



# P. S. 98 SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Home School Connection

Winter 2026

## Principal Chan's Message

Dear P. S. 98 Families,

I hope that you had a wonderful holiday season filled with good health and good cheer! We had an exciting and successful close to 2025 and we are off to a great start in 2026! Here are some highlights from the past two months.

Stage Doors is a project-based arts education program that provides students with a meaningful introduction to live theatre. This year, P. S. 98 was afforded 40 tickets which provided our 4<sup>th</sup> graders with this special opportunity to have lunch at the Hard Rock Café and see Aladdin on Broadway free of cost!

Every class took the stage for our Winter Concert Extravaganza! Our students showcased their vocal skills. The dedication of our students, teachers, and Mr. Carpentieri was on full display. Thank you to everyone who attended! Filling the seats with supportive families and friends makes a world of difference for our young performers. I hope the confidence they gained on stage is a gift that will stay with them long after that final note.

During Computer Science for All Week, our students engaged with technology in such a meaningful way. Grades K-5 participated in the Hour of Code each day. "If-then" logic, unplugged games, and successfully debugging a complex line of code are just some of the activities students participated in to improve their coding skills and increase their level of critical thinking. Our students are preparing to be the innovators of tomorrow.

As always, thank you for the partnership between our school and your homes. Thank you for helping your children practice their lyrics and dressing them in festive clothing for the concert. Asking them about their coding projects or theater experience at the dinner table fosters a strong connection between what we do in school and your involvement at home.

These experiences are what make P. S. 98 such a vibrant place to learn and grow. We are so grateful to have such an engaged and supportive community.

Warm regards,  
Kristy Chan

**The Douglaston School Vision Statement:** P. S. 98 is a place where school and home come together to promote learning to meet standards of excellence. Our students will become self-disciplined, creative and independent

learners. We believe every child will succeed in ways that reflect his or her own aptitudes and interests. We value student and community voice and collaboration. P. S. 98 encourages a strong partnership between school and home to support leadership, promote good citizenship and build a strong sense of community.

**Instructional Focus:** P. S. 98 ensures high expectations and rigorous instruction for every student across interdisciplinary content. We implement inclusive curricula and assessments. Our curriculum includes diverse perspectives that reflect and affirm all students' identities, lived experiences, and cultures. We foster students to be independent lifelong learners.

**School-wide Instructional Priority:** P. S. 98 develops and strengthens a welcoming and affirming school environment by fostering communication between school and home and attending to the social and emotional needs of all students.

**Social Emotional Learning Mission Statement:** P. S. 98's goal is to provide evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) as part of our instruction. We believe in educating the whole child, equipping students for success in school and in life by fostering positive relationships, self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, and responsible decision-making. We strive to know our students well, collaborate with families and support SEL to build supportive relationships between students and between students and staff.

**Diversity and Inclusion Policy:** At P. S. 98, we strive to create a diverse and inclusive environment that values the experience, perspective, and contributions of all students, families and faculty. As a result, we seek to foster an inclusive environment where the individual differences among us are respected, understood, and recognized as a source of strength that enriches our school community.

## Pre-K News

**Mrs. Tulimieri**

In Pre-K, we are completing our Wheels study. Before the study, we noticed the children asking questions about wheels and showing interest in how wheels are used, how they move, and how they help people. Their ongoing curiosity about the different types of wheels helped us realize that wheels would make a good study topic.

In the beginning of the Wheels study, we looked at wheels on vehicles in front of our school. We noticed the sizes and treads of the wheels. We went on walks inside PS 98 to explore wheels in our school building. We found doorknobs, tape dispensers, fans, pizza cutters, hand wheels on pipes, wheels on dollies, swivel chairs and wheels on smartboards. The children looked closely at the wheels and learned that wheels are circular, have axles and are used for movement.

As we studied wheels, we learned concepts and skills in language, literacy, math, science, the arts and social studies. The children wondered how wheels work and move. They solved problems, made predictions, and tested out their ideas.

In the Discovery learning area, the students raced cars down ramps with different inclines. They discussed how the size and tread of wheels affects how fast vehicles travel. The students also learned how smooth surfaces allow wheels to move faster while rough surfaces like bubble wrap create friction and slow the vehicles down.

Our families kindly donated wheels related items to the class. They sent in lids, spools, cardboard rolls, cylindrical plastic pieces, boxes, wooden dowels and caps. In the Art learning area, the children made vehicles and other wheel creations. They made wheel tread paintings and paper plate vehicles. The students also practiced their literacy skills while making alphabet steering wheels. In the

Math learning area, the children practiced one to one correspondence by playing the Dump Truck and Wheel Math games.

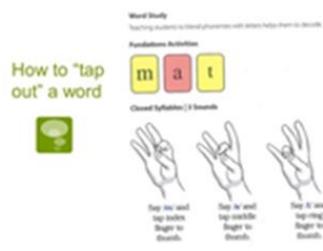
As we continue to explore wheels in our world, the children are learning how wheels make work easier for everyone. Their interest in science is growing. Lately, the children have been questioning how electricity works. They are also noticing how the sun appears bright on some days and not as bright on other days. We will start next week with our study on Light. We have lots of bright ideas in Pre-K!

## Kindergarten News

## Mrs. Eisenberg, Mrs. Cassidy and Mrs. Sheridan

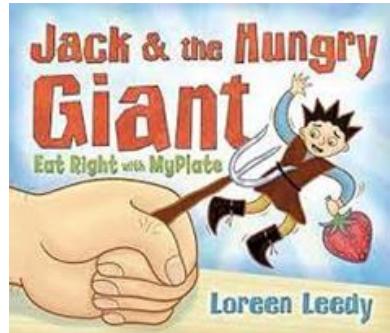
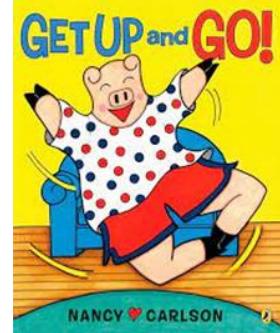
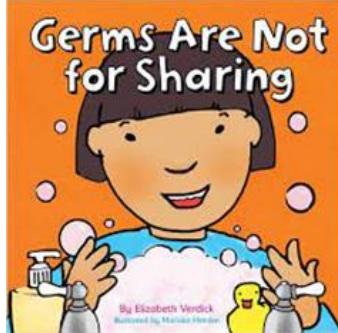
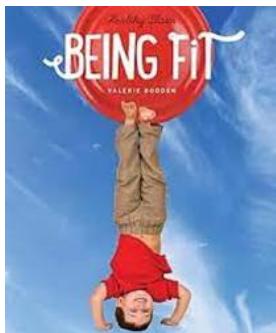
### Word Work

We just completed Unit 2 in Fundations. The children learned how to blend and read three-sound short vowel words by tapping out using their fingers. These words are often called CVC words. The children learned CVC words that begin with the consonants f, l, m, n, r, and s. These consonants have sounds that can be “held” into the vowel sound and are easier to blend. The children are also learning how to form capital, or uppercase, letters A-Z. These letters are taught to the students in alphabetical order. As we move forward to Unit 3 of Fundations, the children will continue to use their magnetic tile boards and dry erase boards to help them practice letter sounds and letter formation. We will also continue learning new trick words. The children will also work on tapping and blending nonsense words. The nonsense words have no meaning, but they conform to the English spelling patterns and rules. We will continue to use the Heggerty program to practice rhyme recognition, blending words, isolating beginning and final sounds, adding and deleting parts of words, and language awareness. Over the last few weeks, we have been practicing how to “chop” words to hear the syllables. The children love doing the hand motions while learning word study skills!



