

Wolf Times

Volume 10, Issue 5

January, 2013



From the Desk of Jacqueline Norcel

“Happy New Year, Bonne Annee, Gung Hay Fat Choy, Feliz Ano Nuevo, Viel Gutes, Neues Jahr, Snorhavor Nor Tari.” However the greeting is said, the message is the same. We all look to the beginning of a new calendar year with renewed hopes, aspirations, and resolutions. It is an excellent time for us to review goal setting and study skills with our students.

Different cultures also have historical traditions of welcoming in the New Year, from eating black-eyed peas in the American South to creating geometric Rangoli (a form of sand painting decoration) in India as part of the five-day Hindu festival of Diwali. These culturally rich celebrations offer time for both reflection on events past and resolutions for future behavior.

The New Year’s holiday offers students the opportunity to consider critically the multicultural traditions practiced in our society. A study of the changing of the year offers myriad social studies connections – from questioning how calendars have developed, to analyzing celebrations across geographic and political boundaries to making a personal commitment to improve the community in some way.



During January, the staff at Frenchtown will be helping our students understand and respect time. How is time measured? Do you know who first began to measure time? Why are there different calendars and different New Years? The children will be made aware of our New Year’s customs and traditions. This year Chinese New

Year doesn’t happen until February 10th. The Chinese Lunar New Year is the year 4711, or the Year of the Snake.

January is the first month of a new year. Our country of the month is France. We invite families to lend us souvenirs and artifacts for our front lobby display. It is a good time to once again introduce the idea of “Firsts” to our students. What does it mean to do something for the first time? After making a collection of their own personal firsts, our children will be encouraged to create hypothetical firsts. The children also will investigate the firsts that occur during the month of January.



January 1st – First practical fire engine went into service 1853.

January 5th – Nellie Taylor Ross became the first woman governor.

January 7th – First voting under the new U.S. Constitution took place during the first U.S. Presidential Election.

January 9th – First successful balloon flight in America - 1793.

January 10th – The first meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations was held.

January 11th – First time milk was delivered in bottles – 1878.

Amelia Earhart Putnam – first woman to fly solo across the Pacific Ocean from Honolulu to California.

Sarah Caldwell – first woman to conduct the Metropolitan Opera.

Robert C. Weaver – first Black American Cabinet member – 1966.

First time basketball played -1854

January 21st – U.S. launched the first atomic submarine, Nautilus, in 1954.

January 22 – Elizabeth Blackwell – First woman doctor graduated from medical school – 1849.

First time gold was discovered in California – 1848.

January 31st – First U.S. Satellite launched – 1958.

This month I would like to write about work habits or skills. Teaching independent work skills

is similar to delegating. When you think about it, helping students to work independently is much like being a manager in the workplace by assisting employees to take responsibility for their work. The techniques for teaching these skills also are remarkably similar.

We can start by identifying and focusing on the key skills that students must possess to manage work. Among these skills are breaking large, complex tasks into smaller, manageable elements; constructing and following a work schedule; identifying and securing necessary resources.

Students should be selecting, modifying and using work processes, and understanding and achieving quality results. Often, these elements can be taught effectively through real life examples, beginning with simple tasks such as making a sandwich. Students can make a list of ingredients and utensils needed; describe the process and sequence they should use; estimate time required; consider alternatives if any of the usual resources are not available; and describe the final outcome. Later, more complex examples that are similar to what students will be asked to complete in the classroom can be analyzed in a similar manner. However, instruction and discussion must be accompanied by plenty of supervised practice to give students both experience and real life examples upon which to draw later – if they become confused or stuck.

The move from instruction and practice to actual application must be gradual. Initial projects should be relatively small. The work must be divided into small chunks. The guidelines we provide them with need to be clear and relatively narrow in scope. Students should have frequent check-in points on their progress and the expected results must be described in very specific terms. Students should be asked to evaluate their work.

This month we are emphasizing the “k” in T.R.A.C.K.S. which stands for kindness.

