in the year, and the long sound, which is when the vowel says its name. Play games with your child by saying one-syllable words out loud and asking them to identify if the vowel is long or short.

In writing we have been working on conveying our ideas in a complete sentence. The children can no longer rely on a sentence starter from the teacher during writer's workshop. They have learned how to convey one idea and separate each word in their sentence with a space. They have also learned that sentences begin with a capital letter and end with punctuation, though they still need many reminders to use them consistently. Children have been learning that writer's make their pieces more interesting with details that "tell more," and stay on topic. We have learned how to "tell more," in our words and pictures, being careful not to wander off topic or repeat ourselves!

In math, kindergartners have been working on identifying, describing and recognizing two and three-dimensional shapes that make up our world. The children enjoy the different math tools we use such as pattern blocks, Geo boards and even Play-Doh or clay to make shapes. Your youngsters enjoy using different two-dimensional shapes to create a picture scene, as well as using small shapes to compose larger shapes in puzzles. We will continue learning more about three-dimensional shapes next month. Your child needs to be able to verbally identify the shapes we are learning. You can help at home by playing "I spy" with them or having them describe the shapes they see around the home. This month the children also had a ball counting their way to the 100th Day! We did a lot of rote counting as well as counting collections in groups of 10. At this point in the year, they should be able to count to 50 by themselves without skipping any number in the sequence. They are all working hard at this!

In science, we continue talking about winter and animals. We have learned about different animal homes and discussed the importance of living things having a shelter. The children also learned what makes something magnetic and did some fun experiments to identify what metal objects would stick to a magnet.



It is hard to believe we are more than half way through kindergarten! You will be amazed at

how much more the children will learn as the year continues. Come early spring, so much just “clicks” within each child and they really take off in their reading, writing and overall understanding. We are all so thrilled to watch this unfold!

Grade One News...

**Mrs. Gambardella, Mrs. Mordecai,
Mrs. Rodrigues, Mrs. Shinnick**

Where did the month of February go? First Graders were busy every moment, learning, singing, and celebrating! We welcomed February with predictions...would the groundhog see his shadow? We were excited to learn that spring is just around the corner! Our most important milestone was the 100th Day of School that we celebrated on February 9th. We were involved in reading, writing and math activities, all centered around the number 100. We also shared our creative and fun 100th Day projects. They were on display throughout the first grade hallway for all to see. What a great job everyone did! Then we celebrated Valentine’s Day, as first graders read the special messages that their friends sent them. We left for our February break, knowing that our friends would soon be back, ready to share learning time with us again! When we returned, it was on to learning about two special Presidents: George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. We read and wrote about these special men in our country’ history. Since February is Black History Month, we researched many famous black Americans and shared how they helped to change our world. February may be a short month but it was packed with learning and fun!

Grade Two News ...

**Mrs. Angon, Mrs. Boyle,
Mrs. Pereira, Ms. Sansone
Mrs. Tuohy**



It is hard to believe that February has come and gone! It has been a busy month for many different celebrations! The Chinese New Year was discussed and the students

learned how 2016 is the year of the Monkey. On the 100th day of school, students worked on various tasks that revolved around the number 100. It was a fantastic way to reinforce the place value system in math. Valentine’s Day was enthusiastically celebrated with many cards and good wishes! The

students also learned a lot of information about Abraham Lincoln and George Washington to celebrate President’s Day!



In reading, the students were exposed to biographies and historical fiction stories about Rosa Parks, Ruby Bridges, Jesse Owens, Duke Ellington, and Harriet Tubman to celebrate Black History Month. Our focus in math has been on collecting and representing data. The students have also learned how to interpret and analyze the information presented in various types of graphs. If you are looking for a fun activity to do at home, you could work with your child on collecting data about a topic and making a representation of it! It is important to know that your child will continue to take a Mad Minute math fact quiz so make sure both addition and subtraction facts are being practiced! It is important to practice these facts every night to develop fluency!

In science, the students have been studying matter. These scientists have been experimenting with various solids and liquids to test their properties. A fun way to reinforce their learning would be to do some different fun experiments at home! A great website to check out is <http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/gamesactivities/gases.html>.

We are looking forward to the last few months of second grade! It is important that the students continue to work hard, check their work over and put forth their best effort!

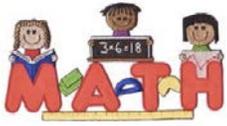
Grade Three News...

