

# #512 NEWS LETTER

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS



February 2	Quarter 2 NC Check-In Assessment
February 8	STEM Night from 6:00-7:30 pm
February 9	Early Release
February 13	Valentine Boxes Due
February 14	Valentine's Day Celebration
February 15	Rock n' Roar Dino Show at 2:30 pm
February 23	<i>Number the Stars</i> Celebration
February 24	Pei Wei Dine-Out Night 4:00-8:00 pm

## POWER HOMEWORK CHANGES

I have made a couple adjustments to the Power Homework requirements. The concept of offering students "choice" is definitely a work-in-progress, but I love that I have the flexibility to make changes as the year continues to best fit the needs of my students. Thank you for being so open-minded, and for encouraging your child to complete the homework each week.

I have changed the format to resemble more of a Choice Board. Students still need to complete at least three choices per week. Something new I'm trying is to make it required that students complete **at least one math** choice and **at least one reading** choice each week. Their third choice can be anything from the Choice Board.

## NC CHECK-IN MATH ASSESSMENT

### NC Check - In

On this particular assessment, there were 24 multiple choice questions. The first half of the test was calculator inactive, and the second part was calculator active. The majority of the questions correlated with the curriculum taught in second quarter, however, there were 9 questions about fractions. Fractions are taught in third grade, but we have not covered fractions yet this year in fourth grade. I will look at how each student did with the fraction material and use this data to plan for instruction during this unit.

Students worked INCREDIBLY hard on this test. I was very pleased!

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### ***Book Clubs***

I'm sure that you're heard by now that we have started reading, *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry as a class. This story is inspiring, full of suspense, and a true story of courage.

Background of the Novel: As the German troops begin their campaign to "relocate" all the Jews of Denmark, Annemarie Johansen's family takes in Annemarie's best friend, Ellen Rosen, and conceals her as part of the family. Through the eyes of ten-year-old Annemarie, we watch as the Danish Resistance smuggles almost the entire Jewish population of Denmark, nearly seven thousand people, across the sea to Sweden. The heroism of an entire nation reminds us that there was pride and human decency in the world even during a time of terror and war.

Each week students are assigned several chapters to read. I have created a series of questions, projects, and extensions that they are completing as they read. On Friday's, students are getting into their book clubs and discussing the book! This has been my favorite part! The discussions that I'm witnessing are so in-depth and students are posing great questions. I cannot wait to finish this book--I know students are going to love every page!

### ***Reading***

The major focus in third quarter is Historical Fiction. This happens to be a genre that not many of my students have read, so I'm so excited to help them explore this genre! Historical Fiction stories are written for children to live vicariously through the eyes of kids their age who have had to grow up much more quickly. During this unit, students will:

- deeply think about the characters in the stories that we read aloud, as well as texts in their book clubs
- think critically as they embrace more complex text.
- we will focus on the connection between a text and the text's visuals.
- students will enjoy several opportunities to participate in Book Clubs in efforts to develop their communication skills.
- focus on reading skills specifically to develop ideas about characters, determining themes, inferring within a text, comparing and contrasting texts, synthesizing across texts, and talking and writing about their reading.

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### ***Opinion Writing***

Students are currently working on their first opinion piece! Last week we brainstormed possible topics as a class and voted. I was so impressed with the list of topics that students brainstormed as a class. Most of the topics were related to current events and social issues. We decided on the top three and students were given the opportunity to choose the topic that meant the most to them. We are using a strategy called, O.R.E.O. This strategy helps students organize their writing. I think the biggest learning curve for students has been their realization that to properly defend their opinion, they need to conduct research. During third quarter, students will write two opinion pieces, and one persuasive essay. My goal is to publish all three pieces. As a reminder, I keep all of their writing at school because I will need to choose several writing samples for their fifth grade portfolio.

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### ***Fractions, Baby!***

We are beginning this month with learning about patterns. Our focus will be on investigating patterns to find rules and write equations based on the rules. We will also focus on generating both geometric and number patterns based on given rules so we can describe features of the patterns. In addition, we will be using t-charts to organize our patterns. We will then begin our unit on **FRACTIONS!** This month in fractions we will be finding equivalent fractions and comparing fractions. We will be using visual fraction models do both of these skills. Visual models include area models, number lines or it could be a collection/set model. Fractions make up 50% of the fourth grade math EOG....so needless to say, this unit is very important!

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#### **Science:**

Our focus in third quarter is Force and Motion, Energy Conservation and Transfer. This is a new unit in fourth grade this year. I have several hands-on, exciting experiments planned that I know students will enjoy!

#### **Social Studies:**

We will wrap up our unit on North Carolina history this month and begin learning about the early development of government in North Carolina. We will be creating a class timeline! Students will also have an opportunity to learn about the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. Students will learn about a variety of important movements in N.C. (e.g. The Greensboro Sit-In) to better understand social issues.