With the end of the 2nd marking period on January 24th, our students are now at the half-way mark for the 2013-14 school year. At this point, all of our parents/guardians should have received student report cards which were sent home on January 31.

As you are aware, our district has shifted to a new standard-based report card. This new report card will put our students and their acquisition of the required academic knowledge and skills, at the center of the discussion that takes place between teachers and parents. It requires that instruction, assessment, and grade reporting about individual student progress, are aligned to specific learning goals for that grade level. This will give our teachers, students, and you the parents, useful information on where to make adjustments to achieve these learning goals.

It is important that our parents are part of the conversation about the academic, social, and behavioral progress our students are making. The report card is an important component in maintaining the two-way communication between you and our teachers. If you should have any questions or concerns about how your child is doing, you do not need to wait for the end of a marking period, or for a report card to be sent home before you contact your child's teacher. A strong partnership between home and school is an important element of student success.

Over the coming weeks, there will be plenty of exciting activities for both our parents and students at Flower Hill. I can assure you that the second half of the year will be as busy as the first. We look forward to your continued involvement and partnership. As always, I thank you for all you do to support our students, teachers, and programs at Flower Hill.

Congratulations to the following Flower Hill students: Keylen Gomez Quintanilla; Spencer James; Milton Portillo Cruz; Anna McCormick; Tyler Peck; Robert McCallion; Sofia Gomez-Calderon; Gianna Delva; Jaziah Edwards; Zoe Sakellaropoulos; Alexandra Walleshauser; Jackson Stollmack; Charlotte Gordon; Kory Toth; C.J. Posillico; Anna Safonte; Naseem Blank; Keyla Maldonado; Jack Morreale; Jillian LoTurco; Lauren Landolfi; Jason Rosen; Ireny Veliz-Garcia

Great job!!!
**First Grade Highlights**

We are so amazed at how much we have learned from the beginning of the year! We started reading groups and we are starting to see all the skills we have been working on come together. We are practicing and learning our high frequency words and we are using those words in our writing. We are also working on writing stories. We brainstorm ideas for creative writing and enjoy sharing them with our peers.

We also learned about one of our heroes, Dr. Martin Luther King. What an amazing man! It was really interesting to learn about his life and how he made a difference in our country in a very peaceful way. He had an important message for us - judge each other by what's on the inside not what's on the outside!

In our Math books we are studying the comparison of length, weight, capacity, and numbers to 10. We have been using our manipulatives to explore new concepts with our friends. We will have a 100th day of Kindergarten celebration and make special 100 day projects. Details coming soon in your child’s folder.

Time really does fly when you are having so much fun learning!

The First Grade Teachers

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**Kindergarten Highlights**

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The Kindergarten Teachers
Third Grade Highlights

Happy New Year!!! As the second quarter draws to a close, we would like to share with you where we are in the curriculum. We are finishing Unit 3 in Language Arts. The children have been reading different genres of fiction, fantasy and realistic fiction. Also, we have been reading informational texts while identifying main idea and key details. In addition to recognizing the main idea of texts, the children are identifying text structure and how it shapes a story. In addition to reading and comprehension, the students have been sharpening their writing skills. Our focus for the second and third quarters will be research reports. The students are given age appropriate texts and paragraph organizers to construct a three paragraph essay.

Multiplication and division has been our focus in math. The students are learning various strategies to help solve various mathematical equations. Word problems using multiple operations continue to be taught and practiced.

The Sun, Moon, and Earth is the new unit in science. We look forward to a trip to the planetarium in March as a culminating activity for this interesting unit of study.

We ask that each student continue to practice their multiplication and division facts at home.

Thank you for your support!

The Third Grade Teachers
Our Fourth graders have been very busy this year. They are rising to the occasion of the rigorous standards associated with the Common Core.

In Math, we have been finishing up our unit on division. Students are working collaboratively in order to participate in rich math discussion and attack challenging multi-step word problems. They are connecting math to real life situations and therefore are learning to "use" math rather than to "do" math. Ask your child to share with you one of the multiple methods we have learned to attack problems and the new rich vocabulary they have learned. They have enjoyed presenting their math and sharing their thinking in order to assist their peers in further understanding. We’re looking forward to the next unit which will be geometry.

