

Friday, December 12, 2014

Dear Parents and Students,

What a week! Illness (flu and upper respiratory funk) has caused four to six of our students to be absent every day this week. Let's hope this was the beginning and the end to our seasonal sickness, so we can get back on track to good health and steady learning. Let's keep our hands washed and get plenty of rest to help deter the germs from attacking us.

Just a few things...

- I mailed the Deep River reading logs that were returned to me. I will hand out the water park passes when they arrive- my guess is sometime in the spring.
- Six Flags reading logs are not due until March, but these may be returned to me at anytime. Six hours of home reading was the requirement with a parent/guardian signature.
- Continue keeping up with your AR reading logs, which should be in your binder.
- We have our new reading ranges, so please make sure you are reading at your correct level. We had library this week AND our class library is now open for business...again. You SHOULD have a book to read during self-selected reading time.
- We had a great time participating in an "Hour of Code" this week. The kids had the opportunity to get a taste of computer programming in a game-like setting. Way to go!
- Our reading quiz and vocabulary/word skill quiz for Christmas in Camelot will be on Monday, December 15. You should have your list in your binder and they are also posted on our weebly website. Next week we will also have another vocabulary/word skill list test on Friday. See weebly for details. We will NOT have a vocabulary quiz on the Monday when we return to school from break.
- "This is Our Story" is on Monday night, December 15, in the high school gym at 7:30. If you have never been, you should go. It is amazing how many musical students we have across the district. Our fourth and fifth grade choir students will be singing. The music is sure to put you and your family into the Christmas spirit.
- We will be conducting a hat assembly-line experiment, so lots of newspaper is needed (no advertisements or supplements). Please send in what you can over the next week. Thanks in advance.
- Our holiday party is scheduled for Friday, December 19. I have no details except it will be at 2:15-3:00. If help or donations are needed, a PTO parent should be calling you. I am sorry that I have no other information for you.

- If your child prefers, a holiday hat can be worn next week inside the building (except during PE) as long as he/she does not use it as a toy or distraction.
- I went to a writing/reading workshop on Wednesday. The topic detailed how we, the teachers, can more effectively connect our reading instruction with our 6+1 writing instruction and academic standards to help our students meet the revised expectations for standardized testing. It was very beneficial.

For those of you who have had a child take the ISTEP in the past, the current test questions and student responses will look much different. There will be three types of writing in the Applied Skills English/ Language Arts test- constructed response, essay, and a longer timed writing. All three types of writing will be responding to passages read.

Constructed response- These will look like the questions like Wednesday's homework. There may be more than one question to answer within a question. The children will read a passage and then respond using textual evidence.

Essay- These will require the children to read two or more passages and connect the themes through comparison and contrast or main ideas and details. The objective is to have the kids analyze complex tasks. For example, a question may read, "You have read two stories about _____. Write an essay describing character 1 from story 1 and one of the main characters from story 2. For each character described:

Explain how the thoughts, wants, and/or actions of the character help you understand what the character is like.

Explain why the character chooses to _____.

Be sure to include specific details from each story to support your ideas.

The format will allow for approximately 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ pages for the essay.

Expository (think report) or Persuasive Writing- From what I understand, there will no longer be an isolated writing prompt (i.e. Think of a special day in your life. Write about who was there, what you did, how you felt, etc.) that allows the student 55 minutes to compose a creative narrative. The writings will more likely require a more persuasive themed writing or a writing piece where multiple paragraphs are required. This writing piece will also be connected with something the kids have been required to read beforehand. The format will allow for approximately three pages of writing.

I wanted to share the information above with you to inform you not to frighten you. This is new for all of us. In class we will continue to connect our reading and writing through deliberate practice, so the kids will be ready.

Enjoy your weekend.