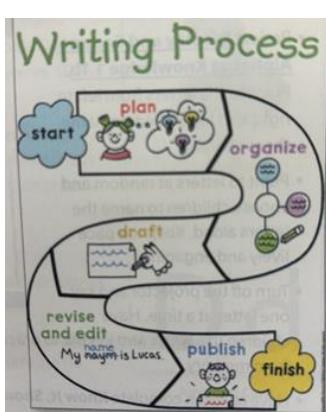
### Reading

We just completed Module 4 of the HMH program. Our essential question for this module was: How can I be my healthiest me? The children have been reviewing and learning many skills such as: how to ask and answer questions, recognize and use academic vocabulary, use text features, identify the central idea and key details, identify the characteristics of informational texts, identify the characteristics of fairy tales, retell a story, and describe the plot using beginning, middle, and end details. The children have also continued to learn print concepts such as directionality. We continue to practice reading from top to bottom and left to right. The children are identifying their trick words in stories and using their Fundations skills to help them tap out unfamiliar words when reading aloud or independently. The children also loved working in literacy centers, both working independently or in pairs with their classmates.



## Writing

We continued to use the writing process to learn about Research Writing. We continue to utilize each step of the writing process: plan, organize, draft, revise and edit, and publish. The children learned that they could do research to learn about a topic they don't already know. The children learned that they could use multiple sources to find information about a topic. To learn more about a topic, you can use sources such as reading a book that teaches about a topic, looking online for a website that talks about the topic, or asking an expert who knows a lot about the topic. Writers of research share what they know about a topic by stating a central idea and key details that give more information about this idea.



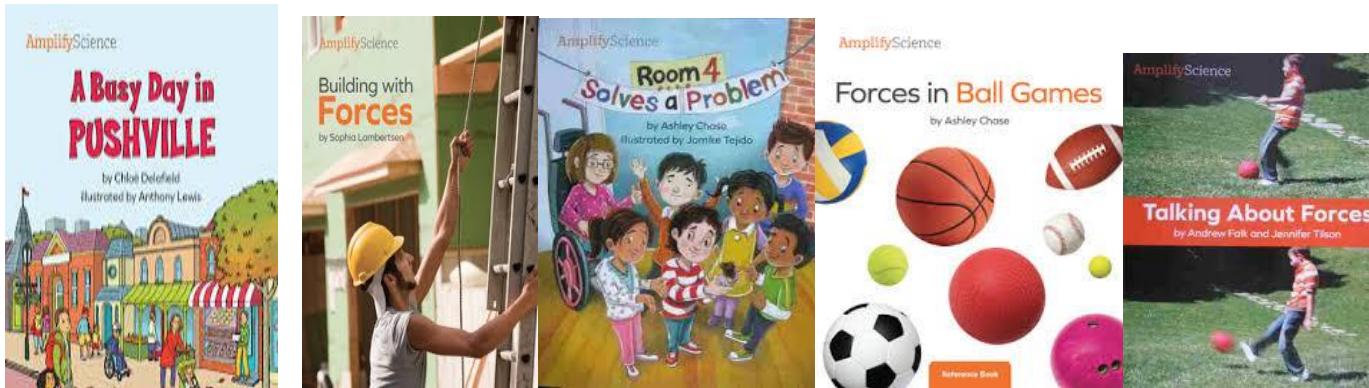
## Math

Our kindergarten students have learned how to use addition and subtraction to solve problems by listening to number stories and representing the story with math tools, pictures, and equations. We just finished learning how to subtract. The children learned how to represent subtraction as taking apart and taking away from a larger number. We solved subtraction word problems by using objects, drawings, and even ourselves to represent problems! The children enjoy working in math centers to make math even more fun! We have been playing the game, Subtraction Smash. The children use Play-doh to show a subtraction sentence. They are having so much fun rolling the die and smashing the number to show subtraction on their mats! We are now working on more addition and subtraction number sentences. The children are learning how to break down and represent numbers. The children will continue to use cubes and counters to show their thinking.



## **Science**

Although we have completed our unit on Sunlight and Weather, our kindergarten meteorologists continue to study the patterns of our weather and temperatures during this frigid and snowy winter! We now are working as engineers to study how objects move because of a force exerted on the object in our study of the Unit: Pushes and Pulls. In this unit of science, our kindergarten students will investigate and answer the question: Why do things move in different ways? We will investigate this question and findings of pushes and pulls while using and creating a pinball machine, as well as studying everyday activities, such as movement of objects in sports, games, building things, and even with our everyday chores!



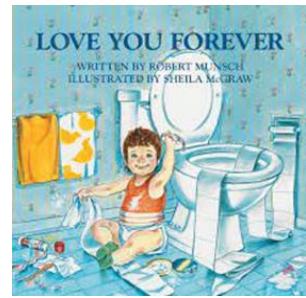
## **Social Studies/SEL**

In our last unit, the children learned the role and responsibility of members in a school community. We also learned that we are alike in many ways, and we are different in many ways. We celebrated what makes us unique!

We learned about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and his impact on our world. The children learned that he was considered one of history's greatest speakers and social activists. His leadership in peaceful protests helped end segregation during the American Civil Rights Movement. We learned how important it is to be kind, respectful, and caring to one another.

We continue to learn about World Heritage. This month we are celebrating Asia. We will learn about Lunar New Year and its wonderful traditions. We will have a Lunar Year celebration in our classroom and will have the opportunity to sample traditional foods. We are so grateful to all our parents who help make this celebration a success.

We are learning how people change and grow over time. We read the story *Love you Forever* to show how a baby changes over time. Each child will write about what they were able to do as a baby, as a toddler, and now as a child.



