The month of November was a busy one for the Flower Hill School family. We ended our first marking period, which was followed by parent-teacher conferences to review the progress our students have made since the start of the school year. We also observed American Education Week, from November 17th through 21st, by inviting parents to visit our classrooms to see first-hand the teaching and learning process in action. I would like to thank our parents who were able to attend both or either one of those events, as they represent part of our efforts to strengthen the partnership between our school and our parents.

In addition to our focus on teaching and learning, our students were also engaged in activities that are centered around good citizenship. Our annual Thanksgiving Food Drive was a tremendous success. I am proud to report that we collected a significant amount of food items that were donated to the Helping Hands Mission. Our students also donated candies that they collected at Halloween. I would like to thank our families for your support and generosity with these important initiatives. Your kindness during the holiday season helped families in our community with their Thanksgiving celebration. It also provided our students with a tangible lesson about sharing with and caring for those in need at this time of the year.

On November 17th, a group of fourth graders made a presentation to the Board of Education about some of the initiatives that are taking place in our school. I would like to give special recognition to these brave students for their hard work and excellent presentation. We are so proud of them, as they represent the qualities that make our school special. A big thank you to our fantastic fourth graders Valencia Delva, Jimmy Viola, Angie Hernandez-Ramos, Yorimilet Rodriguez, Tyler Johnson, Khamiya Elliott, Leah Sheran, Damanjit Singh, Dametria Calderon, Markella Markotsis, and James McCormick.

During the month of December, we will have quite a few activities that I would like to bring to your attention and encourage your participation. We will have our Math Night on December 4th. The PTA’s Book Fair will be held on December 9th and 10th and our winter concert will be on December 19th for grades K-4. We hope to see you in the building for these events.

Finally, December has a way of reminding us that winter is approaching. Please ensure that our students are dressed appropriately for the weather each day. They will have outdoor recess, unless the temperature and weather conditions are unsafe. I thank you for your cooperation and your continuous support of our students, teachers and programs at Flower Hill.

On behalf of our faculty and staff, I wish you and your family a wonderful holiday season and a fantastic 2015!!!
It has been a busy fall in kindergarten. We have been studying holidays in Social Studies. In Math we are beginning Module 4. Module 4 focuses on addition. The children will gain knowledge of the values of numbers and work with embedded numbers to reason and solve addition expressions and equations. With Unit 2 completed in Treasures, we will begin Unit 3 on Transportation. Children will examine different forms of transportation through both fiction and non-fiction text. They will gain new vocabulary, study concepts about print and continue to work on phonemic awareness and listening comprehension. We are looking forward to the holiday season and will be making gingerbread houses in December.

The Kindergarten Teachers

Our First Graders have adjusted well to their new classes. We have been very busy learning new skills in many different areas. In Math, we have improved our fluency when adding and subtracting within 10. We have also mastered number bonds and working with 5 groups. We play many math fluency games that can build a solid foundation of math skills that is essential for other math concepts. Please join us for Math Night to learn some great strategies to help your child at home.

In Language Arts, we have read many non-fiction and fiction stories the past few weeks. We discussed communities, map skills, animals, and family traditions. We have focused on academic vocabulary. When children have more vocabulary knowledge they have a better understanding when reading. We are reviewing many skills each day, including, summarize, main idea, details, character, setting, plot, and author's purpose. Please read with your child each night and review these skills and high frequency words with them.

The First Grade Teachers
**Fourth Grade Highlights**

November and December are busy months here at school and at home. It was great to meet with so many of you at our parent/teacher conferences. The home/school connection is important in helping our students succeed academically and socially. The second graders are making strides in their reading ability as they consistently read in school and at home. Finding books that are interesting and at a “just right” level can be challenging. The public library is a wonderful resource in our community to help us accomplish this. In math we continued our focus on place value understanding up to 1,000. In science we studied the water cycle and related it to our previous unit on solids, liquids, and gases.

In December we look forward to developing various comprehension skills such as summarizing and understanding the author's purpose while reading a text. The students will begin to study addition and subtraction up to 200 this month. We will begin with hands-on activities. Then we will shift to pictorial representations of the numbers. As students understand addition and subtraction with larger numbers by using manipulatives and pictures, then we will utilize the standard algorithm (i.e. $142 + 123 = ___$) to find the answers to various problems.

