

Wolf Times

Volume 11, Issue 5

January, 2014



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 January 31st. The Chinese Lunar New Year is the year 4712, or the Year of the Horse.

January is the first month of a new year. Our country of the month is Israel. 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 learning 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.

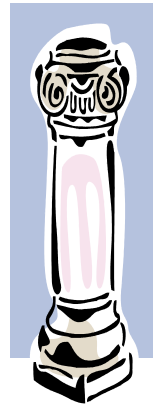
This month we are emphasizing the “k” in T.R.A.C.K.S. which stands for kindness.

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 enter the building by door number 2. Show your identification and sign your child out.



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.”

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

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Kindergarten News...

**Mrs. Alves, Mrs. Bershefsky,
Mrs. Buswell, Mrs. Capone,
Mrs. Crawford**



December snuck in so quickly and with it came the sounds of joy, laughter and excitement as the youngsters readily began learning about various holidays, cultures and traditions from around the world! Just pop into any kindergarten

classroom to get a sense of the holiday excitement so evident in every boy and girl's eyes! Immediately after returning from Thanksgiving recess, kindergartners began learning about Hanukkah, a winter holiday celebrated in the Jewish community. We enjoyed learning about the miracle of Hanukkah and had a wonderful time playing the Dreidel game and eating traditional foods such as munchkins or potato latkes! We learned about the holiday of Kwanzaa celebrated for 7 days after Christmas where African Americans celebrate their culture, history and the togetherness of family. Finally, we learned about the Christian holiday of Christmas and the many unique and interesting traditions of how it is celebrated around the world from St. Nicholas Day in Germany to St. Lucia Day in Sweden and even Los Pasados in Mexico! The kindergartners got so much out of this unit – especially the understanding that while different and unique, holiday traditions are bonded with the themes of generosity, family and love.

In reading, kindergartners began a new unit on retelling. Good readers retell a story in time order by sequencing the important events from the beginning of the story to the end. This helps readers understand the story better and remember what they read. We have practiced this with many new books. We have been improving our independent reading skills and working on building our stamina for this too! Good readers read independently by reading the pictures, reading the words or retelling the books they read! The children are becoming more automatic with their kindergarten sight words and are moving through their Trophy Readers. It is so important that you continue to review these flashcards regularly with your child so that they maintain their current words

as we begin introducing new words at a quicker pace!

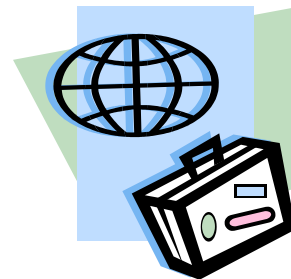
In Foundations, the children have finished learning the letter sound relationships for all consonants and vowels! We continue to review proper lowercase letter formation and sounds for consistency, but are excited to begin working with these sounds and blending them to read CVC short vowel words! The students have been introduced to “tapping” and are working hard to blend three sounds into words. They are also learning the formation for the uppercase letters of the alphabet. Please continue to work with your child at home for consistency!

In math, kindergartners revisited counting activities from the beginning of the year, and were introduced to combining activities such as Build On, Racing Bears and Double Compare! The students learned strategies for determining the total of two quantities including counting all and counting on! These games and learned strategies are precursors to the adding and subtracting we will be exploring later in the year.

It is hard to believe how far the children have come in the past four months. We are excited as we approach a new year together filled with many more months of learning and discovery ahead! We wish you a happy and healthy holiday season with your family! Enjoy the holiday recess and see you in January!

Grade One News...

**Mrs. Gambardella, Mrs. Mordecai,
Mrs. Rodrigues, Mrs. Tuohy,
Ms. Grunow**



During the month of December, first grade was alight with the glow of the holidays. We packed our “suitcases” and traveled to other first grade classrooms to learn about holiday traditions that span the globe. You may have seen menorahs and kinaras glowing in celebration of Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. We learned about the Italian tradition of La Befana, the Swedish tradition of St. Lucia, and the Mexican Legend of the Poinsettia. 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 120. How far can you count?

