

**First Grade Newsletter**

Dear Families,

 December is a busy month whoever you are and wherever you go. As we enter this festive time of the year we want to be sure you are aware of all the learning and fun that will be a part of your first grader’s days at Selwyn.

 Here is what we are going to be up to over the coming few weeks:

**MODULE BLOCK:** We continue to deepen our understanding of the sun, moon and stars through focusing on observable patterns of the night sky. We will move on from narrative texts to informational texts as we build on our knowledge of the sun, moon and stars. Through a combination of close read-alouds, focused read-alouds, hands-on experiences, authentic writing tasks, and small group discussions, students take on the role of astronomers and learn about these big ideas: The sun and moon appear in different places in the sky during different times of day and year; stars are visible during the night, but not during the day; and patterns of motion of objects in the sky can be described and predicted.

**SKILLS BLOCK:** In December we will focus on reading and spelling words with the initial sound wh- (as seen with question words) and the final sound /k/, spelled -ck (which comes at the end of a word, after a short vowel is heard). You can find this spelling in words like brick, duck, and stick. We will also learn the FLSZ rule, which is doubling the letter at the end of a single syllable word if it is heard after a short vowel. Some examples are stuff, doll, floss, and buzz. This month we will also focus more on initial l blends (bl, gl, sl) and s blends (sp and spl). We continue to work with the high frequency words assigned for homework each week. We practice spelling and writing them, spotting them in word searches and fluency passages, finding rhyming words, as well as using them to help spell other words. These activities are on the Super Word Power sheets that come home. Thank you for your support at home with learning their sight words each week!

**LAB BLOCK:** We will be exploring all things that have to do with the sky, space, and our place in the universe. In the CREATE Lab students will be working to create watercolor paintings that represent the sky at different times of the day. The students in each class will be creating an “Our Sky” class picture book to showcase their beautiful work. During the EXPLORE Lab students will engage in a variety of activities to explore light and shadows. They will create shadow pictures using their hands and other materials while discussing how shadows play a role in the appearance of the moon in the night sky. Students will continue to create a world of play in the IMAGINE Lab as they reenact and create stories about the sky. They will retell stories from the Module lessons as well as create their own. Finally, in the RESEARCH Lab, Students will use research skills to learn new information and ask questions about the sky. The Research Lab culminates in the creation of a Sky Riddle Book in which students will use their newly learned researched facts.

**MATH:** During the month of December we will continue to work on subtraction strategies. Students are pursuing a concrete knowledge of their math facts within 20. Remember fluency means students can compute with efficiency and accuracy. As we move past our subtraction strategies and into Topic 5, students will be challenged to find the unknown number in an equation. For example, they may be asked to find the missing addend in

\_\_ + 6 = 11 or the missing subtrahend 15 - \_\_ = 9. The computation becomes challenging when they need to remember the math facts and be able to relate addition to subtraction. If the unknown number cannot be readily be solved with math facts, we encourage their thinking by using tools such as a part-part-whole mat, fact family triangle, or interactive number lines. Topic 5 also includes adding equations with 3 addends and balancing equations.

**SOCIAL STUDIES:** During the month of December, we will be learning about family traditions, holiday customs, and cultures in Australia, France, Germany, India, Israel, Mexico, and Sweden as we visit other first grade classrooms for our annual ***Holidays Around the World*** rotation. During this fun learning experience, students will collect information in their travel suitcases and use them to write nonfiction texts about what they have learned about the holiday celebrations in each country they “visit”.

**LOVE OF LEARNING:** During our daily Morning Meetings we sit together in a circle so that everyone can see and be seen by everyone else. We use the time to greet one another, share news, do a quick, fun activity together, and read a short message about our learning. This routine sets a positive tone for the day and builds a sense of belonging while giving students practice in key academic and social skills. [Source: responsiveclassroom.org]. We also use this time to focus on building an understanding of what it takes to be a citizen and scholar.. For December that focus will be on being EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS [Clearly conveying thoughts, questions, solutions, and ideas in multiple ways, including verbally, written, and digitally.].

**Important Dates for December**

* **Thur 12/5** Mid-Quarter Progress Reports Sent
* **Mon12/9-Fri 12/13** Winter Book Fair
* **Fri 12/13** Citizens & Scholars Assembly
* **Sat 12/21 - Sun 1/5**  Winter Break

We look forward to spending this special and exciting time of year with your children. We would like to wish you all the very best as your family celebrates your own holiday traditions with those you hold dear. Enjoy the time that winter break provides to build special memories together.

**THE FIRST GRADE TEAM:**

*Mrs. Boughman, Ms. Goodson, Mrs. Roberts, Mrs. Shockley,*

*Mrs. Valois, Mrs. Vande Weghe, and Ms. Vruwink*