Thank you for your continual support. Your children are wonderful! Happy holidays!

The second grade teachers

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**Third Grade Highlights**

Our third graders are looking to make this month a "December to Remember." Glancing at the calendar, it’s easy to see that this month is loaded with terrific events like: Math Night, the Scholastic Book Fair and of course, our annual holiday program.

There are great things going on in each classroom as well. "Neighborhods and Communities" is a theme that runs through both language arts and social studies this month. And since our new science unit details, in depth, the importance of earth’s water in our daily lives, students are left with the message to "Think globally and act locally!" Think of it this way: If earth’s water could be poured into one hundred cups, ninety seven of them would be filled with salt water. That leaves only three cups of fresh water.

As students continue to learn in each of the subject areas this month, there will be an emphasis by the teachers to improve comprehension and build vocabulary. They’ll also delve into the author’s purpose in writing. Does the author look to inform, persuade or entertain the reader? Additionally, students will also explore the features in a textbook, like captions and key words.

Module two in math will continue through December. That means more place value and problem solving with units of measurement. Our third grade staff encourages families to check resources like the "Engage NY" site to clarify any concerns regarding the concepts in this module or inquire about resources that may provide additional support. One additional tip: As you’re preparing holiday goodies or find yourself measuring distances to hang decorations, get your child involved by using the measuring tools you have around the house. It will benefit their learning experiences in math as well as give them a chance to have some holiday fun.

The third grade staff wishes all of our families the very best this holiday season. Thanks for all your support throughout the year. Have a happy and healthy 2015!
The fourth grade students have been working very hard these past months. In Math, we have been learning about multiplication. The students have been learning how to use area models to represent multiplication. Using their understanding of place value, and properties of multiplication the students are learning to solve multi-step word problems. Please encourage your child to practice their multiplication tables in order to gain fluency. Best way to learn multiplications is through repetition. Have your child practice with their flashcards on a daily basis. Once they learn this, division comes easily.

In English Language Arts, our students have been working on identifying strategies such as the author's purpose, main idea and understanding cause and effect through the reading of biographical and expository text. It is important that you encourage your child to read more non-fiction books. Think about your child’s interests, and then find books on those topics (sports, inventions, presidents, music, Lego’s). In writing, students have enjoyed daily writing activities corresponding to the readings.

In continuation with our unit in Social Studies we have been learning about the environment of New York. Also, students enjoyed a presentation by the Huntington Arts Council on Native American Artifacts.

In Science, we continued learning about Classification of Living Things. We have been learning about animal adaptations and their habitats.

The month of December will be busy with our Book Fair, holiday concert and looking forward to the holidays!!!

The Fourth Grade Teachers
October and November were big months for the Flower Hill Library. Brand new books arrived for the students! It was evident by the way their eyes lit up when seeing these new books that the students were pleased with the new additions to the library collection.

In the months of October and November, students listened to stories related to Halloween, Veterans Day, and Thanksgiving.

Please be sure library books are returned so that a new book can be borrowed. Notices have been given to students if they have an overdue library book. The Flower Hill Library does not charge a fine for an overdue book.

Please continue to encourage your child to read every day!

Now that we are into the cold and flu season, here are some reminders on how to keep your family healthy.

- Get vaccinated. A flu shot is recommended for everyone over 6 months old.
- Wash hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and toss into trash.
- If your child is sick, keep home from school. Your child may return to school only after being fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.
- Consult your physician if you think either you or your child has the flu.

Be sure your child is prepared to go out for recess. Please send your child with a warm jacket, hat and gloves. Children need fresh air and exercise; we will be going out as long as weather permits.

I will be conducting vision and hearing screenings as required by NYS Education Law. The purpose of this requirement is to detect any vision or hearing problems that may impede a student’s learning. If the results of the screening indicate that your child requires further follow-up, you will receive written notification. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Nurse 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 much 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”, “there” 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 “me” 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 “you” pile and a “me” pile. Each word read correctly by sight goes on the student’s “you” pile, and incorrect words go on the parent’s “me” 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 include making or finding word searches using sight words, or going through magazines or newspapers and circling or cutting 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, stop at a period, and show excitement at an exclamation point!