

The Beaver Buzz



Principal's Corner

At Browns Valley School, we have shared information about the Common Core State Standards in many different contexts, but in order for us to completely transition to these standards, it is important for teachers, students, and parents to fully understand what they are and what each stakeholder can do to ensure that our students are successful. Therefore, I would like to highlight an important aspect of the Common Core State Standards in each monthly newsletter to facilitate this process.

What are Common Core State Standards?

Even though the state standards we have used in the past have created a critical foundation for student success, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are the first step in providing our students with a higher quality education. These standards describe what every U.S. student should know and be able to do to be ready for success after high school, whether that student goes directly to college or to the workplace. They are clear and consistent statements of knowledge and skills students should master at every grade level from kindergarten - 12th grade. Even though 45 states have adopted new Common Core State Standards for what students should learn in English Language Arts and Mathematics, it is up to teachers and administrators at the state and local level to determine how best to teach what is in the standards.

The CCSS in English Language Arts and Math require that students demonstrate a deeper understanding of academic content and critical thinking skills. In English Language Arts, there have been three major changes. Students will continue reading and writing, but in addition to stories and literature, they will read more texts that provide facts and background knowledge in areas including science and social studies. They will read more challenging texts and be asked more questions that will require them to refer back to what they have read. There will also be an increased emphasis on building a strong vocabulary so that students can read and understand challenging material. In mathematics, teachers will concentrate on teaching a more focused set of major math concepts and skills. This will allow students time to master key math concepts and skills in a more organized way throughout the year and from one grade to the next. It will also call for teachers to use rich and challenging math content and to engage students in solving real-world problems in order to inspire greater interest in mathematics. At Browns Valley School, we are working hard to improve teaching and learning to ensure that all children will graduate high school with the skills they will need to be college and career ready.

Harvest Festival

October 18, 2013

For your
Calendar

10/11, 11/1, & 11/11
No School

Oct. 28th – 2:30 p.m.
PTA Meeting

Nov. 8
Awards Rally

A Note from Your Teacher:

Kindergarten – Mrs. Miller

Our kindergarten class is moving along in the right direction. We are having fun and learning. Our day begins with the pledge and a song. Some students start their computer programs while others are working on the calendar wall. At 9:00 we take a break: run a lap, get a drink, etc. Then we're back to work on our language arts. Recently we've finished a unit called "School" and have begun "Shadows." We practice alphabet letters, sounds, words, and do workbooks.

During our math lessons we are concentrating on numbers 0-10, patterns, and shapes. In social studies, the children are learning rules for good citizenship. And in science, we are learning about the weather and plants. During p.e., we play games and learn skills, and use the p.e. equipment. All lessons are planned so that everyone is active.

We need more donated items for the kinder raffle basket for the Harvest Festival. We also need volunteers to help with the game on that night. Thanks to all the kind families who sent snacks for recess.

1st Grade – Mrs. Sweeney

October is here and first graders are on the road to success! This month our class is learning how to tell time, count by even and odd numbers, and count coins. We are also learning new phonics sounds and spellings. With our field trip right around the corner, we will be starting our plant unit.

I am very pleased with the amount of time logged into the booklogs. Thank you parents for your continued support with reading at home. It is so important!

A special thank you to all of the parents who have donated items for the classroom. You are awesome! We have received many items for our Harvest Festival basket, but we still need more. Our theme this year is a "baking" basket. Some items still needed:

- cupcake liners - spatulas - frosting and cake mixes - muffin mixes - cookie cutters

4th Grade – Mrs. Shrader

The students are working on their Halloween Food Reports to present on Halloween. Please feel free to come and watch the presentations, and enjoy the parade and festivities that follow if you can. Students are welcome to bring in a small sample of their report if they choose. The students have posted several interesting food facts on the bulletin board in the hallway and it is quite interesting. Thank you Mrs. Miethe-Kashikar for the display. Several notices are coming home in regards to fundraising, field trips, and activities so please make sure you are looking through your child's backpack so you can stay informed.

The students are blossoming every day in their ability to think about what they are reading and pulling out the theme or message the author is trying to convey. They are facing new writing challenges each day and working to use academic vocabulary to express their ideas. We enjoyed our going outside for a math lesson using chalk on the sidewalk. I look forward to all the upcoming lessons and activities!

5th Grade – Mrs. Wright

The first couple months of school have flown by! The class is entering an Astronomy Unit in reading and will be exploring the stars and planets. There is a lot of scientific language that may be unfamiliar to your child. Encourage him or her to share fun facts learned in class. We are also beginning a unit on the Human Body in science. Students have many wonderful questions about how the body works and I believe they are going to be fascinated by what they learn. As we move along in United States history, we are learning about the many explorers that came before us. Students are completing explorer brochures and are working on their research projects for October 31. Don't forget – the only costumes allowed on Halloween are the pre-approved ones that match their oral presentation of their research topics. A huge thank you goes out to Mrs. Ellenson who has been taking small groups of students out to the garden to do some planting and experimenting with natural weed-killers! Your help is very appreciated! If any parents are interested in art and would like to help with art projects, I have received a large grant of art supplies and am ready to put them to great use! **Finally, we still need donations for our silent auction "man" basket. Volunteers are also needed to help run the fishing game on October 18th.** (Don't worry – it is not last year's fishing game – it will be minimal work – no hooking candy!)

Library – Mrs. Berry

Veteran's Day is on November. We would like to salute our Browns Valley Veterans! We will be posting a board in the main office. Please submit photos of veterans for our bulletin board as soon as possible, and no later than November 1st. Please send copies, not originals! You can also include a brief description of the veteran's service if you would like.