



# Cougar News

December 2012

## LOVIN' ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

We have many exciting reading opportunities in the month of December!

**CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!** We are looking for mystery readers, guest readers, and other support for our annual **"Reading Palooza"**. The celebration will take place on Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013, to celebrate ELA field day, Dr. Seuss's Birthday, and Read Across America day. If you are interested, please contact Mrs. Taylor at [Annalee.brown@cms.k12.nc.us](mailto:Annalee.brown@cms.k12.nc.us).

Fourth and Fifth grade students are participating in the **"Letters for Literature"** writing competition sponsored by Target. They will be answering the following in a letter or essay format: How has an author's work--novel, nonfiction, poetry--changed your view of the world or yourself? What did you learn about yourself that you didn't realize before reading the author's work? We are excited to view our students' writing!

Kindergarten, first, second, and third grade students are participating in the Book It! program entitled **"Read Your Heart Out"**. Students will earn a free personal pan pizza from Pizza Hut each month October thru March when they meet the goals set forth by the grade level. We are excited for our students to earn rewards and become life-long readers!

Congratulations to all of our readers in 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade who participated in the Charlotte Checkers **"Pick-Up A Book and Read"** program. We will see what prizes were won this month!

In November, 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders participated in their classroom spelling bees. Congratulations to all of our winners! Our school winner will participate at the zone spelling bee on December 18<sup>th</sup>, at the Northwest School of the Arts.

Kindergarten, second, third, fourth, and fifth grade students participated in the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Writing Contest. The theme this year is **"Live it, Share it, Extend it: The Dream of a Global Community."** Congratulations to our grade level winners! We are excited to continue our winning streak at the district level!

## LOVIN' ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CONTINUED

This year, we are shifting to the Common Core State Standards in all grade levels. These standards will ensure that all students are prepared to be College and Career ready. One of our focus standards is Reading Standard 10. With this standard, students are expected to read fiction and nonfiction texts on grade level by connecting ideas and texts, using textual evidence, and acquiring habits of reading independently. To access the standards go to [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org). The end-of-the-year expectations for students are:

Grade Level	EOY Expectation	Grade Level	EOY Expectation
Kindergarten	C	Third grade	P
First grade	I	Fourth grade	S
Second grade	M	Fifth grade	V

For more tips and information regarding English Language Arts and to find out more about me visit my wiki: <http://annaleetaylor.cmswiki.wikispaces.net>





## MUSIC NEWS

Students in kindergarten through third grade will be assessing their understanding of note values, rhythm, and vocabulary learned thus far in music. Students will also explore the musical styles of various global celebrations, such as Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, Christmas in other countries, and Los Posada.

Fourth and fifth graders will present their "Scrooge " musical and investigate math with an old but familiar English carol, the "12 Days of Christmas". How much would it cost to follow that tradition today??

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION NEWS

Students in grades 3-5 will understand concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics that apply to the learning and performance of movement. Students in grades K-2 will be applying competent motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities.

Get Happy!

According to recent medical research the more physically active you are, the happier you can be. Penn State researchers asked 190 college students to keep diaries for eight days, noting the duration and intensity of exercise sessions as well as how they felt and how well they slept. Participants who were more physically active felt more excitement and enthusiasm than those who were less active. Their positive feelings were even more pronounced on days when they stepped up their activity levels.

## MEDIA NEWS

Students in grades 3-5 will be using the website [www.easybib.com](http://www.easybib.com) to create citations. This is a good site to bookmark at home...you'll wish you'd had it when you were in high school and college. Students in grades K-2 are using the Popplet app to classify books by their genre characteristics.

## ART NEWS

Kindergarten will read "The Mitten" by Jan Brett and explore the structure of knitting to find out why a knitted mitten can stretch. They will create and decorate paper mittens with patterns.

First Grade will read "The Hat" by Jan Brett. They will also explore the structure of knitting, find out what the structure of a single piece of wool fiber looks like, and why it keeps us warm.