During our Foundations lessons, we learned new “glued sounds.” Glued sounds are consonants and vowels that glue together to make a new sound. Our new glued sounds are ang, ing, ong, ung, ank, ink, onk, and unk.

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, Mrs. Shinnick**

The second grade has been very busy during the month of December! Holiday awareness opened the eyes of everyone as we learned about the different holidays. The students really enjoyed creating gingerbread houses, creating a winter scene after learning about Jack Frost and exploring various holidays celebrated around the world including Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, and New Year’s. In addition, we hope that everyone enjoyed the fabulous chorus concert! Kudos to the children for a job well done!



We spent a couple of weeks exploring various books by Jan Brett and will continue through January! Some titles include: The Mitten, The Hat, Gingerbread Baby, and Annie and the Wild Animals. It was exciting to see how Jan Brett writes and illustrates her books. Most exciting was looking at the borders around her illustrations that preview what is to come within the story. In addition, it was remarkable to see how the children were able to verbalize the relationships between the characters within her stories, therefore, making meaningful text to text connections.

In math, we began working on the *Stickers, Number Strings and Story Problems* unit. This unit explores counting by 2’s, 5’s and 10’s as well as

breaking numbers apart (into tens and ones) as an additional way to solve equations. Again, continue practicing addition and subtraction math facts every night; this prepares your child for third grade!



In science we concluded our weather unit. We had fun becoming meteorologists and tracking the weather. We learned how to read thermometers in degrees Fahrenheit, as well as three types of clouds: stratus, cumulus and cirrus. In addition, we also looked at wind speed and were able to describe it based on observing objects moving around outside (ie: the flag, leaves and branches on the trees).

We hope everyone had a wonderful holiday and are looking forward to a prosperous New Year!

Grade Three News...

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

Where did the first part of the 2013-2014 school year go? Welcome into 2014! We hope that you and your family enjoyed the holiday season break. Now that the children are back at school, please make sure that each one dresses appropriately for the weather. We suggest that the third graders come prepared with scarves, hats, gloves as well as a thick warm winter coat.

In reading, we have been focusing in on common core standards. The students have been doing guided and independent practices, such as using text features and search tools to locate information relevant to given topics in non-fiction reading materials. The students continue to ask questions with various texts. We have been helping the children to expand their written responses to comprehension questions with evidence that they find in their readings. We continue to use Making Meaning story Real-Alouds to enhance our reading curriculum.

We have been focusing on geometry and multiplication in our math program. The students are becoming more aware of shapes and how they are all around us! We are studying perimeter and area, along with customary and metric systems.

Please have the children continue to practice basic facts, especially multiplication!

Our science classes are participating in several different units of study. Some classes have started learning about the human body. Do you know how many bones there are in the human body? This unit also focuses on joints and how they play a role in movement. This year Trumbull is integrating a STEM project into our science program. Through STEM, we are teaching students the engineering process to design products. The big idea for third grade is, "How do you design bird feeders for different kinds of local birds?"



We are beginning a unit on Native Americans who live in the Northwestern Coast of North America. The Kwakiutls and their land still hold many beliefs described in the

readings. Ask your child about the Kwakiutl way of life, including their woodcarving and ceremonies.

As we are approaching the second half of the school year, we have noticed that the students are running low on their basic school supplies. Please make sure that your child's supplies are still in good condition. Many kids do not have pencils and basic supplies. Please ask your third grader what materials need to be replenished, such as folders, pencils, crayons, glue sticks. In addition, our classroom can always use tissues and wipes, especially now that winter is upon us. Thank you for your kind generosity. Again, welcome back from your third grade teachers!

Grade Four News...

