

J A N U A R Y 2 0 1 8

# Third Grade Newsletter

## Upcoming Events

### January 15

No School –  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

### January 17

MAP-M Testing 9:30. Please  
make sure students are on time  
to school.

### January 25

Early Release Day

### January 26

No School for Students  
Reporting and Grading Day

## Magnificent Math

In January, students build upon their prior learning of partitioning a whole into equal parts and begin to develop more formally the idea that a fraction is a number, including understanding fractions on a number line. In order to support development of students' understandings about composing fractions from unit fractions, instruction begins with a strong focus on unit fractions (fractions with a numerator of 1). Students extend and apply their prior knowledge of whole numbers to fractions, recognizing that just as, every whole number is obtained by combining ones every fraction can be obtained by combining unit fractions. With this understanding, students build fractions from unit fractions by seeing the numerator 3 in  $\frac{3}{4}$  as saying that is the quantity you get by putting 3 of the  $\frac{1}{4}$ 's together. In Grade 3, denominators are limited to 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8. Throughout instruction on fractions, there is sustained emphasis on reasoning and the understanding that the size of a fractional part is relative to the size of the whole.

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Instruction with fraction concepts continues into marking period 3 with number line representations as well as equivalence and comparison of fractions with the same numerator or same denominator. A solid understanding of fractions as numbers in Grade 3 is critical to future learning, as this, along with understandings of operations with whole numbers, lays the foundation for students to perform operations with fractions in grades 4 and 5 and to explore ratios and proportional relationships in grades 6 and 7.

## In Language Arts...

At the end of the second marking period, students ask and answer questions about how ideas develop and connect in informational text. Students explain how text, text features, online features, and search tools clarify information relevant to a topic and use knowledge gained from illustrations and the words to demonstrate understanding of a text. They identify the relationships between scientific concepts and steps in procedures. They make connections between ideas to identify text structure used to describe the scientific concepts of heating and cooling. Students then compare ideas across texts and determine relevant points in Health Education that relate to the importance of prevention of disease.

As the third marking period begins, students compare common themes or important points in texts. Students begin by reading literature from the realistic fiction and historical fiction genres. They study how authors share real and imagined experiences and examine how change affects people and their relationships. Students begin by identifying the characteristics of historical fiction. Then, they identify the central message of a text and compare elements of two texts written by the same author. Literature discussion is introduced to provide students the opportunity to share their analysis of text in a collaborative conversation.

## Scientists Among Us

During the month of January, students will finish out marking period 2 by investigating and describing different climates around the world. Students will use climate patterns to make predictions about future climate trends. Students will build a house that can withstand extreme weather conditions, in places such as Phoenix, Arizona (heat, strong wind, occasional torrential rains), Joplin, Missouri (tornados), Jacksonville, Florida (heat, flash flooding, hurricanes), etc.

As marking period 3 begins, students will examine fossils from different areas and draw conclusions about the possible environments they are from. Students will also become their own paleontologist and hunt for fossils using a scree bucket. **If you have any background knowledge on fossils, please contact your student's teacher, we would love to have you come in and discuss with our students.**

## Social Studies

In January, students gather information and describe how geographic characteristics have changed in cities in Africa and how these changes have affected daily life. Students conclude the marking period by determining why people make decisions about protecting the environment. Throughout the marking period, students are encouraged to use the academic success skill of metacognition to monitor, adjust, and explain their thinking.

In Marking Period 3, students study elements of multicultural settings. Students construct and interpret maps to locate and expand their understandings about places on the Earth: North America, Maryland, and the United States. Students then compare elements of culture and examine how people from different cultures meet their needs. The locations selected for this study are the United States and Mexico City today and the ancient Aztec city of Tenochtitlan.

## Teacher Wish List

Classroom teachers could use donations of the following supplies:

Paper towels  
Clorox wipes

Black Expo Markers  
Cardstock

Tissues  
Pencils