## First Grade News

## Mrs. Seligson, Mrs. Fabiani and Ms. Herrera

### Word Study/Fundations

Our first graders are truly wonders with their words! In our Fundations learning, we are enjoying hearing the difference between long and short vowel sounds. Students discuss and show how this vowel sound can affect the words they read. When they notice a long or short vowel sound, they "mark it up!" This helps them to have a visual distinction between their vowel sounds! In addition, we have introduced many new "glued sounds." These are sounds that are "stuck" together when you read them, such as; "ank" "ink" or "onk." Students have been using these glued sounds to sound out unfamiliar words. The teachers are so proud when first graders find glued sounds during their independent reading and excitedly point them out to the class!

Our first graders are also working with suffixes that are put at the end of the base word. When we use suffixes, we take a look at how using them can affect the base words we added to. Then, we read the whole word and talk about how we can use it in our reading and writing!

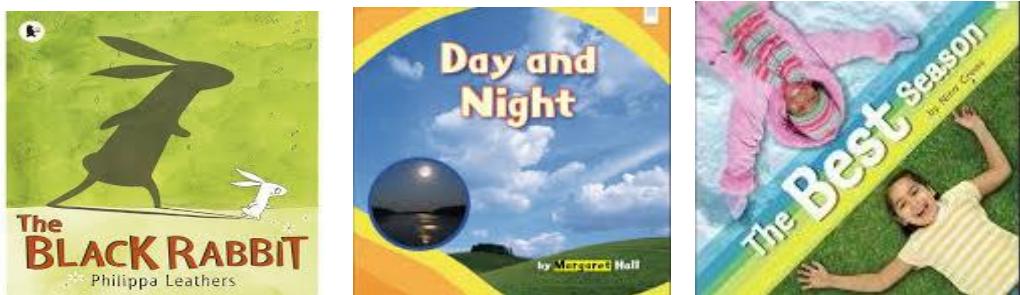
Another exciting part of our word work is that first graders have been introduced to blends, such as "bl" "pl" "st" "dr". During Heggerty, students are working with the sounds within words. We chop and blend sounds in order to deconstruct and create words. In addition, students are working on adding, deleting and substituting sounds in words. These manipulations give students a deeper understanding of the way words work and strengthen their word work skills. We are also listening for the beginning, middle and ending sounds in words. First graders are word work wizards and they are making us so proud, each and every day!



## Reading

Our radiant readers have been absolutely thriving as we dive into a variety of texts, genres and reading concepts. Each of our first graders are beginning a learning module entitled, *Now You See It, Now You Don't!* This module has an emphasis on nonfiction texts and connects nicely with our current science unit of study. In this module, we explore elements of light and dark, examine shadows and make connections using scientific concepts such as day, night, seasons and temperature. In the story, *The Black Rabbit*, a rabbit tries to avoid another rabbit that seems to be following him, only to discover that he is running from his very own shadow!

In the nonfiction texts from our current module, such as *Day and Night*, or *The Best Season*, students compare and contrast, gather information, utilize reference sources, identify text features and more. As we build our student's stamina for comprehension, we will encourage them to ask and answer questions they may have, while clarifying their ideas with their classmates. This module invites exciting discussions, scientific investigations and fun findings. We are so proud of our readers as they continue to utilize strategies to support their understanding. We are excited to build upon the strategies we have already developed, while gaining new strategies and possibilities as we read and explore. Our first graders are incredible readers and we feel so very proud of their amazing progress!

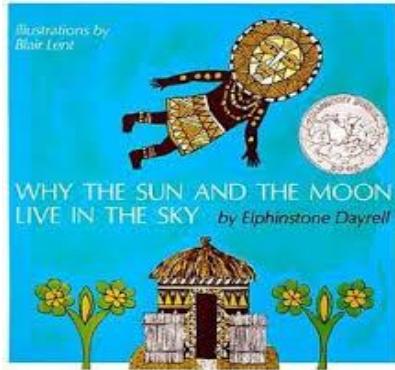


## Writing

As we enter a new writing module, the children are excited to learn about the genre of writing known as a Pourquoi Folktale! These folktales specifically focus on elements of nature and describe "how" or "why" something came to be. These tales may explain why we have snow or rain, why rabbits have fluffy tails, why the sun and moon are not in the sky at the same time, how a tiger got its stripes, or why there are clouds. Our mentor text for this module is called, *Why the Sun and Moon Live in the Sky* written by Elphinstone Dayrell. This folktale weaves an engaging fantasy that explains how the characters of Sun and Moon ended up in the sky. These tales are creative, fictional and often use elements of nature as characters.

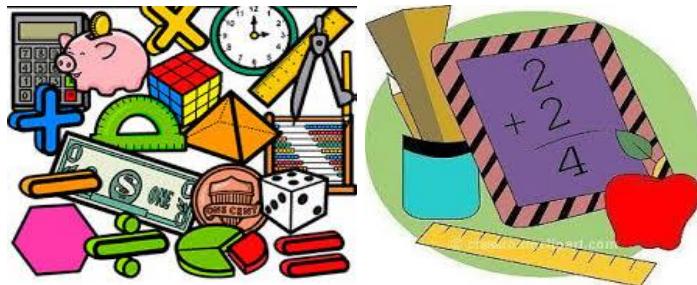
Each student began by brainstorming the elements or concepts they would like to include in their own folktale. First graders created a flow map which focused on sequencing the tale and adding details for their imaginative story. As students begin to draft their writing, we will learn about using adjectives. Students will also focus on writing opening sentences to "hook" their reader. We will share ideas for our ending sentences that give the story a powerful conclusion. Each first grader will work with peers and teachers to edit and revise their drafts throughout the writing process. Students will

then publish and present their final writing piece in the “author’s chair!” We cannot wait to let our imagination inspire us as we create these unique folktales.



### **Math**

In our Envision math work, first graders have been diving into patterns found within numbers. Our students have been counting by ones and tens. They have also been circling small groups of items in order to count a larger quantity. Students are utilizing a multitude of strategies to answer the question “how many in all?” Students answer these questions through number lines, number charts, skip counting, making groups, using tens frames and more! As we recognize patterns within 120, we will utilize this foundation to begin to think about place value, as we group tens and ones. As we move forward in our school year, our mathematicians will identify groups of tens and ones and produce a two-digit number. In addition, we will understand teen numbers, add by ones and tens and show quantities using all of the tools we are practicing. We are so proud of our marvelous mathematicians!



### **Science**

Students explore light by observing light sources and investigating how different materials interact with light. Through hands-on activities, students act as engineers by testing materials to determine which block light and create shadows. Working with partners, students make observations, draw and write about their findings, and use what they learn to design a cutout that creates a dark area. Students reflect on how their designs meet the goal of blocking light, strengthening their understanding of light and shadows through an engineering design process.