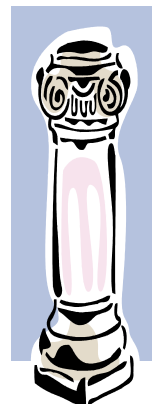
Our lessons will be developed to give our students an opportunity to engage in activities that help them learn about tolerance and respect which helps one act with kindness. A few books you might get at the library to share with your child are:

- Say Something by Peggy Moss (PreK-2)
- Play Lady/La Senora Juguetona by Eric Hoffman (PreK-2)

- Nobody Knew What to Do by Becky Ray McCain (PreK-2)
- Blubber by Judy Blume (3-5)
- The Hundred Dresses by Eleanor Estes (3-5)
- It’s OK to Be Different by Todd Parr (PreK-2)
- Oliver Button is a Sissy by Tomie DePaola (PreK-2)
- Alley Oops by Janice Levy (PreK-2, 3-5)
- Felita by Nicholasa Mohr (3-5)
- Pinky and Rex and the Bully by James Howe (3-5)
- Mr. Lincoln’s Way by Patricia Polacco (3-5)

Our goal at Frenchtown is to provide a safe and nurturing atmosphere for our students and staff. If a parent has an issue with a student they must come directly to Mrs. Strever or myself. If they want to see the teacher for any reason they must first come to the main office. The office will call the teacher. **No parent should ever go directly to a teacher’s classroom ever in the morning or at dismissal time.** Parents must report to the office and then go directly to the cafeteria to pick up their child at 3:35.

I hope that this New Year brings you joyful hours, pleasant memories, thoughts of family and friends, and much happiness and blessings.



Character

Corner—

Mr. Weitzman,

Social Worker

T.R.A.C.K.S.

K = Kindness

The pillar of character from T.R.A.C.K.S. that we will focus on for January is “kindness.”

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Kindergarten News...

Mrs. Alves, Mrs. Buswell,
Mrs. Capone, Mrs. Crawford

Decembers cheer is in the air! It was such a beautiful month with gorgeous weather. Our Kindergarteners have been working very hard learning about retelling stories in reading, gathering ideas for writing in writer's workshop, measuring and combining numbers in math, learning about our weather in science and discovering all the different holidays around the world in social studies.

In reading this month, the children have been exposed to a variety of stories from Tomie DePalo and Jeanne Titherington. *Pumpkin, Pumpkin, The Napping House* and *Charlie's New Cloak* have been a few stories that the children have listened to when learning how to retell a story. When listening to the story, the children have been looking for the characters, the setting and the problem. After they listened to the stories, they did a beautiful job of recalling the book by using the pictures to help retell what happened in the story by remembering the characters, setting, and problem.

In writing, the children have grown so much! They are doing a beautiful job of tapping out the sounds of their words and drawing pictures to match their ideas. This month, the students were working on gathering ideas about things they like about themselves and friends in the classroom. They did a wonderful job of drawing pictures and writing sentences with capital letters at the beginning. We hope to continue this growth in the upcoming months.



In science, the children have been learning about the weather. We have been graphing the weather every morning and recording our information on a bar graph. The children have learned about how the weather changes with the different seasons.

Our little mathematicians have been working very hard! They are doing a beautiful job of measuring, counting and combining numbers together. The children have learned to count and combine numbers to 15 and they have even learned how to add one and take away one. At home you can practice exposing your child to addition skills



by playing double compare with regular cards at your house.

Finally, we had so many wonderful holidays in the month of December. The children have been working hard to learn

about St. Lucia Day, Las Posadas, Kwanzaa and Christmas. The children have heard a variety of stories and have learned different celebrations that children from around the world celebrate. We thank everyone for all of the contributions and setting aside time to assist the classrooms.

We are so happy that we had a wonderful December and we cannot wait for more learning growth and happiness in the New Year!

Grade One News...

Mrs. Gambardella, Mrs. Mordecai,
Mrs. Rodrigues, Mrs. Tuohy,
Mrs. Bershefsky

During the month of December, first grade was alight with the glow of the holidays. We learned about holiday traditions that span the globe. You may have seen menorahs and kinaras glowing in celebration of Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. Some set out "wooden" shoes filled with carrots and hay on St. Nicholas Day as they do in Holland. We learned about the Italian tradition of La Befana. Most importantly, we shared the traditions from our own diverse backgrounds as we came together in multicultural understanding.

At math time, we worked in our third unit called Solving Story Problems. We learned how to solve both addition and subtraction stories. We also practiced counting and writing the numbers to 100. How far can you count?

During our Foundations lessons, we learned to tap out the base word when spelling a word with a suffix s. So, when we tap out "dogs" we tap out "d-o-g" and then add the s. Don't forget to underline the base word and circle the suffix s!

During our last week before vacation, we put on our pajamas and boarded the Polar Express.

We had a great day filled with lots of language and math based activities that brought the book to life. Then, we called “All aboard!” as we headed out for a great vacation.