Second Grade will begin their Art By Me lesson. They will be on a journey of self exploration by drawing a self portrait wearing a hat. They will study themselves in a mirror to become aware of what they really look like and understand facial structure.

Third Grade is also working on their Art By Me lesson. They are exploring the life of Vincent Van Gogh and learning how to draw overlapping objects by drawing sunflowers in Van Gogh's style.

Fourth Grade will be working on North Carolina lighthouses. They will learn the structure of a lighthouse. They will also write a fictional story about the lighthouses they have chosen to draw based on facts they researched in the computer lab.

Fifth Grade will work on their Art By Me lesson. They will be exploring the Mayan civilization and learning the structure of a Mayan Sunface as they draw one.





## KINDERGAREN NEWS

Kindergarten is very busy this quarter. We have a lot of new things to explore and investigate. We would like to thank everyone for all that you do.

**ELA:** In literacy, we are learning about how things move and maps and globes. We will continue to practice reading strategies such as predicting, sequencing, making connections, identifying the main topic and a detail from the story, and asking questions. We are also working on our letter sounds. The letters that we have introduced this far are /s/, /m/, /d/, /p/, /a/, /h/, and /t/. We will continue to introduce sight words in our pre-decodable books and use them to make sentences.

**Math:** In math, we are working on measurement and the number system. In this unit, we are learning about using multiple nonstandard units to measure length, counting a set of 15 objects and finding the total after a small amount is added or taken away. We will also be counting to 50 and writing our numbers to 15.

**Writing:** In writing, we will continue to work on small moment stories that tell about our lives. We will also, continue to work on labeling our pictures, making sure our story matches our pictures, and making a beginning, middle, and end in our stories. We will also work on opinion writing. In this unit, we will write and state an opinion about a topic or book.

**Integrated Studies:** We are finishing our unit on how things move. We are getting ready to start our unit on maps and globes. In this unit, we will learn how to locate land and water features and learn the differences between globes and maps.

## FIRST GRADE NEWS

**ELA:** During the month of December, we will continue our study of folktales. We will be extending our study to learn about three particular authors: Jan Brett, Tomie dePaola, and The Brothers Grimm. Through this author study, we will be learning about different cultures and traditions around the world. Please discuss traditions unique to your family with your child. This will help them to compare and contrast their lives and experiences to those of the characters in the stories. We will also be extending our understanding of the main idea and details while we are reading. At home, continue to identify the message of stories as well as piece together the details, like pieces of a puzzle, to help your child determine the main idea. It is important that your child also continues to read each night to practice the new skills learned in the classroom.

**Writing:** During writing we will continue working on informative and explanatory texts. Students will become more independent in researching a topic, gathering information, and picking out the details and main idea from their sources. They will be asked to identify the topic they are studying, provide facts about their topic, and give their writing piece a sense of closure. In order to be successful with this, they will need to understand sentence structure and proper nouns as well as consistently spell high frequency words correctly. Please have your child practice writing and speaking in complete sentences at home.





## FIRST GRADE NEWS CONTINUED

**Math:** As we move through second quarter, we will be studying place value and building our understanding of numbers. We are working with larger numbers and stressing the importance of grouping when counting and counting on. In our study of place value, students will learn that a bundle of ten ones equates to one ten. Students will begin to visualize numbers as parts that are combined to make a whole. We will also explore numbers up to one hundred. When working with your child, discuss different parts of a number and question him/her about his/her problem solving strategies.

**Integrated Studies:** The character trait for the month of December is *caring*. We will discuss the importance of caring for yourself and for others. Our study of culture in literacy will also be integrated into our social studies lessons. We will learn about different traditions in our community and how communities change over time. We will talk about the past, the present, and how technology allows for changes in communities. We will be comparing communities and cultures, and discussing why communities change over time. This would be a great time to share some of your "Well when I was younger....." stories.