## **Social Studies**

After learning about traditions, values and culture, our first grade historians began comparing the past to now. Working together, students analyzed and studied various pictures of the past. Students generated questions they had about the photographs. We discussed some similarities and differences. Using photographs, we explored what Douglaston looked like many years ago! First graders had fun thinking about what their lives would have been like in the past!



## **Social Emotional Learning**

We started off the winter season with the story *Big Al* by Andrew Clements. In this story we met a big fish named Al. He had difficulty making friends with the smaller fish due to his size and the way he looked. Then one day everything changed! First graders discussed the importance of being kind to all and that our differences make us unique and special! This month we read *After the Fall, How Humpty Dumpty Got Back Up Again* by Dan Santat. This story teaches us about resilience. Just like Humpty Dumpty we can overcome setbacks! After reading, first graders discussed the importance of trying again even when something feels scary.

In February we will read *Ron's Big Mission*, by Rose Blue and Corinne J. Naden. This text tells the true story of Ron, a nine year old boy who dreams of being a pilot when he grows up. This story teaches the value of empathy, inclusivity and belonging. First graders have been enjoying these monthly books and making connections to their own lives!



## Second Grade News

Mrs. Whitlock, Mrs. Moran and Ms. Roma

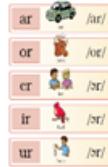
### Word Study/Fundations

Our second graders have become stronger readers. They are now able to read and spell multi-syllable words with glued sounds, long and short vowel sounds, and r-controlled vowels. Next, we will begin our practice with vowel teams. A vowel team is when two vowels work together to make one sound, such as ai or ay (bait, play). Our second graders know how to identify vowels and syllable types to help them both read new words and spell. Marking words has helped them become aware of these sounds and their syllable types to improve their reading and fluency.

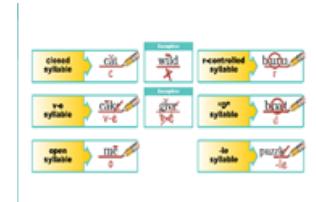
#### Vowel Teams



#### R Controlled Vowels

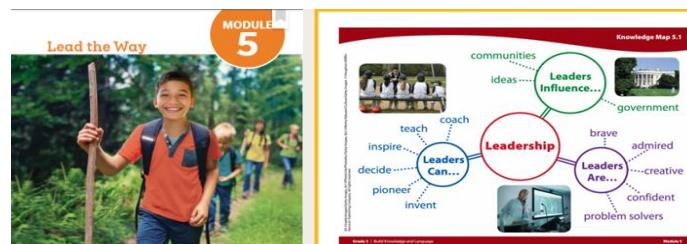


#### Marking Syllable Types



### Reading

In this module, children read stories and texts that will help them identify the qualities many good leaders possess. They learned to recognize these qualities in themselves so they can work to become good leaders in the classroom and in their school. As we read, we focus on different skills that good readers use to understand texts better. In addition, as we have explored biographies, we use context clues to figure out unknown words. Young readers are learning how to synthesize information given in a text to see the important information the author is trying to say. Summarizing and putting details together help readers get information from a text.



In our upcoming unit, students will read many poems and learn how the weather changes from day to day and from season to season. Through texts and collaborative conversations, students will explore types of weather we may often experience, such as blizzards or hurricanes, or weather they may never experience. Students see how weather affects us and the decisions we make. We will

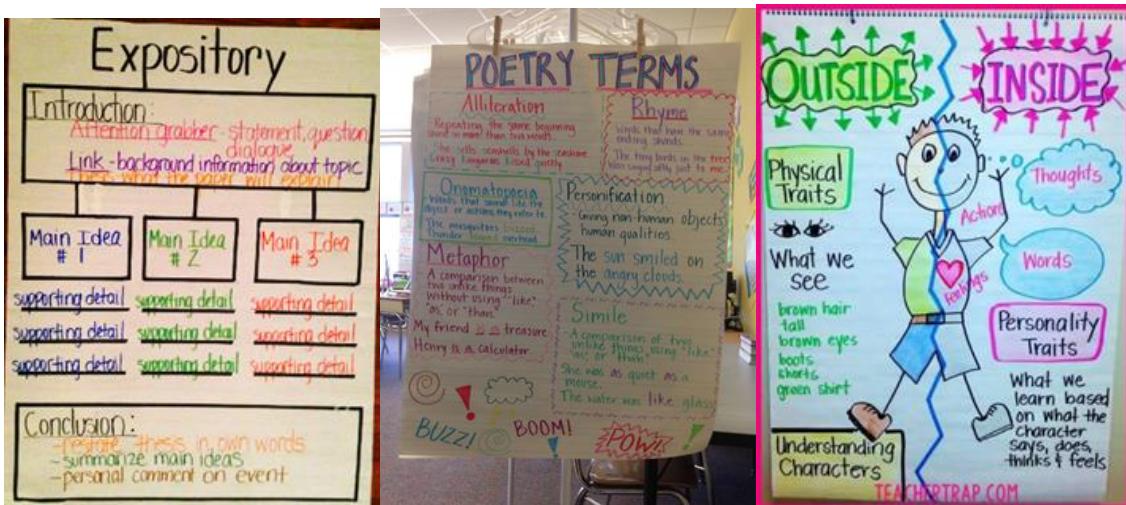
read stories and poems as we learn how they have a mood to express how the author is feeling. The students will then write their own poems about weather. We enjoy reading a variety of genres in our units in second grade.



## Writing

Over the past month, the second graders have been focusing on expository writing. Expository writing, as its name implies, is writing that exposes facts. In other words, it's writing that explains and educates its readers, rather than entertaining or attempting to persuade them. Our topic is... **What makes me unique?** Our young writers informed readers of the characteristics that make them unique. The students are enjoying discussing themselves and what makes them unique. We began our unit with brainstorming ideas in our circle maps and creating essays that tell all of our qualities from inside and out. We are happy to share the wonderful qualities that make us unique.

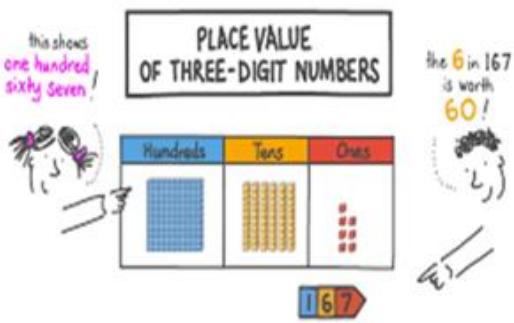
Once we finish writing expository essays, the students in second grade will become poets. We will learn how to write through a poet's eyes by using descriptive language to create a mental image. The students will learn how to use poetic devices in their poems such as rhyming, simile/metaphors, alliteration, and onomatopoeia. The students will put all these devices to work in creating a poetry book about weather. They will write poems describing different weather and what each weather situation is like.



