



September 23, 2011

Mrs. Taht's Fourth Grade Newsflash

Parent / Teacher / Student Conferences

A reminder that our fall conferences are approaching. If you haven't completed a questionnaire about your child, please find a few moments to do so. You can find a copy on our classroom website. Please remember these are **goal setting conferences, so it's important for your child to be present at the conference.** The on-line scheduler will "go live" at 3:00 on Friday, September 23rd. Please let me know if you desire to meet outside of these conference times, and I will make every effort to accommodate your request. **Dates are 10/12, 10/18, and 10/20.** The link for scheduling can be found on our Douglass home page, as well as on our classroom website. I look forward to speaking with you!

CAP Training

Our class had our CAP (Child Assault Prevention) training on Thursday morning (9/22). The presenters did a wonderful job discussing great strategies with the children. Most importantly, the trainers discussed the right for every child "to be safe, strong, and free!" I have no doubt that everyone learned something from this presentation. Please discuss the training with your child, and ask them something they learned or got out of it. If you have any questions about the training, there is a great parent handbook that reviews what was discussed, and also is a good resource for families - there are additional copies available in our office.



Next three weeks at a glance...

- 9/26 Friday Folder Due
- 9/26-10/7 Student Count days
- 9/30 DEAR Contract Due & "Twelfth Night" presented by CSF 12:20-2:30
- 10/7 DEAR Contract Due
- 10/10 Friday Folder Due
- 10/12, 10/18, 10/20 P/T/S Conferences 3:00-8:00pm
- 10/13 DEAR Contract Due
- 10/14 No School for students

Friday Folders: This past week was our first week to have every one of our folders returned on time – yippee!! Just a reminder to please date and initial the inside of the folder – this lets me know that your child has shared the contents of the folder with you.

Our Accelerated Reader program ("AR") is in full-swing! We have successfully determined optimal reading levels, independent reading levels, and have used these to set goals for the trimester. All of this wonderful information will be shared with you at our conferences. In addition, the fourth grade students will be working toward earning incentives, to help foster that love of reading. We have purchased some fun "trinkets" for students to earn as they reach their goals and hit various mile-markers throughout the year. We will hand out our first incentives on Friday. When a child does any one of the following, he/she will receive an incentive: maintain 85% or better comprehension on all tests taken at the end of a trimester; achieve a point value consistent with an average of his/her independent reading level and time spent reading; achieve 50% toward point total goal; reach 100 points. More awards will be determined and passed out as we continue throughout the year. If your child didn't get one today, he/she knows what to do to get one in the future. ☺

Check out our new learning goals....

Reading	DEAR – continue weekly contracts, daily logs in class, AR quizzes as a book is completed Small group fantasy book wrap up Begin research & biographies
Writing	Building a writing community Using ideas from mentors and our own lives to craft stories Choose a story to take through the writing process (revising, editing, publishing)
Language	Spelling –(all) high frequency word list tests on Fridays Spellography – working on vowel and consonant sounds Rules – making plurals & “ie” or “ei”
Math (4 th gr)	Place value (numbers to the millions); rounding and estimation with bigger numbers; money and decimals Speed tests continue = addition facts & subtraction facts (check our website for strategies)
Science	Sun, Moon, & Stars Unit study



Research is just around the corner!!!!



In October, we will begin our first research unit. This unit overlaps with our biography study. To begin, the students will be introduced to various biographies. We will read together, and discuss important aspects of people's lives. We will also spend time learning how to conduct research using books, encyclopedias, and the Internet. After the initial instruction is delivered, students will then choose a biography to read on their own. I will have a variety of books to choose from, and will have various reading levels available. I will encourage your child to choose a book at his/her "just right" reading level, so as to be able to complete this project independently. I ask the children to choose a person they are not familiar with, or whom they'd like to learn more about. If your child has a strong inclination to study someone in particular, and you want to take him/her to the library to choose a book, I encourage you to do so. Please be sure to help direct him/her to a good reading level, and I will want to approve the book prior to starting it. With my help, your child will determine the amount of reading he/she needs to do (based on the number of pages in the book chosen, and the number of days we will allot to the reading). Your child will then work independently in class (and at home) to read and take notes about the person being studied. He/she will monitor his/her progress throughout the project with a graphic organizer tool. The end products will include: a speech presented to the class, in full costume, during the week of 10/31; our wax museum on 11/4 (more information to follow about each of these in the coming weeks).

Shakespeare is coming to Douglass!

Next Friday, September 30th, we are pleased to host a traveling performance group from CSF (Colorado Shakespeare Festival). The group will perform an abridged version of "Twelfth Night". The story contains a lot of "bullying", so the group has created some wonderful workshops to tie this into learning for the students. The third, fourth and fifth grade students will all view the performance after lunch in the gym. Following the fifty minute play, our fourth graders will break into small groups, and will have the opportunity to discuss these bullying issues in depth. They will not only analyze the play for character behaviors, but will also learn many anti-bullying strategies. We have hosted the CSF in the past, as part of a preview to our spring shows, and I look forward to their performance next week. The group has provided an in-depth study guide for all of the teachers. I plan to use this to share a synopsis of the play with our class next week. This will help to prepare them for the play. We will discuss the most important characters in the play, and the gist of the story. It will be a bit confusing for some (as most Shakespeare can be when first introduced), but I'll do my best to help prepare them for the "twins", the crazy antics of the fast-paced story, and what to expect. Most importantly, I look forward to the opportunity for your children to experience a live performance with experienced actors right in our very own gym! What a treat!! In addition, I think the follow-up workshops will be wonderful compliments to our One Book Douglass program, helping to enhance our teaching to the social-emotional well-being of every child.