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

Many had lots to be thankful for during the holiday season. We hope you enjoyed time with your family and friends. It is hard to believe that a new year has begun. As we begin the winter season, we think back to last year's wild weather and are thankful that Mother Nature has been relatively kind to us. However, we know to be prepared for the unexpected! If you have not yet returned an emergency dismissal form for your child, please do so as soon as possible. We want the children to be familiar with where they are to go in the event of an unforeseen emergency.

Our fourth graders continue to engage in a rigorous curriculum that challenges them to delve below the surface and use critical thinking skills. All classes use close reads to analyze the purpose of the text, its structure, the author's choice of words, and key story elements. In Making Meaning, our focus has shifted from non-fiction text to fiction. Children are recognizing the key elements of a story- the characters, setting, and plot. In addition, they are learning to recognize the theme and analyze the author's message to the reader. Students continue to progress in their written response to literature. As always, the challenge is to provide specific evidence from the text to support our thinking. Using a highlighter to draw attention to evidence in reading assignments is a great strategy to practice at home. Engage students in conversations about their nightly reading. Expressing thoughts verbally often assists students in getting their words down onto paper.

Math classes completed the unit *Size, Shape, and Symmetry*. We had the opportunity to investigate linear measurement, using both metric and standard benchmark units of measure. Measuring objects in the classroom, we explored both perimeter and area. In our study of two-dimensional geometry, children learned about the attributes of polygons- defined in terms of angles and sides. Do you know the differences between the various types of quadrilaterals? In our current unit, we are revisiting a variety of strategies to use when adding and subtracting large numbers. Aside from the algorithm, students are encouraged to use a number line or focus on place value by breaking large numbers into smaller parts. Basic fact fluency will aide students as they are faced with more challenging computations.

We continue to polish our note-taking and argumentation skills utilizing Time for Kids, multi-media and other non-fiction resources to gather evidence and take a stance on controversial topics. To assist students in formatting persuasive essays, we introduced the acronym A.R.G.U.E. Students first **A**nnounce their position, then provide **R**easons, **G**ive specific evidence from the text, **U**ndo the opponent's viewpoint, and **E**nd their argument with a strong statement. In the coming weeks all classes will be utilizing the newly revised Connecticut CBAS Writing site to practice our keyboarding and composition skills.

Newton's Laws of Motion provided students with a good foundation for understanding the world

of simple machines. We learned about tools and machines that can make “work” easier for us. How was it possible for the Egyptians to move those heavy bricks to build the pyramids? Ask your children about the use of levers, the wheel and axle, and an inclined plane. In our next unit of study, we will investigate the structure of an atom before learning about the wonders of electricity.



In social studies classes, students have been learning about Connecticut’s history, the first colonists, and what this region had to offer to those who settled along

our river ways. Do you know why Connecticut is called the Constitution State? Soon we will begin our journey through the regions of the United States!

We ask that you please make sure your children are dressed appropriately for outdoor recess. In addition, as we enter the cold season, donations of tissues, hand wipes, or liquid soap are always welcome to help deter the spread of germs.

We wish you all a year filled with good health, happiness, and prosperity!

Grade Five News...

**Mrs. Carley, Mrs. Russo,
Mrs. Ferraro, Mrs. Windsor,
Mrs. Demshak**

Happy New Year! Welcome to 2014. We now begin the real push for preparing your fifth grader for middle school. Our second trimester is about fractions, geometry, and decimals in math. In social studies, we will guide our learners through the early years of the first thirteen colonies being set up. Science focuses on our eyes and ears and the use of sound energy and light energy. We continue to expect daily reading to include a variety of literature. The push for an increased use of nonfictional text for acquiring new knowledge will continue. The fifth grade team remains bound to helping your learner become independent and responsible.

