

January 11, 2014

Dear 4th grade parents,

A short week to kick off the new year, but eventful nonetheless! I'm sure the kids will remember the "polar vortex" and having to set up space heaters to beat the cold for a long time, but in the end our classroom was reasonably comfortable by the time classes began on Thursday, and the central heat was back on by 10:00 AM. This is one of those stories that I'm sure will become embellished over time to be much more dramatic!

The Geography Bee on Friday morning was quite a coming-out party for 4th grade. The students were very nervous about their ability to compete with the middle school, but our daily integration of world geography across the curriculum over the past 4 months proved my assertions to them that they know much more than they give themselves credit for! Three of our students survived to the very late rounds, and two made it into the final tie-breaker. Hearty congratulations to all, especially Leah who tied for 3rd, and Ella who placed 2nd (narrowly edged out by 8th grader Jacob Clemens after several rounds of questions!)

The Bristol Speedway skating field trip was another great success. It was a pleasure to watch virtually all the students giving their best to learn a new skill, and a difficult skill at that. So many of them kept working at their skating for the full hour+, slipping and falling and slowly progressing, and I didn't see any who sat out because they were self-conscious or embarrassed. They worked hard, helped and encouraged each other, had fun, and got some exercise - a very well-spent afternoon! Many thanks to Coach Boyd for both proposing this trip and then persevering through all the rescheduling challenges.

Coming up Wednesday we have our Asheville field trip to the Colborne Science Museum and the Asheville Art Museum. I have received notice from the Kindles, Rafuls and Hursts that they are available to drive - please confirm your license and insurance paperwork with the office if anything has changed. If any other parents are planning to come along, or if you have not yet returned your field trip forms, please get me written confirmation ASAP. I will email travel details and rosters once all paperwork is returned (or by Tuesday at the latest).

Thanks to Joy Kindle for questioning the Jupiter gradebook calendar. I loaded all the assignments and tests for the term into Jupiter assuming that we would be in class 5 days this past week - given the 3 days we were out early in the week and the fact that most of Friday was taken up by the Geography Bee and the Skating field trip, we are understandably behind the schedule I initially set. I will try and get the Jupiter Calendar back on track over the next few days, but for now you

can relax - the only tests scheduled at this time for next week are a Spelling test and Math quiz on Friday.

Homework this weekend is also heavier than normal to help us catch up on the time missed. In addition to math, the students are expected to write another Haiku poem and to begin to think seriously about the Ashley Science Fair which is less than 2 months away. Students should have brought home a small packet explaining the Science fair with a confirmation slip that needs to be returned on Monday. Term 2 report cards were also sent home last week and are due back (signed) on Monday.

That's all I can think of for now - have a great weekend!

Mr. Mac