FLOWER HILL HAPPENINGS

Message from the Principal

The month of December is upon us and it reminds us that we are quickly approaching the end of 2015 and a new year and new beginnings await us for 2016. It seems like the start of the school year was just yesterday, and I am amazed at how rapidly things have been moving since then.

We have completed the first marking period. Our teachers and parents had conferences in November to review our students' progress thus far. We marked American Education Week November 16th - 20th and had our Math Night workshop on December 3rd. Each of these events provided our parents with the opportunity to visit our classrooms and experience first-hand the teaching and learning process in action. They also represent our continued effort to engage our parents and strengthen the partnership between home and school. I would like to thank our parents who were able to attend any of these events, and I encourage your continued involvement in the learning process throughout the year.

During the month of November, we also had our Thanksgiving Food Drive. I am proud to report that we collected a significant amount of food items that were donated to the Helping Hands Mission. Again, I would like to thank our families for your support and generosity with this important cause. Your continued support and kindness, during the holiday season, helped families in our community to have a happy Thanksgiving.

As we look toward the remaining days in the month of December, I would like to remind you of some upcoming events. Our PTA's Book Fair will be held on December 8th and 9th. Our winter concert will be on December 23rd for grades K-4. We hope to see you in the building for these events.

Finally, while the temperatures have been mild so far, 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 anticipated cooperation.

As we reflect on the year that was and anticipate the new beginnings that await us, we are cognizant of how fortunate we are to have such a supportive school community. All of us at Flower Hill thank you for your continuous and unwavering support of our students, teachers and programs. On behalf of our faculty and staff, I wish you and yours a very wonderful holiday season!!

Upcoming Flower Hill Events for December

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>12/3</td>
<td>Math Night</td>
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<td>12/8</td>
<td>Gr. 1 F/T “Teddy Bear Clinic”</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/8 &amp; 12/9</td>
<td>Book Fair/Winter Workshop 6-8pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/23</td>
<td>Winter Concert @ FH</td>
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<td>12/24-1/1</td>
<td>Winter Recess</td>
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Congratulations to the following Flower Hill students: Cassidy Harris; Angela Abbatelli; James Markotsis; Harmony Cantave; Michelle Calix Pineda; Kareem Alfaro; Abbey Rose Goldman; Braedan Kline; Luke Lomler; Ryan DiVico; Emma Meystrik; Avery Davidson; Shannon Koepele; Anna McCormick; Keegan Malone; Jonathan Kraft; Timothy McDonald; Thomas Smith; Isabella Rodriguez; Brooke Farasciano; Charlotte Gordon; Katherine Pineda & Keira Coulter  Great Job!!!
Kindergarten Highlights

It has been a busy fall in kindergarten. We visited White Post Farm in October and saw “Frosty the Snowman” this month. We completed Module 1 in math, where we classified and counted numbers to 10 and we are beginning Module 2, where we will be identifying and describing shapes. We just completed Unit 3 in Treasures on Transportation and are beginning Unit 4 on Food. In our unit on food we will read and write about the food we eat. As we progress through the unit, we will develop and apply key comprehension skills that good readers use as they read. We are finishing up the first unit of Fundations. We learned letter sounds, letter formation, rhyming, story retelling and initial and final sounds in words. We are looking forward to the holiday season and will be making gingerbread houses in late December.

Happy Holidays!!!
The Kindergarten Teachers

First Grade Highlights

November was filled with so many special activities, while our busy learning days were going on in our classrooms. Early dismissal days and Election Day allowed us the opportunity to meet parents during report card conferences. It was a pleasure seeing all of you!

Each classroom started working with Mrs. Heather Thorgensen, who is presenting public speaking workshops in all our first grade classes. Her dynamic presentation was enjoyed by all. We are looking forward to next month’s meeting. Ask your children about her lesson.

All the classes had the pleasure of inviting our family parents to join us during American Education Week. It was so much fun to see everyone get involved in the math centers. The children really enjoyed ‘playing’ these games, while learning their math skills. We will continue to use center activities as new math units are covered. Please remember to review addition and subtraction facts with your children whenever a spare moment is found. Our classes were busy with reading and writing lessons too. Setting, plot, and characters, were just a small part of the Treasures lessons. Social Studies focused on Election Day, Veteran’s Day and the significance of Thanksgiving, while we initiated a science unit focusing on Comparing and Measurement.