## Math

Math will be very exciting for our second graders this month. We will all participate in real world problems with our study and practice of time and money. We will practice counting money with coins and bills, and will show a value of money in several different ways. We will learn how to tell time

to the nearest five minutes, as well as tell time in different ways. This is something that can be practiced daily at home by using phrases such as "half past 2," "quarter to 5," 15 minutes before 7," or "quarter after 3." The children will have an opportunity to make a clock in class and can use the hour hand and minute hand to show time on an analog clock. They will soon be able to tell the time in different ways using the phrases for the time before and after the hour. In our next math unit, the children will be able to work with three-digit numbers. When spring arrives, our second-grade mathematicians will be able to solve problems using data within charts and graphs, and will work with geometric shapes.



## **Science**

In our unit on Landforms, our second graders are becoming active geologists in our study of changing landforms. We are learning about the many types of landforms and bodies of water that make up our world. We will also study how landforms change shape and size. Through analyzing books, making models, and observing different types of rocks and sand, our second graders will learn how to make and record observations, investigate, and draw conclusions in science. Our exploration of different landforms will give us the opportunity to see how weather affects our earth in both positive and negative ways.



## **Social Studies**

Second grade is working on our unit about New York City over time. Students began the unit by taking a look at timelines and researched inventions that were made famous in New York. This introduction set the stage for our students as they compared how the population, natural resources, homes and buildings, and land has changed over time in New York City.



For our next unit, the students will be studying urban, rural, and suburban communities. We will learn that people choose their community based on their needs. As we explore the different communities and their features, we see how different communities have both similarities and differences. Students will analyze and compare how natural resources are used in different communities and compare the population density found in each community. As we learn the qualities of each community, we will debate the advantages and disadvantages of living in each community. The children enjoy giving their opinions to tell which community they would like to live in one day.



### **Social Emotional Learning**

Within our current HMH reading module, we are integrating social and emotional learning opportunities. The students are learning about social awareness and how they have the ability to empathize with another person's emotions. They can use empathy to understand someone else's perspective in different situations. We are also continuously discussing ways to show respect. This includes showing respect to classmates, as well as people near and far, including those from cultures and backgrounds that are different from their own.

**EMPATHY SHADES**

How are you feeling?  
I see you are feeling \_\_\_\_\_

I am here for you.

I know how you feel.

I understand where you are coming from...

**Empathy is feeling the emotions of another person and seeing their point of view.**

**Community Unity**

People make up a community. Who is in my community?

Everyone has different ideas. How can different ideas help our community?

We all have the same needs. What needs, wants, or feelings might we all have?

Everyone deserves respect. How can I show respect to others?

### Reading

Third grade is currently reading about Teamwork in our HMH curriculum, Module 5. Students are learning through this thematic unit about how to be a team player and what it means to be a good friend. In this module, students are reading stories that touch upon these ideas in stories such as *Soccer Shootout* and *Running Rivals* by Jake Maddox. As third graders read, they are demonstrating their understanding of a variety of comprehension skills. Some of these skills are but not limited to finding literary elements, describing characters, determining the theme, and understanding figurative language.

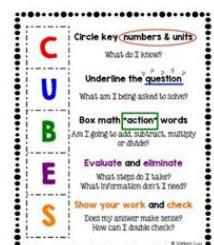


### Writing

In our writing unit, we are currently drafting persuasive letters to convince our readers that having a friend is important. We first read *Don't Feed the Geckos!* by Karen English as a mentor text to launch the unit. Students are planning their writing by thinking about their audience using the mnemonic device, T.A.P., to identify the task, their audience, and the purpose of their writing. In their writing, students are taught to use persuasive language that is intentional in order to move their audience. They are taught to provoke their audience by gaining their trust with specific examples, rallying their readers' emotions, and using logic and reasoning skills to generate strong evidence to support their reasons. To culminate this unit, students will be able to write a persuasive writing piece with all of these elements in place.

### Math

Students have been working hard practicing their multiplication facts. They have mastered the properties of multiplication which include; the Identity Property of Multiplication, the Commutative Property of Multiplication and the Distributive Property of Multiplication. Currently, they are actively engaged in division and solving multi-step word problems using CUBES. They will continue to work on labeling their answers, displaying all of their work, and being able to explain how they arrived at their solutions.



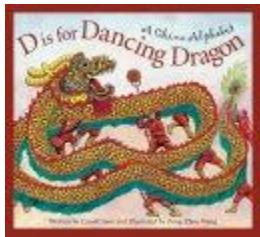
### Science

In this unit, third grade students will take on the role of being wildlife biologists. People have many misconceptions about how organisms get their traits and about the role that inherited information and environmental factors play in determining variation in the traits of organisms. This unit addresses these concepts directly by providing numerous opportunities for students to construct an accurate understanding of the influences that inheritance and the environment play in determining organisms'

traits. Through photos, videos and articles students will investigate a family of wolves and determine why the children look both similar and different from their parents.

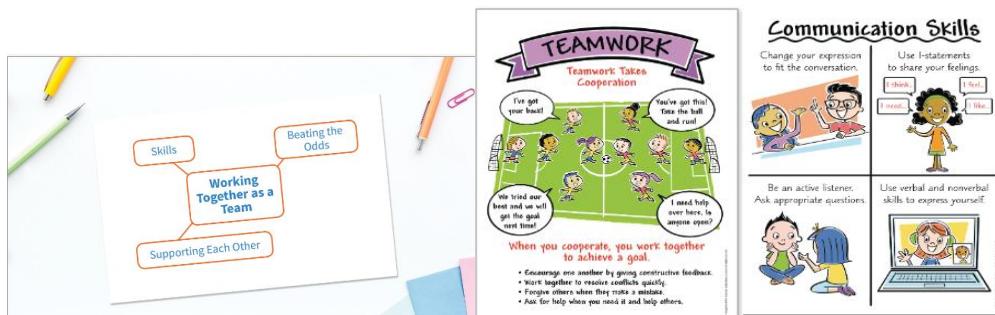
## **Social Studies**

Currently, the third grade is studying how culture, geography and history affect different communities. The first community we have been learning about is The People's Republic of China. Students are working together to discover more about the culture, geography, and history of this distinct country. Students are currently working on a research project pertaining to China, their culture, food, art and geography.



