Message from the Principal

After the long, cold and snowy winter, spring has finally sprung and all of us are looking forward to a well-deserved and well-needed spring vacation. As we look towards the upcoming recess, which will start on April 14th, I would like to bring your attention to a few important events that are on the horizon.

First, the New York State assessment season is upon us. Our terrific third graders and fantastic fourth graders will take the Common Core ELA on Tuesday, April 1, Wednesday, April 2, and Thursday, April 3. They will then take the Math Assessment on April 30, May 1, and May 2. Our fourth graders will take the NYS Science Test the week of May 27th. I am asking our families to take note of these important dates. Please ensure that our students are present on the days these assessments are being administered. Our teachers and students have worked hard in preparing for them, and with your continued support, all our students will have the academic knowledge, skills, and strategies to do their personal best.

Also, please note that the 3rd marking period is quickly coming to an end. The marking period will end on Friday, April 11th. Parents will receive student report cards on April 25th. As always, please reach out to your child’s teacher with any questions or concerns.

In addition to all the work we have been doing as it relates to testing, our students have also been engaged in other programs/activities that have been exciting for them. We would like to thank all our families for the support you provided during our PARP celebration March 3rd – 14th. Our students were excited to have special guest readers in their classrooms and to receive their own individual ‘classics’ to read. A special thanks to Mrs. Kaloudis, Mrs. Beck, and Mrs. Higgins for helping with this important undertaking. We are also appreciative of your help and support with our Science Fair, which was held on March 25th and our Math Night on March 11th. All of these events were hugely successful. Our success is a result of the strong partnership that exists between our school and home.

Again, thank you for all that you do to support our students, teachers, and programs at Flower Hill.

Happy Spring!!!

Congratulations to the following Flower Hill students:

Annie Cunningham; Chavanesse Perry; Jade Mejia; Angel Menjivar Quintanilla; Ameer Shaker; Diana Diaz Mejia; Amaya Santiago; Timothy McDonald; Siena Levine; Gavin Goldsmith; Brooke Farasciano; Lars Galvin; Jannel Marroquin; Germain Thomas; Katherine Guevara-Jandres; Riley Ackerman; Karen Maldonado; Charles Girimonti; Allison Quinn; Ryan Porzio & Fiorella Benitez-Arevalo
The kindergarteners were very busy in the month of March. In reading, we worked on themes about animals and neighborhoods. We will continue to practice letter recognition, letter sounds and high frequency words. We have studied characters, setting, beginning, middle, ending, fiction, non-fiction, main idea, key details and author's purpose. The children are excited about working in guided reading groups. Please continue to read with your child at home. We celebrated Dr. Seuss' birthday by taking part in many activities and reading stories such as, Green Eggs and Ham, Wacky Wednesday, The Cat in The Hat and the children's favorite Hop on Pop. The children enjoyed participating in PARP and studying the classic "The Velveteen Rabbit."

In Math, we celebrated the 100th day of school. Our students were excited to display the special projects that they created at home using 100 objects. We worked at 100 day centers and counted to 100 by ones, twos, five and tens! We have been working on measurement and weight. We had a lot of fun using a balance and finding out which object weighed more or less or the same as another object. We have been working on addition as well as subtraction. We learned all about the scientific method as we prepared for the Science Fair. The children were very enthusiastic when taking part in our science experiments.

In April, our reading themes will be Weather and Plants. We will be studying and reading books by Eric Carle such as, The Very Hungry Caterpillar, The Tiny Seed, and The Grouchy Ladybug. We will continue to work on addition, subtraction and analyze, compare and compose shapes. An in-school field trip is scheduled called Go Green by the Long Island Center for Arts & Sciences. The children will learn the importance of keeping our planet healthy and ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle. Each child will make a paper pot and plant a seed to take home. Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

The Kindergarten Teachers

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It is quite an exciting time to be in first grade! We are learning so much and having such a great time. We recently read Flat Stanley, by Jeff Brown, and are wishing our own Flat Stanleys "Bon Voyage" as they head out to visit our friends and families around the world. We are all looking forward to hearing about and keeping track of all the places they go and things that they do!

In Science, our focus is on how to keep ourselves fit and healthy. We are studying "My Plate" and what a balanced diet should consist of. Healthy snack options and ways to fit in the right amount of physical activity each day will also be important topics during this unit. Each class presented an experiment at our annual Science Fair using the Scientific Method.

In Math, we are learning how to represent and interpret data using tables, charts, and graphs. We are reading graphs for information, and even making some of our very own individualized ones. We are also using and understanding important vocabulary words like most, fewest, least and compare. Our next unit will cover place value in two-digit numbers.

The children continue to improve their reading skills through guided and shared reading. PARP may be over, but it is still so very important that you continue to read at home each and every night to and with your child. Parents and guardians, please attempt to ask your child "inference questions" and also other relevant questions that go beyond the text.

The First Grade Teachers
Third Grade Highlights

Spring greetings from the Flower Hill third grade staff. We are looking forward to a busy but exciting month of April.

Throughout the month of April, students will work with a number of new resources from the different subject areas. Separate math work packets for both class and home have been designed that focus on fractions, with manipulatives to help make concepts clearer.

Additional resources in language arts, to compliment our Treasures series, will also be utilized. Each of these will be directed toward strategies such as cause and effect, finding key ideas and details, sequence, craft and structure, comparing and contrasting, and increasing vocabulary.

The month of April will also see us completing one science unit on buoyancy and starting another on balancing and weighing. We'll be having our spring break in-between the state assessments in language arts and math. The third grade staff wishes to thank our families for their continuous support and to ask that children be sure to get a good night's rest and a healthy breakfast before each of the testing days.