Grade Two News ...

**Mrs. Alfano, Mrs. Angon,
Ms. Hull, Mrs. Pereira,
Ms. Sansone**

December flew by and the second graders were very busy learning many new skills!



In reading, the students have been focusing on developing their reading strategies to help them become stronger readers. They have been practicing making connections, visualizing, and making inferences in their independent

reading books. Each night as you read with your child, remember to talk to him/her about the book he/she is reading. Ask questions about the book’s main idea, characters, the problem and solution as well as the vocabulary used in the story. This will help to improve your child’s reading comprehension.

In math, the students have been working hard on Investigations Unit 3: Stickers, Number Strings, and Story Problems. The unit taught the children to develop ideas about counting and quantity, the composition of numbers and the operations of addition and subtraction. The students also investigated what makes numbers even and odd. Please keep in mind that it is important for the children to memorize the math facts. You can help them with this task by practicing with flash cards at home. Our goal is for every second grader to know the facts automatically without their fingers!

Our second grade scientists have been busy investigating the weather! They became weathermen and women and recorded the weather each day in their science journals. They became experts on the different clouds types and learned how meteorologists use the clouds to predict weather patterns. They also learned how to use and read a thermometer. Not only did they become familiar with many of the instruments used by meteorologists, they also acquired many new vocabulary words associated with the properties of air and weather conditions.

The students were amazing in their December concert performance! They sang their hearts out and made everyone so proud. We would like to thank Ms. Nuzzi for all of her hard work and dedication!

As the New Year begins, please be mindful of the change in weather and make sure that your child comes to school with the appropriate clothing for outdoor recess. The second grade teachers would like to wish you all a happy holiday season and a year ahead filled with happiness and prosperity!

Grade Three News...

**Mrs. Atwood, Mrs. Cretella,
Mrs. Makoski, Mrs. Martins,
Mrs. Carley**

Happy New Year from third grade! We hope that you and your family enjoyed the holiday break. It is so nice to spend time with family and good friends. Did you get to go outside and enjoy the winter weather? Now that we are back at school, please make sure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather, especially when we venture outside for recess. We are suggesting that your third grader come with a hat, scarf, and gloves, as well as a thick winter coat.



In reading, third graders have been working with various texts to practice the comprehension skill of wondering.

They have been asking questions while reading their just right books and our Making Meaning stories as well. We have been helping students to expand their responses to comprehension questions with evidence that they found in the text. Students can all have different opinions and ideas, and we are helping them to explain their thinking by showing us what they learned in the story. You can practice the technique of “wondering” at home too. Don’t forget to mark in your FREE calendar when you read!

In math, the students have begun Unit 4 which focuses on geometry. Students are becoming

more aware of shapes and how they are all around us! We will be studying both perimeter and area, as well as both the customary and metric systems of measurement. Don't forget to practice your addition and subtraction basic facts at home!



The students are learning so much about the human body in science class! First, they began by counting all of the bones in the body, and gained a real understanding of their functions. Now, the

unit continues to focus on joints and how they play a role in movement. In social studies, your third grader is expanding his/her learning about habitats to include the study of prairies and forests. The students are focusing on the plants and animals that live in each region and how they survive in their habitats.

We are about half way through our school year and we have noticed that the students are starting to run low on their school supplies. Ask your third grader if any supply re-stocking is necessary. Glue sticks and pencils are always the first things they are missing. In addition, our classrooms can always use tissues and wipes. Thank you so much for your generosity. Again, welcome back, from your third grade teachers!

Grade Four News...

**Mrs. Weinstein, Mr. Fiore,
Mrs. Gaspar, Ms. St. John
Mrs. Wolfe**

Welcome to 2013. It is hard to believe that we are starting a brand new year! The time has flown by and we are underway with our second trimester. We hope that everyone had a restful and peaceful winter break.

In reading, our focus of the Making Meaning curriculum was exploring story elements. Such elements included story settings, plots, sequencing of events, and character conflicts. The stories read included Thunder Cake, Chicken Sunday, Teammates, and The Bat Boy and His Violin. During independent reading time, students are focusing on identifying the important events in their stories, developing vocabulary, and asking

questions to deepen their understanding. As students use questioning, they ask essential questions: "What can I take away from this story?"; "How has this helped me to better understand what I am reading?" Students use context clues to infer answers that are not stated directly in the text.