## **Social Emotional Learning**

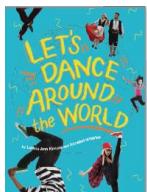
Along with our HMH program in Module 5, we are incorporating Social Emotional elements in our daily lessons. Relationship Skills are the ability to build and maintain healthy relationships. When you are skilled in relationships you communicate clearly, resolve conflicts, reach out for help and cooperatively work with others. When you are skilled in relationships, you are engaged with others and can say "no" to situations that are not good for you. Students will begin building their knowledge about teamwork and what sports can teach us about working together.



## **Fourth Grade News**

**Ms. Fejzullaj, Ms. Camhi & Ms. Healy**

### **Reading**

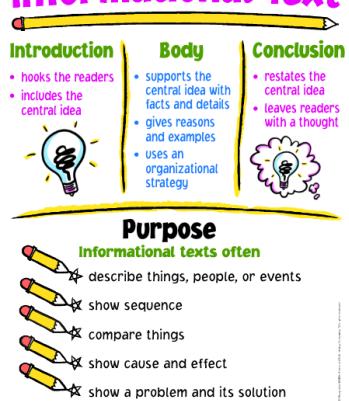


Fourth grade is currently working on Module 5 where we are focusing on the essential question "How far can your talents take you?" During this module, we read a biography about the Beatles, informational text about types of dancing and multiple poems. Comprehension skills such as central idea, text structure, asking questions to monitor our thinking, themes, elements of poetry, visualizing and figurative language were taught and utilized throughout the module. Fourth graders also learned new vocabulary words to go along with the text and how to use different suffixes and prefixes to help them identify unfamiliar words. During the next unit, we will be reading about the Marvels of Nature while we explore more informational texts and literary nonfiction.

## Writing

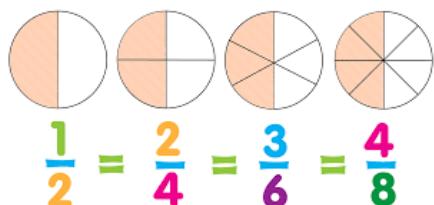
Our current HMH Module 5 writing piece aims to get students to strengthen their expository writing skills. Fourth graders take on the role of researchers and writers within this unit, starting by researching an extraordinary Black American influencer then organizing their points into a note catcher. After research, students create topic sentences for each paragraph and start logically putting together their research points using transition words. Once done with their initial draft, students learn different revising strategies such as how to create a well thought out introduction using an emotional tug, a startling statistic, a vivid image, or quote. Furthermore, they learn how to revise for descriptive language, how to check for appropriate text structure, how to revise for grammar and punctuation, and how to write a well thought out conclusion paragraph that speaks to readers. Finally, students learn how to peer edit and get ready to publish and share all about their extraordinary Black American influencer.

## Informational Text



## Math

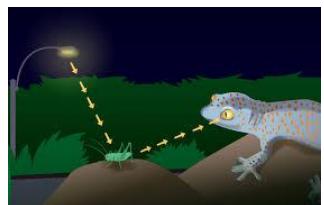
Fourth grade has recently embarked on the journey of fractions. Throughout these units, we will develop a deep understanding of the value of whole numbers and their fractional parts. Our work will include finding equivalent fractions, comparing fractions, as well as computing with fractions- adding, subtracting and multiplying. Students learn different ways to represent fractions and compare them including using fraction strips, number lines, benchmarks and operations. Remind your child that fractions exist everywhere in the real-world. Help them develop mathematical



language by encouraging "fraction talk." For example, rather than eating 2 slices of pizza for lunch, point out that they may be eating  $\frac{2}{8}$  of a pie. Ask them how it's possible for someone to eat the same amount of pizza as them if the pie was cut into a different part of a whole!

## Science

As we begin our unit on Vision and Light, fourth graders take on the role of Conservation Biologists! In this unit, we will discuss the different sensory structures animals have, which help them collect information about the environment around them. We heavily focus on the structure of the eye and its function in collecting sensory information. Through readings, hands-on-investigations, and simulations, fourth grade conservation biologists will investigate why the number of Tokay geckos living in an area of a rainforest in the Philippines is on a decline. Students will come to see how human changes to the environment affect the survival of a species and problem solve how to reverse this. Students will also be preparing for the state performance-based task on Energy.



## Social Studies

We are moving on from Native Americans to the Colonial and Revolutionary Periods. Within this unit, we will be learning about what life was like for colonists in the 1700s. We will be analyzing what led to the American Revolution by focusing on key events such as The French and Indian War, The Battle of Golden Hill, The Quartering Act, Taxes, The Boston Massacre, The Boston Tea Party, and The Battles of Lexington and Concord. Students will have an opportunity to role-play a Loyalist or Patriot and write to King George III. They will make a claim and support their perspective with historical evidence.



## Social Emotional Learning



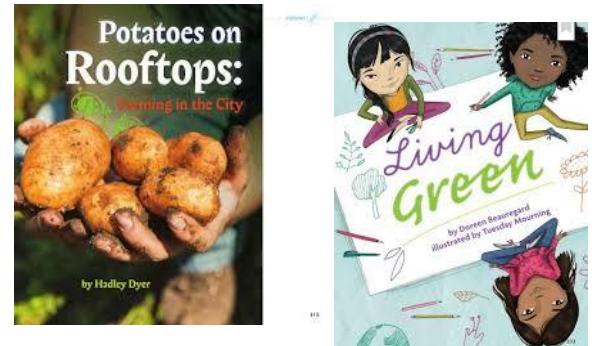
In this module, we are focusing on social awareness. Social Awareness is the ability to empathize with another person's emotions and understand his or her perspective in different situations. We are teaching our students that when you are socially aware, you appreciate and respect people near and far, including those from cultures and backgrounds that are different from their own.

## Fifth Grade News

## Ms. Barongi, Mr. Grossman and Mrs. Kelly

### Reading

In our most recent reading module, Natural Disasters, students explored a variety of texts and media to learn about the different types of natural disasters that affect our Earth. Through informational texts, students practiced identifying central ideas, summarizing key events, and asking and answering questions to better understand new and sometimes challenging material. We also read across genres, including narrative nonfiction, realistic fiction, and persuasive texts, which helped students build background knowledge and make connections between ideas. We are now beginning our new module, Project Earth. This module focuses on persuasive texts and encourages students to think critically about the importance of conserving and protecting our natural resources. Students will work on identifying an author's purpose, evaluating reasons and evidence, and supporting claims related to caring for our planet. This module helps students strengthen their reading comprehension skills while also encouraging thoughtful discussions about environmental responsibility.