In ELA, we have enjoyed reading and discussing fiction and nonfiction text. We are making inferences and drawing conclusions on rigorous text using close reading. We are increasing our ability to write from sources including the Internet, thesaurus, and other reference materials in order to strengthen our persuasive essays with evidence and facts. We are learning to compare and contrast across text using text base evidence. We are expanding our academic vocabulary through the use of context clues in text and through conversation. We submitted stories about “peaceful” solutions to world problems, the children are excited about the possibility that their story may be selected for the March Child’s Play assembly.

In Social Studies, we are learning about the first inhabitants of New York, the Iroquois and Algonquian tribes. We have identified areas on Long Island in which Native Americans first lived and where reservations still exist. We were excited to learn that many of the towns across New York and Long Island gained their names from Native American tribes. It was fascinating to see how they used natural resources to communicate and for daily living. Additionally, we learned about the over 200 commodities associated with New York agriculture. We attended an assembly in which a local farmer presented and we submitted poems to the I Love New York Agriculture Contest.

In Science we finished up our unit on Living Things. Children had fun and demonstrated creativity in the creation of their animal projects. They worked on developing their speaking and listening skills during presentations. We are simultaneously working on the next unit, Matter, and are excited by the arrival of our first Science kit, which is chemistry. In this kit, children will participate in hands on experiments. Children will develop essential skills including: observing, recording, questioning, analyzing, and drawing conclusions. Children will learn that chemistry is the study of the world around us and how everything is made of chemicals from the pencils we write with to the oceans we swim in.

The Fourth Grade Teachers
Notes from Nurse Pirolo

Now that we are in the “cold” and “flu” season, here are a few reminders of when it is best to keep your child home from school.

- Elevated temperature, child should be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Vomiting or diarrhea in the past 24 hours.
- Coughing, sneezing, or runny nose that would interfere with learning, especially if drainage is discolored.
- Strep-throat, child must be taking antibiotics for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Any rash accompanied by other symptoms, such as fever, unusual tiredness or irritability.

Please reinforce good hand washing, use of tissues and to cover mouth when coughing. Please call the attendance number 673-2139 to report your child absent. Also, please notify the school if your child has a communicable disease.

Students are not allowed to carry medication in school, including cough drops, unless we have a signed request from the child’s doctor and parent.

Taking a few simple measures to prevent the spread of germs will help us enjoy a healthy and happy 2014!

Nurse, Pirolo

Library Literary Corner

During library classes, students have been working on reinforcing skills taught in the classroom. Students have been working on reading comprehension, with an emphasis on referring back to the text to find the answers to questions. Students have been practicing using the wording from the questions to begin forming their answers.

When it comes to book selection, some books remain popular. The Diary of a Wimpy Kid series continues to be a top reading choice for students. The top five books borrowed over the past 60 days are:

- Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Cabin Fever
- The Bernstein Bears and the Missing Dinosaur Bone
- Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days
- Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Hard Luck
- Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Roderick Rules

Kindergarten and first grade students will continue having library classes during “B weeks”. These students will have library on February 10 and then again on March 3, March 17 and March 31.

PARP will start within the next few weeks, but you don’t have to wait for PARP to share your love of reading with your children…. Start now!

Mrs. Palmer
The ABC’s of Reading Comprehension Strategies
for Parents

Why worry about comprehension?
Reading is more than saying the words or getting from the beginning of the book to the end. To be successful readers, children need to be able to comprehend text. Here are some strategies, with definitions and sample questions that could liven up your reading discussions at home.

A. Making Connections
Readers constantly make connections as they read; connections to their own lives, another book, or real world events. Bringing those connections out and discussing them can lead to more interaction and interest in a text as well as deepen comprehension.

  What does this book remind you of?
  Have you experienced any of the events or situations in this book?
  Can you understand how the character was feeling? Why?
  What do you know about the book’s topic?
  Does this book remind you of another book?

B. Visualizing
Readers create pictures in their minds as they read. If they aren’t able to, comprehension is lost. You could have your children make stops while reading aloud to describe the pictures in their minds. They could even draw for you what they see.

  What do you picture as you read this paragraph?
  When reading this story did you make pictures in your head?
  How did these pictures help you understand the story better?

C. Questioning
When readers question the text before, during, and after they read, they attend more closely to the text, clarify meaning, make predictions, and focus their attention on what's important. It is critical for readers to understand some of the most interesting questions we have aren’t always answered in the story.

  Before Reading
  What do you think will happen?
  Why do you suppose…
  During Reading
  What do you think?
  What do you wonder?
  How come…
  What does this word mean? How can I figure out using clues from the text?
  After Reading
  What would have happened if…
  I wonder why the author…
  I wonder where we could look to find out more about…