We all had a great time on our field trip to the Dolan Center for the “Teddy Bear Clinic.” Our first graders will partake in the Flower Hill Songfest. It will be exciting to hear and see their hard work on this day. During this month all the first grade classes will schedule a ‘Gingerbread House Creation Day’. More on this will be coming home soon.

December will bring our classes into the Common Core Module 2 Math Unit which will focus on bridging adding, subtracting and problem solving within ten, to work with two digit numbers. The students will begin solving addition and subtraction problems involving teen numbers. Counting on and counting back strategies will assist their math development into ‘making ten’ and ‘take from ten’ in upcoming lessons.

Our Treasures reading series will take us into a unit entitled “Let’s Create!” Children will read and write about different ways we can have fun. As we progress through the unit the children will also develop and apply key comprehension skills that good readers and writers use. What an exciting time of year it will be!

We wish all of our Flower Hill families a Happy and Healthy 2016!!
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. It was wonderful to have families come for Math Night to see some 2nd grade concepts that we have learned in action. In science we wrapped up our study of solids, liquids, and gases and look forward to the water cycle and weather. In social studies we continued discussing communities as well as the importance of Veteran’s Day.

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. We look forward to seeing you at our Gingerbread House decorating activity and the Songfest. Your children are wonderful! Happy holidays!

The second grade teachers

The third grade students are in full swing into the second quarter of the school year! The students have been telling time, estimating numbers, solving algorithms, and completing two-step work problems in math. Math module 3 is the next endeavor for our students. This module will continue to develop their multiplication and division skills using units of six through ten. Please continue to have your child practice their multiplication facts.

Language Arts continues to develop your child’s understanding of fiction and non-fiction text. The focus has been identifying the author’s purpose for writing, identifying a character’s trait and how it impacts the story, and locating key details that add to the main idea of the text. The students are using the text to provide “proof” for written response questions. They are encouraged to go back to the story, find the answer, underline the “proof”, and respond in writing.

Science continues to be a hands-on, project based learning for our students. The children performed experiments on objects that would sink or float and created boats that could carry weights without sinking. Our next unit of study is on Earth’s water and the effect it has on our landscape and environment.

United States and local government is our topic of study in Social Studies. The students will learn about our local leaders and their impact on our daily lives.

Don’t forget our winter concert is December 23! Best wishes for a happy holiday and healthy New Year!!

The Third Grade Teachers
The fourth grade students have been working very hard in these past months. In Math, we have been working on both multiplication and division. The students are not only learning to multiply and divide using the standard algorithm, but they are also learning to divide and multiply using a place value chart and area model. Please encourage your child to practice their multiplication tables in order to gain fluency. The best way to learn multiplication is through repetition. Have your child practice with their flashcards on a daily basis. Once they learn multiplication, division becomes easier.

In English Language Arts, our students have been working on identifying strategies such as the author’s purpose, main idea and cause and effect through the reading of biographical and expository text. 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 as well as the early settlers of New York. Also, students enjoyed a presentation by the Huntington Arts Council on Native American Artifacts. The students learned about the Iroquois, Algonquians, and many other Native American tribes in New York and throughout the United States.

In Science, we continue learning about Matter. We have also started our first science kit, “Chemical Test”. The students will complete various tests of five mystery powders to develop an understanding of physical and chemical properties. Students will develop hypotheses and test their hypotheses through exploration. Also, students will be making observations and writing a conclusion based on their investigations.

Have a wonderful holiday season!

The Fourth Grade Teachers
NOTES FROM THE HEALTH OFFICE

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. Wash for a full 20 seconds, the time is takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and toss into trash. If a tissue is not available, cover your cough or sneeze with your sleeve.
- If your child is sick, keep them 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.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/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 at 631-673-2058.

Stay Healthy!

Kristina Cavalcante, RN
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 through text in a 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 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.

Play the “memory” game or another matching game with sight words written on two index cards. 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!