

3rd-6th Fireweed Academy Newsletter

March 30, 2015

Culture Theme

Last week we began theme group rotations giving students an opportunity to consider "culture" through a variety of lenses. Speaking of lenses... in Kris's theme groups, students are approaching culture with a scientific lens. Topics range from observing and growing microorganisms, to the history leading up to the technology and knowledge of the field today. Our study begins with Antonie van Leeuwenhoek, the first of the "Microbe Hunters" and his love of lenses and all things microscopic. Throughout the week and during subsequent specials, students will hear of scientists such as Robert Hooke, learn about microscopes, prepare and observe slides, and will safely design and conduct an experiment in which they culture bacteria.



Guests

We had a wonderful guest presentation this past Friday. Leah Thon, an Americorp Volunteer with the STEM Outreach Program taught students about Remote Operated Vehicles. Leah shared advances in technology through ROV (remote operated vehicles) that allow us to explore and monitor our marine communities. Students were able to operate an ROV as well as design, build, and test their own for neutral buoyancy and drivability.



Assessment Update - AMP Testing Begins Next Week

Beginning next week, all 3rd-5th graders will be participating in the Alaska Measures of Progress assessment for Language Arts and Mathematics. The following is a brief explanation of Alaska's new standardized assessment tool. The following information is from the Alaska Department of Education & Early Development (<http://education.alaska.gov/>).

Alaska Measures of Progress (AMP) is the new Alaska assessment for students in grades 3-10 statewide. It replaces the Standards Based Assessments (SBA) that students took in previous years. AMP is aligned to the new, rigorous standards set forward by the state. Like the SBAs, students will take the AMP test each spring to help determine their progress over the course of the year. The test has two

sections or subtests, English language arts and math. Each section will take most students between 90-120 minutes, but there is not a time limit. Because there are new standards and a new assessment, AMP scores will not be comparable to SBA scores.

If you are considering the right to refuse that your child test, the required form is attached to this newsletter or can be picked up at school (table between David's classroom and Kris's classroom).

Stem Club

Calling all students! Math club resumes in Stephanie's room on Mondays from 3:15-4:15, however... Stephanie is transforming Math Club into Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Club. Students are invited to work on and get help on homework for the week. Also we will have materials available for building ROVs, Hovercraft, and battery operated wiggly bots, robotics and more!

Open Enrollment

We are done with Open enrollment. However, I am still missing a few form for student who I suspect are indeed coming back to our school. If you have completed a form, please call me at 235-9728. That said, we are not full in every grade so please continue to let our friends and neighbors know that we have space for the FY16 school year. Thanks-Janet

Class Notes

The culture theme offers up some interesting and potentially delicious avenues for investigation. Fifth grade math class is looking for one more bread machine so that we can put our fraction skills to work baking bread. We are also still looking for expert advice and supplies for making root beer (bottles, caps, capper) and yogurt as part of our science explorations. Drop off or send in supplies in Krus's 5th/6th classroom (102).

Fundraisers-**Calling all 6th graders!!!! Please pick up your packets from Janet**

The 6th graders are selling raffle tickets that have two terrific prizes! One is Dinner for 2 at the Homestead Restaurant, www.homesteadrestaurant.net (\$150 Value and donated by Rick and Sharlene Cline) and the other is a Halibut Charter for 1 from Ofishial Charters, www.ofishial.com (\$260 value and donated by Austin Ceccarelli's parents). Each ticket is \$5 or 5 tickets for \$20. The drawing will be held Friday April 17 at noon in Big Fireweed's Room 102 (Kris Owens room) during our Soup Lunch Fundraiser (our last fundraiser). Winners need not be present to win. The 6th graders have tickets for sale and I have some in my office as well-Janet

From THE DISTRICT: EARLY RELEASE SURVEY

"Each school day, more than 1,200 KPBSD employees do all that they can to provide a quality education to our district's students. A part of this work is our continuous improvement process that requires us to regularly evaluate our practices so that we can in turn, make the necessary changes to

help our students find success. An intricate piece of our improvements is our professional development for our certified staff. With the need to do more for our staff in this area, for the past two school years we designated six school days as minimum days—with a 90 minute early release for students, while staff works a maximum day in order to deliberately devote time to collaborate and collectively address the learning needs of our students. Now that you are familiar with these shortened student school days, we want to receive your feedback on them. Please complete these questions, and provide your optional comments. Thank you very much for your time.” – Sean Dusek, Superintendent

The direct link is: <http://bit.ly/KPBSDParentSurveyMinimumDays> and a link will also be added to the community interest section on the KPBSD homepage and in the KPBSD website in section: Students/Parents > Surveys at some point Tuesday evening. This link will be available April 1-24, 2015.

Upcoming 3-6 Dates: Mark your calendars!

- April 6th - 10th: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) with Cheryl Sotelo
- March 30th - May 1st: AMP Alaska Measures of Progress Online Assessment (3rd-6th)
- April 3rd - No School (Easter Holiday)
- April 8th - APC meeting
- April 17th - Soup Fundraiser at Big Fireweed and Raffle Drawing