

Mrs. Nixon's February Class Notes

Dear Families,

Research is everywhere in our elementary class - from the youngest to the oldest! As the children become readers and see older students researching and giving reports, they soon want to write about and illustrate their own topics. Their first attempts include many drawings and one or two sentences. As skills develop, their reports become more complex. Throughout the process, we all learn many facts (especially about animals) that amaze and inspire us to keep learning more! The older students are busily learning keyboarding skills to help them produce a more polished product. This week has been filled with many oral reports as we wrap up our study of arthropods.

Pin maps and paper maps have been a common sight this week, with younger ones adding in the ocean names to their world maps and older students making sure they know all their state names. Europe has been on our minds as we try to get our bearings about all the small but important countries and their shared borders. We have also been learning the names and locations of the major rivers of the world. Students will enjoy looking at photos and videos of the various rivers with you at home.

We continue our work with parts of speech, learning about the various uses of nouns, the changes in verb formation, and the importance of prepositional phrases. We have searched for each part of speech in the books we read and even in the statements we make. Children have produced posters of prepositional phrases, labeling them with the corresponding symbols we use in our grammar boxes.

Math abounds with all the operations in daily use. Younger students are practicing subtraction, changing thousands to hundreds, etc. Older students are learning to write all the steps of squaring and square root that they have used for

months with our concrete materials. Fractions continue at all levels, with lots of repetition of addition and subtraction with unlike denominators and changing answers to their simplest form - not easy! Now some are learning to change common fractions to decimal fractions and percentage.

We are all enjoying getting to know Mrs. Hess, our new assistant, who has already contributed to the well-being of our classroom through her organizational skills. She has been getting to know many students by helping them with their final drafts for their reports and listening as they practice for their oral presentations. Her twinkly eyes and easy smile speak volumes of the appreciation she has of our students.

Be sure to check out the LOYALTY CREDITS you have earned toward your child's Middle School years at Mountain Laurel. It is explained in the new publication about our Middle School, which you received in your enrollment contract for next year.

Sincerely,

Mona

Dear Families,

Parent/teacher conferences will be held Monday, February 21st. (No school that day.) See the link below to sign up for either a phone or in-person conference. If these times are not convenient, please send me an email, and we will figure out a time that works.

For Valentine's Day the elementary students make Valentines for each other the week before. If you have purchased Valentines, it is fine for your child to bring those in as well.

Sincerely,

Mona

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0D4EACAB29A5FF2-elementary6>

Dear Families,

As the snow melted, the mud took over but did not stop us from playing outside. The children were so excited to have such a beautiful day to play and explore in the woods Friday.

Learning to play chess, perfecting our drawing and knitting skills, and exploring the area of rectangles and triangles have been some of our recent activities in the older group. The younger group has been learning about the qualities of solids, liquids, and gases and memorizing multiplication facts through the use of bead bars. Some of them are also multiplying by multi-digit multipliers with the checkerboard.

We encourage students to read both fiction and nonfiction. Some of them have continued reading about arthropods and some have gone on to new topics such as Ancient Greece, China, the work of Jane Goodall, electricity, windmills, dog breeds, trucks, etc. From their reading they will venture into their next research projects, using their reading, writing, and artistic skills in their explorations.

If you have not signed up for a conference, send me an email and we will figure out a time that works.

Sincerely,

Mona