We will be studying about different Earth materials such as rocks, soil, and water in Science. During this process, we will determine what makes these materials useful in different ways. We will also discuss the differences between solids and liquids. Through exploration, students will be able to identify and describe solids, liquids, rocks, soil, and water using new vocabulary!

**Homework:** Thank you for ensuring that your child has his or her homework completed each night. The math concept is aligned with the lessons that are being taught in class. Continue reading and discussing the main idea and details of the text. It is important that homework is completed and checked by you each night. Feel free to have conversations with your child about the homework to further reinforce the skills he/she is practicing! Keep up the great work, and please contact us with any questions or concerns you may have.

## SECOND GRADE NEWS

**We are continuing to have a great year in second grade, igniting innovation and learning!**

**ELA:** In literacy, we will continue to work on blending, dictation, and applying our reading strategies while reading. We have begun to explore our new theme, *Structure and Exploration*. During this theme we will explore different things. We will also focus on the following skills: identifying the main idea and key details of a text, text features, story elements, and asking and answering questions such as who, what, when, where, why, and how.

**Math:** In math, we will continue to use known strategies to solve addition and subtraction word problems. Students will also solve addition and subtraction word problems using groups of tens and ones instead of drawing pictures. We will work with the Base-10 number system, in which students will represent numbers with strips of ten and singles. Students will also continue to work on developing coin equivalencies and combinations, developing visual images of numbers, and telling time to the hour, half hour, and five minute intervals.

**Writing:** In writing, we will continue to work on creating informative/explanatory text and to work on editing and revising our writing. This also includes grammar and conventions.

**Integrated Studies:** In science, we will continue our exploration of life cycles. In social studies we will be studying economics and financial literacy.

**The second grade team would like to thank all of you for our commitment and support to help ensure a successful school year!**





### THIRD GRADE NEWS

Second quarter has begun and our third graders are in the full swing of learning! Our universal theme for the next few months is "Structure and Exploration."

**ELA:** We have been focusing on fables, folktales, and myths. Students are reading these texts and identifying key elements in each. Students are also comparing and contrasting the three texts. In ELA, we are continuing to integrate our social studies and science Common Core Essential Standards. Our next area of focus will be using text features, specifically images, to help students to identify important information about a given story. Please keep reading with your child each night for thirty minutes.

**Writing:** In writing, students have worked through the writing process on a persuasive letter, cinquain poem, and concrete poem. They have been following our argumentative rubric to guide them through stating and supporting their opinions. At this point in the quarter, we are finishing argumentative essays related to Dr. Martin Luther King's dream. Students will continue to write across the content areas on topics related to science, mathematics, ELA, and social studies.

**Math:** Solving multiplication problems is our current emphasis in math. Students are expected to fluently know their multiplication facts from zero to twelve. Third grade is solving multiplication problems using a variety of strategies: picture, skip counting, repeated addition, and arrays. Once we have mastered multiplication, we will begin division. Although our focus will be on multiplication and division, we will still keep a strong spotlight on multi-step word problems using addition and subtraction as well as algebraic thinking.

**Integrated Studies:** We have been exploring the solar system. Our students are able to identify the order of the planets and list details about each. We excited to continue our studies on our Earth and the universe. Looking ahead, our next unit focuses on matter, properties and change. After learning about the three branches of government, we are taking a look at historical narratives. We are using historical narratives to guide us in identifying the key facts that make up the text. Further, we are using this information to gain an understanding of how people, places and events have changed throughout time.



### FOURTH GRADE NEWS

**ELA:** We are working on referencing the text to make inferences, glean the main idea, and draw conclusions. We will be describing the theme, character, setting, and events of a story using details. We will also begin work with myths and poetry with an emphasis on using figurative language. Our Grammar studies will continue with parts of speech, including adverbs and pronouns. We will be completing our MLK writing contest and moving to another. The next contest is "Letters for Literacy". Students will be able to write to their favorite author. This will reinforce the letter writing skills they worked on earlier this year. Students really enjoy this project.