**Mrs. Atwood, Mrs. Cretella,
Mrs. Makoski, Mrs. Martins**

This year seems to be zooming along at a fast pace! We are in the second half of the school year, and our third graders are showing a great deal of growth in all of their academic areas. It’s wonderful to see how much they are able to learn!

Reading classes are focusing in on nonfiction text this month. We are examining text features and how they help us find information in what we are reading. Identifying the causes and effects as well as sequencing are such important skills. Be sure to continue to complete the reading

logs with your child and send them in on the last day of the week.



In math, students are being introduced to fractional concepts. We encourage your children to observe fractions in their everyday life, such as

measuring cups, cutting slices of pizza, etc. Students are continuing to work toward memorizing all of the multiplication facts with products through 100. These are now required of all third graders, and lots of practice at home can support this effort. Make sure that your students are filling in their Bear Math Calendars to record all the work they are doing with flash cards as well as fun computer programs like Xtra Math.

Social Studies classes have enjoyed learning about the Native Americans of the Northwest Coast with the Kwakiutl tribe. We will now be moving west – to the prairies where the Cheyenne tribes live. The Cheyenne used the buffalo as a resource for their food, clothing, and shelter, so be prepared to hear lots about the buffalo from your child! In science, classes are learning about the human body and how all the systems of the body work together. We are moving away from the study of bones and muscles to include the nervous system and how it governs the entire body! It's so interesting to learn how amazing our bodies are!

In March, the weather can change from one day to the next. Please be sure your child comes to school prepared for the weather. Also, ask if any of his or her school supplies need to be replaced. Those folders and crayons that were shiny and new in September may not be in such great shape any more. As always, classrooms are grateful for any donation of tissues and wet wipes to replenish our supplies.

Grade Four News...

**Mrs. Carley, Mr. Fiore,
Mrs. Grunow, Mrs. Weinstein,
Mrs. Wolfe**

The countdown to spring is on!

Our fourth graders continue reviewing our “Making Meaning Reader/Text Connections”, interpretations of non-fiction and fictional text, and focused on making inferences, questioning, character change and analysis, through fiction and

non-fiction writing, and poetry. The students continue to broaden their vocabulary while enhancing their comprehension. We have also concentrated on our open-ended responses during whole class Readworks lessons, small guided reading groups, and through homework assignments. In addition, classes continue to practice our DRP strategies and sharpened up our editing and revising skills. Our focus on grammar continue through “Being a Writer” and other resources. We are looking forward to another great month of learning ahead.

Fourth grade mathematicians are also hard at work! We continue our mathematical journey focusing on fractions. Students practice naming and writing fractions, estimating fractional amounts, exploring mixed numbers, naming and writing equivalent fractions, ordering fractions, and fractions on a number line. Our unit will continue with addition and subtraction of fractions. Mad Minute Math and daily warm-ups keep us on our mathematical toes! Our fourth graders have shown perseverance and tremendous growth over these weeks. Students will continue to practice and review math skills that will be assessed in the spring. Remember, it is so important to continue to review the multiplication facts with your child at home to help increase their accuracy and recall!



In social studies, we continued our tour of the U.S. in the Northeast. Students learned about the early settlers and the great immigration wave through Ellis Island at the turn of the nineteenth century. This will lead to future lessons about the urban growth of our cities and sprawl, vs. our early, rural agrarian society. In addition to examining the experience of an immigrant to the city, students will learn about how the economy fueled the expansion of the United States. We will explore the advantages of living in a city, along with the cultural contributions made to America by the millions of immigrants who settled there. All fourth graders are tested on their knowledge of the eleven states of the northeast, their capitals and two-letter state abbreviations. We look forward to the spring and our study of the sunny Southeast!

Our States RBL (research based learning) project broadened our use of technology through Googledocs and internet research. Students learned about our states from coast to coast, wrote letters,

and heard back from as far away as Hawaii and Alaska!

The current unit in science, Electricity and Magnetism, is just underway. Students were able to transfer their knowledge of atoms and their electrically charged particles to learn how current electricity works and flows through wires to create electric energy. They created “closed circuits” (using wires and batteries) to make a light bulb light up. Most recently, we have begun a variety of experiments to demonstrate the way positive and negative charges can build up on an object to cause static electricity. Fourth grade scientists were able to conduct experiments with balloons to demonstrate unlike and like charges. In doing this, they were able to learn that unlike charged balloons were attracted to one another, while balloons with the same charges repelled one another, or each other.

The fourth grade Frenchtown community is confident that the coming months will be filled with opportunity and discovery. We look forward to our continued academic success as we show what we know on the SBAC tests, as well as the start of our second research-based learning project, Endangered Species-which will include an in-class presentation from a representative of the Bronx Zoo for all fourth graders!