The Third Grade Teachers

Second Grade Highlights

Anyone else ready for some warmer weather? Second grade classes sure are as they spring forward in their learning. The children continue to gain more independence in their work habits and reading ability. We can't stress enough the importance of increasing fluency in reading and math facts up to 20. This is critical in order to become super readers and mathematicians. Remember, fluency is not just reading words as fast as you speak, but understanding what you read as well.

In March we wrapped up our study of the solar system with a trip to the Vanderbilt Planetarium. Each class studied the scientific method and conducted an experiment for the science fair. We have begun studying plants and will begin to focus on their adaptations in different habitats. In April we will add in animals and study their adaptations within their habitats. In social studies we learned about the difference between needs and wants, consumers and producers, and we even learned some map skills. In math we concluded the unit on three-digit addition and subtraction. April will include concepts related to foundations of multiplication and division, graphing, money, and measurement. This is an exciting time of year and we hope that "Spring Fever" turns into "Reading Fever!"

The Second Grade Teachers
Math continues to be an exciting challenge for all of us! Presently, we are moving throughout two modules….Module 4 and Module 5….Geometric shapes, Angles, Fractions, and soon Decimals. We will continue to reinforce the skills with the Go Math series. We are learning about fractions by drawing tape diagrams and comparing and explaining fractions on number lines. Also, many different shaped angles are being measured with our protractors!

Just a reminder, please have your child review multiplication and division facts frequently and practice different types of problems. Remember our children are learning and using a whole new vocabulary and different strategies. They have learned about the many strategies to use to solve a problem.

I’m sure you have heard already….Our Fourth Grade Science Lab is in Room 14. Here the children are working cooperatively and are engaged in performing different chemical tests. Very Cool! Be ready for your child to be excited and perhaps spark some interest in becoming chemical engineers!

Just recently, each fourth grader had the opportunity to participate in the Child’s Play Touring Theatre Writing Project, which was sponsored by the Arts-in-Education. Writing pieces were submitted and students eagerly waited to see if their entry would be the chosen one to be acted out live on stage. Congratulations to all the entrants…we had quite a few that were recognized for creative writing. So proud of them all!

We recently enjoyed our field trip to Bricks 4 Kidz, where the students had the opportunity to learn about simple machines and build some creative pieces. It was a fun trip for all!

Happy Spring!!

The Fourth Grade Teachers
On Tuesday, March 26th there was a lot of energy and excitement flowing around at Flower Hill. It was the Annual Science Fair! Students learned about the Scientific Method in their classroom by performing a class experiment with teacher guidance. Each classroom displayed their experiment at the Science Fair for everyone to enjoy. In addition, students in all grades were encouraged to follow the Scientific Method and perform their own experiment at home. Each student was then given the opportunity to present it to their class. All of these wonderful experiments came together in the gymnasium for students to view during school hours.

During the evening hours, families were invited to see the various projects on display. The first place winners (Elizabeth Sheran; Ella Ackerman; Daniela Colon; Riley Ackerman and Katie Browne) will now take their experiments to the Brookhaven National Laboratory and compete with many other young scientists across Long Island. Congratulations to all of our winners and those who participated!

Kindergarten registration is under way and we are planning for the 2014-2015 school year.

Just a reminder that all students entering kindergarten, 2nd, 4th and 10th grade are required to have a physical exam. Forms will be sent home in June. If your child has a scheduled annual physical before then, you can request a form from my office or print one off the school website. A doctor’s office form is also acceptable. Completed forms can be handed in to the nurse’s office anytime throughout the year.

I have completed screening students for vision and hearing. If any difficulty was detected a referral form was sent home.

Nurse, Mrs. Pirolo
What is reading fluency, and why is it important?

What is reading fluency?

Reading fluency involves the ability to read text smoothly and at a reasonable rate. When fluent readers read aloud, they do so effortlessly with speed, accuracy, and proper expression as though they are speaking. Because of the “automatic” nature of their reading, fluent readers are able to focus their attention on the ideas in the text and comprehend the author’s message. Reading fluency is not speeding through text as fast as you can!

Why is reading fluency important?

Less fluent readers struggle along through text in a very labored, word-by-word way. They must focus most of their attention on decoding the words, so comprehension suffers as they devote most of their mental energies on decoding. Therefore, fluency is important because it provides a kind of bridge between word recognition and reading comprehension.

How can parents help their child become a more fluent reader?

One way for children to become more fluent readers is to recognize more words by sight. Certain words, such as “was” and “the” have to be recognized immediately, or by sight, because they can’t be decoded. Other words are so common, such as “in”, “to” and “there” that they should be memorized as soon as possible.

Make it fun!

The first step toward improving fluency should be memorizing the most common sight words. This can be done in a fun, relaxed way by making a game out of sight word learning!

Create or buy flashcards from the lists of common sight words. With flashcards, make a “parent” pile and a “student” pile. Each word read correctly by sight goes on the “student’s” pile and incorrect words go on the “parent’s” pile. Children love to have more cards in their pile! If you create your own cards, write each word on two 3X5 index cards. Play the “memory” game or another matching game. Other sight word activities are to make or find word searches using sight words, or go through magazines or newspapers and circle or cut out all the sight words found. Point to signs as you drive and read them to your child—tell them that it’s their turn to read that sign the next time you drive past it.

Reading should be pleasurable! When working on fluency, it really doesn’t matter if your child is reading comic books or books that seem “too young” for them. What matters is reading as much as possible. And, when you read to your child, model good fluency strategies such as intonation and punctuation rules as you pause for a comma or stop at a period.