**Math:** In math we have just started a new unit on place value/estimation. During this unit students will:

- Read, write, and sequence numbers up to 1,000,000.
- Determine the place and value of digits in numbers.
- Add and subtract multiples on 10 (including multiples of 100 and 1,000) fluently.
- Round numbers
- Solve problems using estimation.

We will also begin timed multiplication and division fact tests. It is essential for students to know these facts fluently. We will also continue to work on problem solving using multiplication and division strategies.

\*Remember the Student Math Handbook is a great resource you and your child can use at home when completing math homework.



## FOURTH GRADE NEWS CONTINUED



**Integrated Studies:** Social Studies this month will concentrate on the settling of North Carolina by regions: Coastal Plains, Piedmont, and Mountains. Students will learn where you live effects how you live. In Science we will be continuing our unit on Energy and Conservation and Forces and Motion.

During our investigations students will:

- Recognize the basic forms of energy (light, sound, heat, electrical, and magnetic).
- Recognize the ability of energy to cause motion or change.
- Recognize that light travels in a straight line unless it is refracted, reflected or absorbed.
- Explain how electrically charged objects push or pull on other electrically charged objects (attraction or repulsion).
- Explain how magnets interact with all things made of iron and with other magnets to produce motion without touching them.
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Please keep the SCIENCE FAIR PROJECT and dates in mind! Students receive grades on every individual part as well as the whole project. These dates are posted in student agendas.

**\*\*Don't forget to start planning/saving for our fieldtrip to Raleigh in May! It is \$92. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to ask your child's teacher.**

## FIFTH GRADE NEWS

*Updates by Grade Level:*

We are well on our way on our journey through the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter. Students are digging deeper into our curriculum, reaching new heights, and achieving new goals each week.

**ELA:** Students are continuing their studies of the 13 original colonies. Through this unit, students are summarizing the political, economic and social aspects of colonial life in the thirteen colonies as well as analyzing major battles and conflicts during that time. We are pairing these Social Studies standards with our English Language Arts standards by incorporating historical fiction novels. Students are determining the theme of a story from details in the text, including how the characters in the story respond to challenges. In Writing, we will be working on our MLK writing contest essays.

**Math:** In Math, we are continuing our focus on fractions. This is the largest percentage of the EOG and we are continuing to learn strategies for comparing and ordering fractions, converting fractions to percents, and multiplication and division of fractions. Students are working through performance tasks that allow them to apply the fraction strategies to real world problems.

**Integrated Studies:** Scientifically speaking, we are working in our unit about energy conservation and transfer. This involves students explaining how the properties of some materials change as a result of heating and cooling.

Reminder: Don't forget to turn in D.C. trip forms!



## TALENT DEVELOPMENT NEWS

*Updates by Grade Level:*

Second Grade: We are continuing the identification process for 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade TD Students. Currently, we are underway with our portfolio process. Students are working on various portfolio pieces to demonstrate several categories of giftedness.

Third Grade: Students are reading wonderful selections in our Junior Great Books. Recently, students completed a text analysis of "The Master Cat." In addition, students will begin to use texts from the College of William and Mary- with a unit titled Journeys and Destinations. This unit focuses on the concept of change. In preparation for grades 4 and 5, students will begin to work with Mrs. Hefner on "Math-Olympiad-in-Training" problems. These math problems require students to think critically and apply several problem solving strategies. They are a great challenge!

Fourth Grade: Students are reading the novel, "Island of the Blue Dolphins." Making inferences and character development and motivations will be highlighted in discussions of this novel. Students will also dig into how structure and exploration, the new quarter theme, is connected with the novel. In math, students are continuing to practice different strategies for problem solving. Students are working on Math Olympiad problems in the classroom. They are collaborating in solving these problems. Different solutions to each problem are also encouraged.