Grade Five News...

**Mrs. Alfano, Mrs. Demshak,
Mrs. Ferraro, Mrs. Gaspar**



It's March madness time! We hope you enjoy the healthy competition on the basketball court and in our school because Invention Convention is upon us! Remember inventions, inventor's log, and display boards are due on Wednesday, March 23rd! Judging will take place on Tuesday, March 29th and parent viewing time is 1:30-2:45pm. Each student chose an invention that solves a real problem and serves a purpose. It was hard for many to find something that no one has ever thought of before or improve upon an object that was already invented. However, once your child did, the designing and building was underway. The test trials and improvement phase definitely showed your child that it is not easy creating something and a great deal of perseverance is needed. Your child documented what was done and how it was done in

an inventor's log. Most enjoyed creating a display board demonstrating the invention process and the invention, complete with drawings and photographs. Some are a little nervous about the interview process by the judges. Judges may ask questions like: What problem does your invention solve? Why did you decide on this invention? What was the biggest problem that you faced while working on your invention? Check out the site www.ctinventionconvention.org for more information.

Your child is now expected to write essays that help readers understand a strong opinion. Opinion



writing states a point of view and supports this view with clearly stated reasons and relevant information. Your child is learning how to create

an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to clearly present their opinion. They use linking words to connect their opinion and the reasons that are supported by facts and details (e.g. in order to, therefore, for instance, because). Your child is expected to gather relevant evidence from credible sources. Students are also presented with an alternate or opposing opinion that they need to acknowledge and distinguish that from their point of view. So, when we are analyzing an opinion, we want to see a clear opinion stated, evidence presented using facts, relevant details, accurate statistics, and reasoning why the other opposing opinion is not as good. We are encouraging students to use valid reasoning, present facts in a logical manner, consider their audience, and incorporate a rich vocabulary.

The Elementary Science CMT is a cumulative test administered at Grade 5. It includes science knowledge and inquiry skills described in the Core Science Curriculum Framework for all grades up to and including 5th grade. There are 39 test questions. The Elementary Science CMT will include questions from Life Science, Physical Science, and Earth Science and the testing time is 65 minutes.



Important Dates:

March 10th: Start of 3rd marking period
March 15th: Science CMT
March 14th: Practice CMT
March 17th: Legal half day
March 21st: Report cards go home
March 23rd: Invention and Trifold Due
March 25th: No School
March 29th: Invention Convention

From the Library...

Mrs. Bilangi



As well as the various grade level research projects, students in all grades have begun their internet safety lessons. Children should be able to share some of the rules we have discussed during our lessons. There is very useful information for parents regarding internet safety on the government's website: www.onguardonline.gov

The fifth grade lunch time book club has been enjoying the magnificent book *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio. I highly recommend this book to readers of all ages.

Please remember that students are responsible for all library books taken out on their library card, even if the book stays in school. If a book gets wet, it must be replaced since mold can grow on pages that have been wet, even after it dries. We do not want mold to spread through our Media Center!



It's not too late to sign up for A+ Stop and Shop. We now have 333 families signed up. Our total to date is \$3422.39.

January Homework Winners

Michael Cardinale Grade 4
Dana Lee Grade 5

They both won ice scooters!

100% Classroom Winners

Mrs. Gambardella Grade 1
Mrs. Rodrigues Grade 1
Mrs. Martins Grade 3

We didn't do as well in January as we did in December.

Estimation Jar

Teddy Bears in the Jar=25

Winners:

Mikito Kurokawa
Jack Larkin
Ava Rose
Sam Tran
Sarah Gasparinni
Krishna Kuchikulla
Alyssa Liriano
Yeabsera Williams



Each child won a teddy bear from the jar.

Stay tuned for February's Estimation Jar.....

PTA Gifts to School

- Microphone to record on the computer and iPads
- Scholastic Books – 40 nonfiction grades K – 5
- Five Chromebooks to add to add to grades 4 and 5, one for librarian's use.
- Every classroom K – 2 received a brand new Valentine's book. Every class book is different.





Frenchtown Elementary Walking Club

"Come Walk With Us!"