### Writing

This month in HMH Writing, students are focusing on editorials, a type of persuasive writing that allows them to express their opinions on important topics. Students are writing about environmental issues they care about, asking thoughtful questions, and conducting research to gather facts that support their viewpoints. Through this process, they are learning how writers use evidence to influence others and inspire positive change. As students develop their editorials, they continue to practice key writing strategies such as crafting strong thesis statements, using credible sources, and including

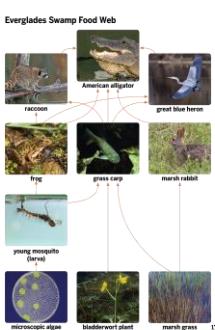


transitional words and phrases to help ideas flow smoothly. They are also learning how to clearly explain and clarify their ideas, as well as how to write effective conclusions that leave a lasting impression on the reader. To polish their work, students use editing checklists to review and improve their writing. This includes checking for proper sentence structure, capitalization, and punctuation to ensure their writing is clear and well-organized. This unit helps students grow as confident writers while strengthening their ability to communicate ideas in a meaningful and persuasive way.

## Math

Fifth graders are exploring fractions in many ways. Students are building on their understanding of fractions as parts of a whole, so that they can add, subtract, multiply and divide these values. We are connecting our math learning to real-world examples and by creating models. Students continue to be engaged in mathematical discussions and sharing their understanding of the concepts being taught.

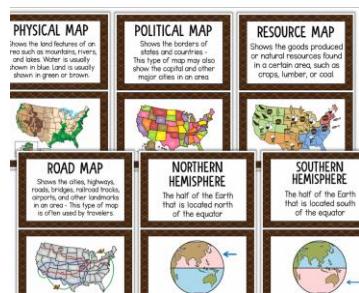
## Science



Amplify's Ecosystem Restoration unit is giving students opportunities to explore the question, "How do organisms in an ecosystem get the matter and energy they need to grow and thrive?" Students analyzed simulations portraying the movement of matter in a rainforest ecosystem, modeled food webs, and read scientific texts to help develop their understanding of food molecules and matter. Students practiced writing scientific arguments to answer questions and provide evidence from these different sources. Our next topic will bring us up into space where we will explore stars' positions and distance from Earth, constellations, and light years.

## Social Studies

In fifth grade, students are exploring a variety of topics related to the formation of the United States. Their learning includes studying the major events and influences that shaped our nation, as well as examining the physical geography of different regions. Students investigated regional features such as landforms, climate, and natural resources to understand how these characteristics affected where people settled, how land was used, and what economic opportunities developed in different areas. This helped students see how geography played an important role in shaping communities. In addition, students analyzed paintings, written texts, and other forms of historical artwork to better understand what early Americans valued during the nation's early years. Students also worked with several types of maps—including physical, political, census, and weather maps—to learn how maps provide important information and how geographic features can impact the people who live in various regions.



## **Social Emotional Learning**

Our fifth graders are taking big strides in emotional intelligence this term by incorporating Social Emotional Learning (SEL) into both our class conversations and academic lessons. A major focus of this learning is conflict resolution; we are equipping students with a toolkit to handle peer disagreements with patience and empathy. By encouraging students to voice their needs and listen to opposing viewpoints when friction occurs, we are helping them develop the resilience and interpersonal skills essential for their transition to middle school and beyond.

## **Physical Education**

**Mr. Sciabarassi**



As the weather has not been in our favor to go outside for many weeks now, we have been doing our indoor Fitness Unit. This includes our FitnessGram Fitness Testing for our older students (Grade 4 and 5). All other grades are doing very similar activities, with modifications for practice. The NYC FitnessGram is a City Wide initiative that involves different aspects of fitness for students to be "tested" on. This includes:

Cardiovascular: FitnessGram Pacer Test (Running)

Muscular Strength & Endurance: Push-ups, Sit-ups, trunk lift

Flexibility: Sit and Reach

This is mandatory for New York City Elementary grades four and fifth but will be practiced and modified for the younger students as well!

For Pre K – third grade, these exercises are performed with modifications like less repetitions and in a game format.

We make teams and have relay races with exercise obstacles to make working out fun.

We come together at the beginning and end of every class to talk about having proper technique for these exercises so students can avoid injury and see the best success!

## Music

## Mr. Carpentieri

Students in Pre-K, Kindergarten, first grade, and second grade have been building off the success of this school year's Winter Concert. Students in Kindergarten began January with a unit on animals and music singing songs like *BINGO*, *The Animal Train Song*, *Old McDonald*, and *Walking Through the Jungle*. Students finished the month by watching and listening to songs being performed from Camille Saint Saëns' *Carnival of the Animals*. In February, students in Kindergarten are learning about music and space singing songs like *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*, *Starlight Starbright*, and *Moon, Moon, Moon*. At the end of the month, students will listen to and watch a performance of Gustav Holst's *The Planets*. Students in first grade began January by learning about instrument families and their place in the orchestra. Students finished January by listening to and watching a performance of Benjamin Britton's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*. In January, second grade students started the "Tell a Musical Story" unit in which they listen to instrumental music, find the theme, and write a creative fictional story to accompany the song. In February, first and second grade students will begin their instrument unit on boomwhackers. They will be playing various famous songs using these pitched percussion tubes such as *Dance Monkey*, *How Far I'll Go* and *Shake it Off*.



Students in third, fourth and fifth grade are introduced to a new "Artist of the Day" each music class. In January, we listened to artists with European heritage such as The Beatles, Daft Punk, Laufey, and Adele. Coinciding with black history month, the month of February will feature various black artists such as Bill Withers, Stevie Wonder, John Legend, and Jimi Hendrix. In January, students in third, fourth and fifth grade began the ukulele instrument unit in January. With the aid of the "Yousician" app, students have been playing chords and melodies from classic songs such as *Youth*, *Riptide*, and *Fix You*. Students are continuing the ukulele unit through February.



## Technology/Computer Science

## Mrs. Mei

Kindergarten through second grade students are becoming more proficient in using the mouse to drag and drop while coding! They are creating algorithms (step-by-step instructions) for their characters by using the "Test and Learn" steps. Once a bug (mistake) is spotted, they know to persist and debug (fix the mistake) by looking carefully at the codes and retry.

We also reviewed what it means to be a responsible digital citizen when using media. Through songs, videos, and images, the students are understanding what being safe on the internet means by reflecting on ways to keep passwords and information safe. They also gained a better understanding that not everything they see on the internet is true, and that they can always trust an adult when something doesn't feel right.



For students in grades 3-5, we are completing the first round of using Lego Education, with each grade having 3 STEM/Robotics sessions in the Library. Students worked in groups to create, program, and test their given projects. Students were able to create sequences and loops, decompose problems, and improve programs to meet specific needs. Using Legos, they also developed their engineering design skills, problem-solving skills, and communication skills as they investigated ways of defining problems, brainstormed solutions, and tested and refined prototypes.