We recently completed our Geometry unit in Investigations called "Size, Shape, and Symmetry: 2-D Geometry and Measurement." Students focused on classifying two-dimensional shapes, comparing the size of angles, and working with both linear and area measurement. Students learned to define and categorize polygons using shapes that had common attributes, as well as using 90 degrees as a focal reference for finding the measurement of other angles. Students explored perimeters of shapes and finding the area of polygons using square units. Our new unit, called "Landmarks and Large Numbers: Addition, Subtraction, and the Number System" allows students to practice different strategies for adding and subtracting large numbers that use 10, 100, and 1,000 as landmark numbers.

Science curriculum focused on Simple Machines. Simple machines were explored to discover how they can make work easier to do tasks. Students learned about the lever, pulleys, the wheel and axle, the inclined plane, screws, and wedges. Students conducted hands-on experiments to measure force using push-pull meters. They compared the amount of force needed to move an object with and without the assistance of a simple machine.



In social studies, the unit on Early Connecticut History was recently completed. Students were able to use our Hartford trip as a reference point. Students

discussed the harsh life encountered by the early settlers and traders and why it was still important for these groups to try and make it to the New World.

We would like to extend a big "thank you" to our fourth graders and their families for making the December classroom celebrations fun, the generous donations to the students' activities and

treats, as well as extend our appreciation for the thoughtful gifts. We wish you all a Happy New Year!

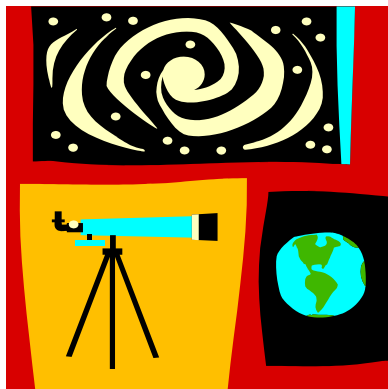
Grade Five News...

**Mrs. Carley, Mrs. Russo,
Miss Caravetta, Mrs. Windsor,
Mrs. Demshak**

Our holiday season is in full gear and we would like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday!

Our reading classes are continuing to work on improving our writing about our reading. While reading our “just right” books, we are thinking of ways that we can communicate about our books - ways such as: how the author develops a character in a piece, why we liked a particular chapter, things we notice about how the author wrote, or even simply, our favorite part. We are also beginning to work on making inferences. We continue to work on reading comprehension, responding to open-ended questions, and strategies for completing the DRP. Children should continue to read for 20 minutes nightly. This can also go for the monthly “Free Calendar”.

In social studies, we will be working on the Colonial Era. We will be learning about how our amazing United States came to be. Children are learning about how the Native Americans and explorers have changed and shaped our country today because of the actions of yesterday. We will also focus on how the 13 colonies were set up and run as well as some of the challenges for America’s first colonies.



We have completed our astronomy unit. Many children continue to struggle explaining their understanding of the reasons for the seasons. Please continue to support them with conversations about

the amount of direct sunlight each hemisphere receives in order to provide varying temperatures, amount of daily sunlight, and hours of darkness. Our science unit has evolved into light energy and how it provides us with the ability to see. We are

using a very hands on approach with center based activities and reflections that children are responsible for in their interactive science journals. They are expected to participate in daily classroom lab activities and if they are out, they will need to make up the time during study hall in order to keep up with the rigor of the science classroom. There is a new science newsflash on Mrs. Windsor’s web site that all parents are encouraged to sign up for that will help to facilitate science discussions at home.



In math our focus is on fractions. We encourage parents to reference fractions in everyday activities. Some ideas might be, finding fractions of an hour, or

using fractions while cooking; the more real life application, the better. We are still working on getting all of our fifth graders to master those multiplication and division facts as well as keeping up with basic addition and subtraction. We have weekly mad minute multiplication and division quizzes that count toward their report card grades. Children should be continuing to work on their Bear Math Facts packets at home. Remember, 10 minutes a night counts!

The CMT comes very quickly after vacation and we need to continue moving toward mastery on the state requirements. Please encourage strong effort, participation and extra practice at home! It pays off!

From the Nurse’s Office... **Mrs. McCullough**

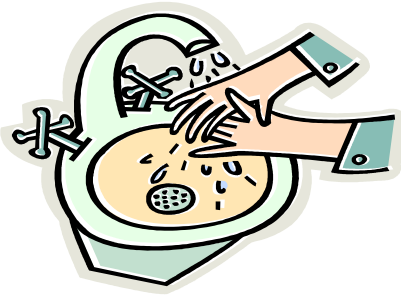
The nurses office has been a bevy of activity in the last few weeks. I want to take this opportunity to remind everyone how to prevent the spread of germs. This flu season is predicted to start earlier and be the worst one in recent years!