This is our 3rd year doing a fitness walking club which meets Tuesdays and Thursdays 7:45-8:15 am. Our club has an open enrollment throughout the school year. Permission slips are available on our "wall of fame" here at Frenchtown. This year we have approximately 45 students signed up to walk with us. We have faculty and parents join us weekly for morning exercise. Children are encouraged to walk, jog, or run for the 30 minute session. Brisk walking will get 2 miles in before the bell rings to call us to class. Kids enjoy the social aspect as well as the refreshing start to a new day here at school. Walking outside on nice days or circling our gym floor on cold rainy days helps get our hearts pumping! Exciting news about the Kids Marathon (May 22nd) in the Spring will be coming out shortly. Mrs. Makoski and Mrs. Joyce look forward to seeing you join them!

FRENCHTOWN ELEMENTARY
Citizens of the Month
February

Grade One

Mrs. Gambardella	Gracie Goncalves
Mrs. Mordecai	Caitlin Stocknoff
Mrs. Rodrigues	Jena Aljammal
Mrs. Shinnick	Sofia Zerella

Grade Two

Mrs. Angon	Mila Biasuz
Mrs. Boyle	Tane Barhpaga
Mrs. Pereira	Christian Gallo
Ms. Sansone	Brandon Macura
Mrs. Tuohy	Linh Tran

Grade Three

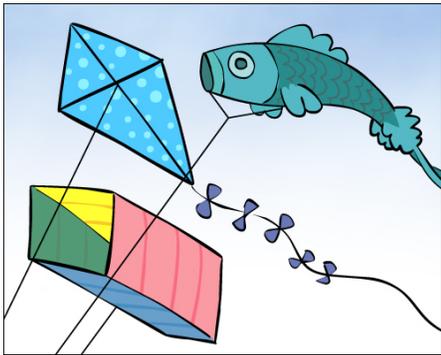
Mrs. Atwood	Joseph Riodin
Mrs. Cretella	Benjamin Parente
Mrs. Makoski	Karolynne Pimenta
Mrs. Martins	Katelynn Robinson

Grade Four

Mrs. Carley	Michael Cardinale
Mr. Fiore	Thomas Ou
Mrs. Grunow	Henry Lavoie
Mrs. Weinstein	Bernardo Bizinoto
Mrs. Wolfe	Anthony Alfano

Grade Five

Mrs. Alfano	Connor Smith
Ms. Demshak	Jenna Goncalves
Mrs. Ferraro	William Zaslow
Mrs. Gaspar	Isabella Mercado



FT Reading Department

Date

March is Reading Month!

Celebrate Dr. Seuss's birthday!! Take a trip to the library with your child and select favorite Dr. Seuss books. Encourage your child to read these books out loud to you. They provide great practice for your child to work on fluency skills.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DR. SEUSS!

BY MICHELLE GILES



HE WROTE CAT IN THE HAT
AND GREEN EGGS AND HAM
HE CREATED HORTON, THE GRINCH,
THE LORAX, AND SAM I AM.

HE LOVED TO WRITE STORIES
HE WROTE A GREAT RHYME
WHEN WE'RE READING HIS BOOKS
WE HAVE A GREAT TIME.

IT'S MARCH 2ND DR. SEUSS.
IT'S SUCH AN IMPORTANT DAY.
TODAY WE CELEBRATE YOU
HAPPY BIRTHDAY WE SAY!

March 2016

monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16		18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

Reminder

Students in Grades K-2, please make sure your name and room number goes on your free calendar when you turn it into your teacher. Mrs. Joyce cannot give you credit if you do not do this!

Mathematics News

Mrs. Sangeeta Gidwani Mrs. Lisa Zielinski

Common core mathematics is a way to approach teaching so that our students develop a mathematical mindset and to see math in the world around them. We are creating problem-solvers guided by the eight mathematical practice standards which support their understanding when solving complex problems.

To refresh, here are the 8 Standards for Mathematical Practice:

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.
4. Model with mathematics.
5. Use appropriate tools strategically.
6. Attend to precision.
7. Look for and make use of structure.
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

This month our focus standard is **Mathematical Practice 4: Model with mathematics**
This standard states that mathematically proficient students can:

- Apply the mathematics students know to solve problems arising in everyday life, society, and the workplace. In early grades, this might be as simple as writing an addition equation to describe a situation.
- Apply what they know and are comfortable making assumptions and approximations to simplify a complicated situation, realizing that these may need revision later.
- Identify important quantities in a practical situation and map their relationships using such tools as diagrams, two-way tables, graphs, flowcharts, and formulas.
- Analyze those relationships mathematically to draw conclusions. They routinely interpret their mathematical results in the context of the situation and reflect on whether the results make sense, possibly improving the model if it has not served its purpose.