Math will focus on the use of fractions. We will be learning ways to multiply and divide fractions as well as finding fractional parts of a whole and fractional parts of fractions. Geometry

introduces regular and irregular shapes, definitions that accompany the shapes, and finding angle measurements. The corner of this paper is a 90-degree angle and the top edge is a 180-degree angle. Using these two measurements, we estimate measures that are obtuse and acute. When we reach decimals, children will be adding, multiplying, dividing, and making connections to fractions. We are often asked how parents can support the learning. Helping ensure your youngster is quick and accurate with their basic facts will enable them to move more successfully through the math curriculum. There are many websites that can also support your child’s learning. Khan Academy is an excellent site to reinforce our classroom lessons as well as help parents understand the concepts we are teaching in school. Check out the teachers’ websites for more ideas to help encourage math growth.

Social studies takes us back to the 1700s when many people began to migrate to the United States and set up colonies. We had the Mid-Atlantic Colonies, New Englanders, and Southern Colonies. People were leaving their homelands to escape oppression, practice religion as they chose, and experience the opportunities they had been denied.



Science goes personal! We now get to look into our ears and eyes. Children will be expected to know all of the parts of the ears and eyes as well as how those parts work together to make hearing and vision possible. We investigate ways to change sounds in pitch as well as volume. We use the terms higher and lower to refer to pitch and louder and softer to refer to volume. In January, our fifth graders will make their second trip to the Hillcrest Planetarium to culminate all of the new knowledge we have about our universe. We will also spend one morning per class doing a district wide performance assessment. A science performance assessment allows the children the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to read and follow directions, work with science instruments, and take notes based on observations and findings. January 17 will be our trip to the Connecticut Science Museum in Hartford. We are still looking for some parent chaperones. Please consider going and learning about light energy with our fifth graders.

Our curriculum for reading has used the Connecticut Mastery Test as a foundation for our reading instruction. This has changed this year to

encompass more close reading that is needed to be successful on the Common Core Assessments. Although we do not teach to any specific test, we teach good reading strategies and help children think about the texts they are reading. We want our questioning and texts to resemble what children could possibly see on an assessment to ensure their confidence in being successful. Reading nightly not only ensures better test scores, but it also builds a love for reading that is a life long skill needed to be successful in life. Please reinforce this good habit by modeling reading, encouraging reading, and helping your child to complete the trimester reading challenges. Statistics have shown that any reader reading below grade level expectations has the potential to grow one to two years by reading out loud to someone fifteen minutes daily. Reading with your child is a wonderful bonding experience.



We want to reinforce the use of the daily assignment planner. This is a tool that will be needed to be successful throughout the rest of your child's

academic career. Helping them check their planner for upcoming tests and projects will help them become more independent. When you sign the planner nightly, please ask to see the homework and help your child get it back in the folder. One of the most frequently used excuses we hear is, "My mom forgot to put it back in my folder." This should be your child's responsibility. Please help them accept this responsibility.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to work with your children. We take our time with your children very seriously and want the very best for each one of them. Here is to a healthy and safe 2014.

Math News...

**Mrs. Gidwani, Mrs. Cannon-Axtell,
Mrs. Sansone**

EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT! **4TH AND 5TH GRADERS** ARE LEARNING ABOUT FRACTIONS, IT'S TIME TO SHOUT IT!

In **grade 4**, students will be starting to learn about equivalent fractions, finding fractions of a number

or group, and ordering and comparing fraction amounts.

In **grade 5**, students will be learning about multiplying and dividing fractions.

Try to incorporate fraction talk into your everyday lives!

- ❖ My house is a quarter of a mile down the road.
- ❖ I have over half a tank of gas.
- ❖ I need $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of sugar to make 10 cookies. How much sugar would I need to make 40 cookies?

It is extremely important that our children have a strong grasp of fractions for future success in math classes, the kitchen, the workshop, and in life.

What are some things you can do to help?

- ❖ As your child brings home his/her fraction work, ask questions and get involved.
- ❖ Take out the measuring cups and do a little baking! What happens if you half a recipe? What happens if you double a recipe?
- ❖ As you enjoy a pizza, talk about the fraction that each member of your family is eating. What fraction is still in the box?
- ❖ As you cut a holiday pie or cake, talk about the fractional parts. What happens to the size of the pieces when you cut the dessert into more parts: the fewer the pieces, the larger the pieces; the larger the NUMBER of pieces, the smaller the SIZE of the piece.