Fifth Grade: Students are working with ELA materials from the College of William and Mary. Students are concluding their unit on Autobiographies and will soon begin a unit on Persuasion. All of the William and Mary units feature advanced reading selections chosen for their complexity, depth, relevance to issues facing our society, and capacity to provoke interpretive behavior and contemplative thought. In Math, students will work on critical problem-solving skills using various strategies. Students will be working with problems from "The Problem Solver."

## TALENT DEVELOPMENT NEWS CONTINUED

### Shout-Outs:

Congratulations to our 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Students who competed at Mathapalooza! Our team placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in team building and 3<sup>rd</sup> in team problem solving.

Participating Students: *Omari Brown, Melanie Carnahan, Sonya Dutt, Lucas Franco, Guilia Girboni, Emily Guerry, Gia Karmatz, Nicholas Parrott, John Polek, and Natalie Vogel*

Based on our first few weeks of problem solving practice and the first official Olympiad competition, the following students are to be recognized for their critical thinking and problem solving:

4<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathletes: *Fiona Reed, Sota Kaneko*

5<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathletes: *Joseph Kaseman, Alana Guerry, Alec Wells*



## SCHOOL COUNSELOR NEWS

### **Making Connections:**

We make connections everyday with our families, our neighbors and the clerk at the local grocery store. We communicate and interact with others many times throughout the day. The connection we make is hopefully a positive one, linking us to the person to whom we are relating. Sometimes it is not, and the relationship is lost or damaged until a new, strengthened connection is made. We also connect with things. We see our children communicating via computers and cell phones, and we may wonder if the new video game has become our child's closest friend. This article will focus on the meaningful connections we want to make with our children and want our children to initiate with others. These positive connections enrich our lives and our relationships with other people.

**Connecting With Your Child:** Connecting with your child does not have to be an elaborate plan or expensive outing. It can be simple, uncomplicated, and cost nothing. Here are some ways to connect with your child:

**Morning** – Start the morning off right by being organized the previous night. Be sure your child has everything ready and packed for school. No one benefits if the day is started with rushing and harsh words. Instead, try to make time to eat breakfast together and use this time to talk about the upcoming day.

**During the day** – Include a note in your child's lunchbox or school bag. Remind your child of something you will do together that day or include a short note that you are thinking about your child.

After school – "What did you like best about your day?" Of course you want to hear about the challenges of the day, too, but don't forget to end with the positive. Communicate trust that your child can handle things, and support that you will always be there to help. Let your child know how proud you are of any (even small) accomplishments.



## SCHOOL COUNSELOR NEWS CONTINUED

Connecting with your continued-

**Evening** – Take time to relax together. Read a book, play a game, or enjoy a favorite family show together. Your family may sleep better and feel more connected to each other when you slow down and unwind together.

**Weekends** – They are a perfect time to share family time. Take a walk, go to a park, visit the library, play outside, or make something together. Life is hectic; take time to enjoy it.

### **Upcoming Events:**

College Week December 10-14

\*If you have college pennants and/or posters we can borrow to decorate the school please contact Ms. Bunyan.

### **Holiday Help:**

During these difficult economic times, the holidays can be very stressful. If you are in need of some extra help this holiday season, please contact Ms. Bunyan. There are a few different programs that may be helpful in assisting you.







## IMPORTANT DATES

- **December 1:** Unicycle Club in North Mecklenburg Christmas Parade
- **December 3-14:** Student Council's Toy Drive
- **December 5-7:** PTO Cookie Walk
- **December 6:** PTO/Winter Performance 5<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade
- **December 10-14:** College Week
- **December 10-14:** PTO Holiday Store
- **December 12:** Principal's Coffee at Just Baked Cupcakes and Coffee House, 9:00 a.m.
- **December 19:** Classroom Winter Parties from 1:30-2:45 p.m.
- **December 20:** Character Education Assemblies (K-2 9:00 a.m., 3-5 10:00 a.m.)
- **December 21-January 1:** Holiday Break