What the above really means is that our students will be able to use math to solve real-world problems, organize data, and understand the world around them.

This standard will look different in each grade level as students develop. The chart below shows the progression.

Kindergarten-2 nd Grade	In early grades students experiment with representing problem situations in multiple ways including numbers, words, drawing pictures, using objects, acting out, making a chart or list, creating equation, etc. Students need these opportunities to connect the different representations and explain the connections.
3 rd -4 th Grade	Students experiment with representing problem

	<p>situations in multiple ways including numbers, words, drawing pictures, using objects, acting out, making a chart, list or graph, creating equations, etc. Students need opportunities to connect the different representations and explain the connections. They should be able to use all of these representations as needed. 3rd and 4th graders should evaluate their results in the context of the situation and reflect on whether the results make sense.</p>
5 th Grade	<p>Students experiment with representing problem situations in multiple ways including numbers, words, drawing pictures, using objects, making a chart, list or graph, creating equations, etc. Students need opportunities to connect the different representations and explain the connections. They should be able to use all of these representations as needed. 5th graders should evaluate their results in the context of the situation and whether the results make sense. They also evaluate the utility of models to determine which models are most useful and efficient to solve problems.</p>

Source: Debbie Waggoner

Our teachers are developing students' capacity to "model with mathematics" by moving explicitly between real-world scenarios and mathematical representations of those scenarios.

Teachers ask:

- Write a number sentence to describe the situation.
- What do you already know about solving this problem?
- What connections do you see?
- Why do the results make sense?
- Is this working or do you need to change your model?

To tap into this mathematical practice at home remember that it is all about real-world context! Math limited to math class is worthless. Children need to use math in science, art, music, and even reading. Show your child real graphics, articles and data from the newspaper or other sources to make math relevant and real. Have your child create real-world problems using all of their mathematical knowledge.

From the desk of Ms. Strever, Assistant Principal

Each month, the focus of my article has been on one of the characteristics highlighted in our Dream, Reach, Succeed program. This month the emphasis is on curiosity, the true foundation for learning. This article is from AboutKidsHealth by Nira Datta.



Curiosity: How to Nurture the Urge to Know More

Swiss psychologist Dr. Jean Piaget, defined curiosity as "the urge to explain the unexpected." A more intuitive definition is simply "an urge to know more." Babies, by definition, are curious creatures. They hunger for information and knowledge about the world. They take in an enormous amount of information and acquire a vast amount of skills in the first few years of life.

Curiosity is the single most powerful ingredient in learning.

Many studies show when kids are curious about something they learn it far more easily, remember it far longer, and learn at a deeper level.

There are two types of curiosity:

- **Specific curiosity:** This is curiosity about unique areas. Research suggests children tend to become curious about particular domains, such as cars or animals for instance.
- **Diverse curiosity:** this is a general hunger for information or knowledge.

While we do not know what influences specific and diverse curiosity, we do know that they vary between children. These individual differences become apparent about the age of 4. This is when the 'personality' of the child emerges - whether it's a love of cars, collecting puzzle pieces, or drawing. So it is not just that curiosity helps kids learn; it shapes who they are going to become.

An emotionally secure child is a more curious one.

One factor influencing a child's willingness to explore is their emotional attachment to their caregivers. Research suggests kids are more likely to explore the environment around them when they are well attached to their caregivers.

Children appear to become less curious as they get older.

It is not that kids become less curious as they get older; studies show they just do not express it as much as they did when they were younger. Let your child lead with their own interests.

How to foster curiosity in your child:

Show what you don't know

Research shows kids explore more when adults model that type of enquiry. Teachers and parents alike forget that an absence of knowledge and interest in gaining new knowledge is what models true learning. Next time you engage with your child, ask yourself: Do you want him/her to know you have all the answers? Or do you want him/her to see you know how to find an answer when you don't know it? The latter teaches a child to enjoy the process of learning and discovery.

Create an environment of inquiry

Parents who ask questions have kids who ask questions. Ask your child questions around the dinner table, like what did they learn at school today, or why something works the way it does. You can ask questions about anything, from science or favorite TV characters to how they choose a library book.

Encourage exploration at home

Let your child meander and follow that 'urge to know more'. When your child develops an interest – a fascination with trains, for instance - be patient. Nurture the interest: take your child to an exhibit on trains at the museum, or watch movies on the topic. This way your child can fully indulge in the process of discovery, a key element in intellectual and creative development.

Enjoy March with the promise of the first day of spring on March 20th!

Fondly,
Diane Strever