Students in third through fifth grade will soon begin using a new computer science program using Scratch called Experience CS. Students will learn to code their own programs, make exciting projects, and build their computational thinking - all taught through the context of core content, like math, science, social studies and language arts. Third grade's unit is called "Weather Watchers," fourth grade has the unit titled "The Me Project," and fifth graders will explore the "Take a Tour" unit. More information will be given in the next newsletter.

**Typing Programs:** In an effort to assist students with their keyboarding skills, students have been practicing in the classroom and in the tech lab. Students from second to fifth grade are highly encouraged to utilize Typing Pal. As for first grade, they are encouraged to practice their keyboarding skills using Typing Club. Learning how to correctly type is a skill that will serve them well in the years to come.

## Art

## Ms. Devine

**Kindergarten and First Grade:** Kindergarten and first grade students explored warm and cool colors while creating cheerful snowmen. Using a mix of paint, markers, and crayons, students experimented with different art materials to bring their designs to life. They also applied their prior knowledge of shapes by cutting and pasting geometric pieces to construct their snowmen, building both creativity and foundational skills.



**Second Grade:** Second graders explored the art of landscapes while learning about the Northern Lights. Inspired by this natural phenomenon, students created their own vibrant landscape artworks. They also practiced blending techniques using oil pastels, developing both their artistic skills and creativity.



**Third Grade:** Third graders explored contour line drawing by creating snowflakes that showcased repetition and pattern. Through this unit, students strengthened their drawing skills while learning how lines and patterns can be used to create balanced and visually engaging designs.



**Fourth Grade:** Fourth graders explored a variety of watercolor techniques while creating their own cityscape snow globes. Through this project, students experimented with color, texture, and layering, developing their painting skills while expressing creativity in a winter-themed design.



**Fifth Grade:** Fifth graders created winter landscapes using a variety of mixed media, including watercolor, Sharpie, colored pencil, and markers. Students were given the opportunity to choose which materials they wanted to use, encouraging creative decision making and personal expression while strengthening their artistic skills.



## Student Council

**Mrs. Kelly**

The Student Council has been busy promoting our recent school spirit day, Crazy Hair Day! Be on the look out for Heart Awareness Day and Teacher Swap Day coming in February!



In addition, Student Council members are preparing to share ideas on how to use the funds from the Civics For All Participatory Budget. They are working on creating commercials for each of the selected ideas which will be shared with the PS 98 Community. Be on the lookout for these commercials and remember to vote at the end of February!

As part of a District 26 Leadership Initiative, Student Council members are asking students in all grades to

write appreciation letters to our local police and fire departments (To be completed with classroom teachers). It is important for us to show our community workers how important they are and that we appreciate the work they do to keep us all safe.

Thank you for supporting the Student Council!

## P. S. 98 Ambassadors

**Mrs. Holle**

PS 98 Ambassadors started out the year by asking for donations to City Harvest to help feed the poor. Thanks to your support we donated 450 pounds of food before Thanksgiving. Ambassadors then partnered with Assemblyman Edward Braunstein in the Toy Drive. Again, your support made this a very successful event and we donated toys to less fortunate and hospitalized children before the holidays. Ambassadors created posters and made morning announcements for both. Their next project will be with Assemblyman Braunstein's Valentines for Vets. Please consider making a donation (socks, puzzles, sugar free candy, aftershave, etc.) to those who served our country.

## Congratulations to our Bucket Fillers

November 2025

**K-101 – Amelia Negulescu  
K-102 – Juliet Strohschein**

**3-208 – Iliana Mkhitarian  
3-209 – Chloe Lewis**

**1-108 – Eve D’Angelo  
1-109 – Max Marasciulo  
2-206 – Tessa Chan  
2-207 – Samuel Estela**

**4-201 – Lydia Xia  
4-203 – Stephanie Collura  
5-202 – Dylan Pressley  
5-205 – Ting Chiu**

**December 2025**

**K-101 – Mason Morgan  
K-102 – Cannon White Simmons  
1-108 – Zoe Belanich  
1-109 – Tristan Provenza  
2-206 – Penelope Chen  
2-207 – Catalina Martin**

**3-208 – Ava Ghaznavi  
3-209 – Daylis Avendano Gonzales  
4-201 – Peyton Puglisi  
4-203 – Oliva Tan  
5-202 – Jordan Lee  
5-205 – Ivy Xu**

**In, Out and Around The Douglaston School**

**Mrs. Holle**

In November and December our students went on class trips to Green Meadows Farms, City Hall, and Queensborough Community College Performing Arts shows. The New York Historical Society came in and visited grades 2-5. The students learned about democracy and the history of New York City through primary sources, artifacts and maps. The Douglaston Garden Club planted bulbs with Kindergarten and first graders. We also had our Scripps National Spelling Bee. All the students did an outstanding job. Congratulations to the winners. The PTA had their Holiday sale. The students were so excited to buy gifts for their family and themselves. Students also had a fun lunch with teachers from the PTA pizza raffle. At the end of the year, we had our wonderful Winter Concert and pajama day. During the first week back to school after the winter break, MYM Chess, Piano and Basketball started their second sessions. The PTA also had the Skydome Planetarium Assembly which the students absolutely loved. We had a fabulous Family Math Night run by Ms. Fejzullaj and terrific Broadway performances by our very talented students. Congratulations to all our performers. The last CASA program started for grades 2-3. The students are learning Origami. Mrs. Camhi had a Parent Workshop on NYS Computer Based Testing. Coming up in February is World Read Aloud Day where parents can come in and read to their child’s class. We are having Coffee and Conversation and Fundations and Heggerty Parent Workshop. A schoolwide assembly, They Made a Difference - Women in History as well as Kindness Week. PTA World’s Fair dance programs will start at the end of February. Information on how to sign up will be sent out soon. There are many more exciting events to come including Career Day, Reading by Twilight, Forces and Motion Assembly, Read a Thon and more.

**Dates to Remember**

**Mrs. Holle**

February 16-20 – Mid-Winter Recess  
February 27 – Second marking period ends  
March 2 – Third marking period begins  
March 5 – Parent Teacher Conference – Early Dismissal – No Afterschool  
March 16 – Report cards available via NYCSA  
March 20 – School Closed – Eid al-Fitr  
April 2-10 – School Closed - Spring Recess  
April 16-17 – ELA State Test – Grades 3-5

April 30 – May 1 – Math State Test – Grades 3-5  
May 14 – Science State Test – Grade 5 only  
May 25 – School Closed – Memorial Day  
May 27 – School Closed – Eid al-Adha  
June 3 – Third marking period ends  
June 4 – School Closed – Anniversary Day/Chancellor's Conference Day  
June 5 – No Students – Clerical Day  
June 19 – School Closed – Juneteenth  
June 26 – Last day of school – Report cards available via NYCSA