If we all follow some simple rules, we can keep the spread of cold, flu and stomach bugs to a minimum.

There has been a recent rash of students being sent to the nurses office telling me they either vomited the night before or had a fever.

A student who has a fever or vomited or had diarrhea needs to stay home for 24 hours AFTER THE LAST INCIDENT OF AFORE MENTIONED ILLNESS. When you send your child to school sick you expose the entire class and the teacher to illness. So please be considerate and keep your child home! FYI a fever is 100 F or better.

Aside from spreading illness, the student is not at their best when they are sick. Rest is the best medicine.



Careful hand washing is the NUMBER 1 way of preventing the spread of germs. Keep hands away from your mouth and eyes. You can't imagine

what germs may be lurking from the thousands of objects you touch everyday!

An apple a day DOES keep the doctor away. A healthy balanced diet helps your immune system fight off germs.

Consider the flu vaccine for you and your family.

And PLEASE, if I send your child home with a fever or vomiting/diarrhea; DO NOT send them back to school the next day.

Lets all be considerate of one another and strive for a HEALTHY NEW YEAR!

Reading News...

**Mrs. Infante, Mrs. Cannon-Axtell,
Mrs. Olimpieri**

**The Frenchtown Reading Department
wants to wish everyone a happy and healthy
2013!**

CAFE Strategy: Tune In To Interesting Words

When children learn to **tune in to interesting words**, they build word awareness and the understanding of words. This leaves them with “thinking power” in their brain to comprehend and make meaning of what is read. Have you ever heard a new word, looked it up, and then repeated it often to remember it? Students who **tune in to**

interesting words expand their vocabulary by focusing on the new words and their meaning. By looking for words that are interesting and unique, children not only increase their vocabulary, but they also enhance their comprehension. A child must have multiple exposures to a word in order for it to become a part of his/her vocabulary.

How can you help your child with this strategy at home?

- When your child is reading or you are reading to your child, ask your child to find three interesting words. Have your child write these words down and talk about the meaning of these words. See if anyone in your family is able to use the words in a sentence. Add these words to your family word collector.
- Encourage your child to find interesting words when watching TV or in daily conversation. When tuning in to an interesting word, help your child understand the word and then add it to the family word collector.
- As always, modeling is a wonderful way to spark interest in children. When you are reading a magazine, newspaper, or book, tune into an interesting word and discuss it with your child. Explain that even adult readers **tune into interesting words** to better understand text.

Music News...Miss Nuzzi

The second graders did a wonderful job presenting their musical, "Snow Way Out!" In January we will look forward to practicing a new show for our Family Week concert in May. In music class, students are wrapping up our units on solfeggio, scale, and melody. We learned how to sing a do, re, mi scale, then rearrange the notes to create original melodies with interesting patterns. Lastly, we brought our melodies to life on the xylophone.

Recorders and method books have been ordered and should be delivered in January. We will continue to practice reading notation on the staff so we will be ready when recorders arrive. If you have not sent money in for a recorder and method book for your child in grade 3, 4, or 5. Please contact me for details.

Nuzzim@trumbullps.org



*Frenchtown has earned 31,600 points.
65 shoppers have designated our school to
receive their Big Y points.*

Student in the Spotlight



Siena Mejia-Collarini in Mrs. Alfano's second grade class has collected and turned in **280 Box Tops for Education** for December. Way to go Siena!



**Here are the Top Five Holiday
Boutique Raffle Winners!**

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. I-Pad | David Niedzialek |
| 2. Coach Handbag | Jenna DeLucia |
| 3. Pandora Charm
With Black Evening Bag | Pat Grosso |
| 4. Furby | Katie Duenges |
| 5. One Direction
Prize Pack | Gabriella Santiago |

The following students have been selected as "Bus Students of the Week" during the month of December:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------|
| Christian Giammatteo | Bus 44 |
| Jamaal Jean | Bus 43 |
| Mia Vega Garcia | Bus 40 |
| Joanne Bogen | Bus 41 |
| Jessica Marchetti | Bus 3 |

Please Note: We will no longer be collecting bottle caps. They can be put right into the recycling at home.