

November 2011
Ms. Bettencourt's Classroom Newsletter!

Reflections

Although I did not attend the costume party for the students, I heard the event was quite a success. The "Trunk or Treat" seemed to be one of the most enjoyable activities and of course we had Dr. Dills as the 'Mad Scientist!

Speaking of Dr. Dills...we had the pleasure of his company once again! This favored storyteller of Fairhaven mesmerizes children and adults as well. I so enjoyed the time I spent with the third grade classroom listening to Dr. Dills weave his wonderful tales. He incorporates facts, uses his body language to emphasize his story and encourages whole audience participation with choral response. Most importantly, the children truly participate in an unforgettably, rich experience!

The Veterans' Day assembly was very nice. We had quite a turnout of local veteran's and their families to help us celebrate the affair. It was wonderful to see the large number of students who wanted to share information about their favorite veteran. In my opinion, this was truly the most important part of the entire celebration!

The Classroom

As you know, this year our students have been spending quite a bit of time with their regular education peers. We have noted some interesting changes amongst all of our friends. For example, some of our students are displaying less anxiety in the classroom. They are tolerating challenges better. Each child is improving in taking responsibility for their behavior and accomplishing tasks on their own. Friendships are flourishing and bullying is out the door! Students are learning coping techniques to use when they do become anxious. It's wonderful to be in a classroom and watch the "pats on the back" that our students receive from their peers after doing an especially good job on an oral example or board work!

Looking Ahead...

I'd like to provide a brief reminder that November 21st and November 22nd are scheduled conference days. The students will have half days on that Monday and Tuesday. They will be provided lunch. The afternoons are open for parents to schedule appointments if you have not already done so. I will be available to meet with you and the regular education teacher. I will

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Looking Ahead....(cont).

also be available if you would like to meet with me alone.

November 23rd is also a half day for our students. However, lunch is NOT provided on this day. As usual we have the Friday after Thanksgiving off also.

Flexible Reading Groups

I'm not sure if you are aware that Fairhaven has adopted the RTI approach to reading. RTI stands for Response to Intervention. Students are placed in flexible grouping. Each student is assessed to determine if they have any needs. By needs, we are referring to things like fluency, decoding skills and comprehension. The students are then divided into groups that address their needs. Their progress is monitored frequently and students may move in and out of groups as needed.

Parent Advisory Information

As you know, I recently sent home a list to all parents of materials that may be borrowed from the Acushnet-Fairhaven PAC. The PAC or Parent Advisory Council is a helpful resource for parents who have children that have been determined to have special needs. I was a member of a PAC in another community. I joined for the benefit

of my youngest son. I reviewed the materials on the list and felt that they could be very helpful to parents and teachers alike. I recommend anything by Steve Lavoie; he is a dynamic presenter and touches on many important topics. There are also some great books listed on this resource list. Some that I have read and would recommend them to other people interested in expanding their knowledge of specific topics. So if you get the chance, feel free to contact administration to obtain a good read or a great video.

Sincerely, Heidi Bettencourt
Special Needs
Teacher