Have fun with fractions!

Grades 2 and 3 students will be working with measurement and geometry this month. **Grade 2** students will be measuring with U.S. standard units and Metric units. Students will also learn how to make a timeline of their school day. Grade 2 students should be practicing subtraction facts every week. **Grade 3** students will be learning how to find area and perimeter of shapes and figures. Students will learn the attributes of quadrilaterals and triangles. Students will also learn about different types of angles. Grade 3 students should be practicing multiplication facts every week (x2, x5, x10 to start). Go to www.multiplication.com for

multiplication games and www.arcademics.com for subtraction games.

From the Library...

Mrs. Belangi

I want to thank all my volunteers for supporting the Library Media Center we could not function without your help. I want to especially acknowledge Diane Pomposello who has patiently worked behind the scenes setting up the volunteer schedule each month and also Scott and Barbara Bodington for their generous donation to the Library Media Center again this year. Donations are especially appreciated in this time of tight budgets.

From the Nurse's Office...

Mrs. McCullough



Children and adults alike consume soda on a daily basis but do you know the damaging effects soda has on your body?

The following information was taken from Consumer Media Network.

Asthma: Sodium Benzoate, found in sodas, is used as a preservative and adds sodium to the diet reducing the availability of potassium. Potassium is need to regulate heart rhythms and is essential in the proper functioning of the kidneys, muscles and digestive systems. Sodium benzoate can cause rashes, exacerbation of asthma and eczema. The annual cost of asthma to the health care system is estimated to be about \$18 Billion.

Kidney Issues: Colas contain high levels of phosphoric acid which has been linked to kidney stones and other renal problems.

Sugar Overload: Twenty Minutes after drinking a soda, your blood sugar spikes causing an insulin burst. Your liver responds by turning any sugar into fat!

Forty minutes later, caffeine absorption is complete. Your pupils dilate, your blood pressure rises as a response your liver dumps more sugar into your blood stream. The adenosine receptors in your brain are now blocked, preventing drowsiness.

Forty-five minutes later, your body ups dopamine production, stimulating the pleasure centers of your brain. This is physically the same way heroin works, by the way.

Obesity: The relationship between soft drink consumption and body weight is so strong that researches calculate that for each additional soda consumed the risk of obesity increase by 16%
Dissolves tooth enamel: The sugar and acids in soft drinks easily dissolves tooth enamel. When tooth decay reaches the nerve, the root and the base of the tooth, the tooth may die and lead to an abscess.

Osteoporosis: Soft drinks contain phosphoric acid and a high phosphate diet has been associated with bone break down and an increased risk for osteoporosis. When phosphorus is excreted in the urine, it take calcium with it, depriving the bones and the rest of the body of this important mineral.

Diabetes: Those who drink more soda have an 80% increased risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes. One in every 10 health care dollars is spent on diabetes.

So the next time you pick up a soda, think twice before you drink it!



Julia DeGroot's name was inadvertently left off of the Chorus Concert Program on the list of second graders. Sorry Julia!



Children in the Spotlight

Fall Noetic Learning Math Contest Grade Four

National Honor Roll

Saihari Kota
Ari Lederfeind
Zachary Parent
Rislyn Raja
Tiffany Suporn

Honorable Mention

Dominic Arvai
Jayson Caballero
Garret Calandro-
Bitjeman
Brayden Crumb
Kyla Devlin
Farrah Hass
Daniel Fung
John McCain
Kiersten Nyquist
Steven Pelle
Eman Seyal
Carlie Siwanowicz
Aston Yip

Police Coloring Contest Winners

Kdg.- Jeremiah Heins
Grade 1 – Charlotte Huang
Grade 2 – Amber Burany
Grade 3 – Madeline Lojko
Grade 4 – Aiden Giammarco