Dear Stony Point Families,

It is almost unbelievable to me that we are fast approaching the middle of our school year. As a staff, Stony Point Teachers will soon have an opportunity to pause and reflect on where we are and where we are heading for the 09-10 academic year. It occurs to me that pausing might be a great “homework” assignment for all of us during the winter break. Essentially, we ask three questions at our midyear review:

1. What's working?
2. What do we need to add?
3. What do we need to take away?

What's working?
By pausing to reflect on what we are doing right, we ensure the continuation of best practices and successes that are purposefully implemented. Since we know there is a difference between doing something on purpose vs. haphazardly, it is important that we identify what's working so that we can keep/put into place structures that allow those practices to continue. This sounds simple, but as an organization committed to continuous improvement, we must remember to intentionally keep (and not interfere with) what's working!

What do we need to add?
By reevaluating student achievement at set points in time, we are able to pinpoint any areas where we need to boost support for a certain subject area, particular resources, or individual student needs. During our midyear review, teachers pause to take a close look at the needs of each student in their care. Since one of our School Improvement goals is every student will pass reading and math SOLs, we are committed to 100% of our students reaching personal goals along the way. In addition to adding support for students not making benchmarks, we will also pause to ensure students are challenged beyond grade-level standards.

What do we need to take away?
I once heard that writers sometimes have to remove a favorite word or sentence from a piece of writing because it just doesn’t add value to the whole paper. One valuable outcome from pausing is that it allows us to take out something we previously thought was necessary. Anyone who has recently cleaned out a basement (like I just did!), attic, or even a closet, can appreciate the great feeling that follows simplifying. During our midyear review, we assess all of the things we have on “the plate” and we may just decide we need to take some things off in order to reach certain overarching goals.

Please know that our staff is committed to the success of every student, and we will be reviewing your child's individual needs to ensure optimal growth in learning for 2010!
It is my hope that you'll find time in your busy schedules to pause, reflect, and maybe even ask similar questions during the next few weeks. How often do you have a homework assignment to pause? ☺

Best wishes for a wonderful, relaxing winter break!
Carrie Neeley
Preschool News

Preschoolers love being part of the Stony Point Community. Our current focus is bears. We’ve eaten them, watched them, read about them, drawn them, and next we are going to make them out of clay. Bears are helping us learn about hibernation and the changes that take place in the winter. We just finished writing a class book about what different animals do in the winter. Next time you see a preschooler, ask them what your favorite animal does in the winter, they’re experts!

Kindergarten News

Kindergarten is busy preparing for winter! In December, we examined the winter-themed stories of author and illustrator Jan Brett. She has written and illustrated many children’s books including some well known titles such as The Mitten, The Gingerbread Baby and The Three Snow Bears. Students also learned about holidays such as Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa. We worked hard with our music teacher, Mrs. Owney, to prepare for our Winter Musical Performance on December 18th.

First Grade News

First graders are very busy this month! We have been working hard to write and illustrate reports about animals. We are also learning to read, interpret, and create maps and globes. Lastly, we are investigating winter holidays like Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa.

Library News

Our students have access to many great learning resources at school and at home. Students in 3rd, 4th and 5th grades have been using a Grolier resource for researching social studies and science topics. Students have a label that has the url, personal username and password. Our students also enjoy Tumblebooks which has an extensive library of animated, talking picture books, games and quizzes. This is a great resource for you to access at home: www.tumblebooks.com; username: albemarle ask your child for the password. Hint: we hope they are reading them everyday. A free resource you and your children will enjoy that is produced by the Screen Actors Guild Foundation: www.storylineonline.net. We hope you will spend time this busy season snuggled up with your children enjoying some good books!
Second Grade News

Second graders have spent time recently learning about famous Americans. We’ve studied George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Susan B. Anthony, Helen Keller, Jackie Robinson, and Martin Luther King, Jr. We’ve looked at biographies of these famous Americans and thought about their contributions to our country.

Art News

Every child is an artist. ~Pablo Picasso

The halls are full of images that help children learn and put words to paper. When children use art to express their understanding of curriculum, it reinforces their learning and accelerates their engagement in the process. You will find: watercolor paintings of Famous Americans, colored pencil self-portraits, Egyptian prints and colorful animal collages. If you are in the building, notice the hallway art!

Third Grade News

The third grade food drive went well! We learned about and created all types of graphs based on your donations. The food drive allowed us to help others AND provided us with real-life data to use in our problem-solving throughout the day. Students have enjoyed comparing, contrasting, categorizing, adding numbers and observing trends. What a great experience! Thank you for your donations.

Fourth Grade News

In science, students continue work on the unit study of weather and climate. We will begin making daily recordings and collecting data using the instruments in our own Stony Point weather station. As we analyze our results, we will use our mathematic skills to make line and bar graphs to graphically show our data. As an extension to our study, we recently made a trip to the Channel 19 TV Station to meet with Brantley Ussery, local meteorologist. The "green screen" and "teleprompter" sure proved to be a lot of fun and Stony Point got great publicity by being featured three nights in a row on the 6:00 news!

Math students are extending their knowledge of multiplication fact families to multiplying larger arrays and to divide arrays into equal groups. Students have also been working on problem solving with Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Geraty during "Problem Solving Fridays." The students are showing some great thinking during these fun events, in which they get a chance to apply what they know about math to authentic situations.
Special Education News

Students receiving special education services continue to work on their individualized goals and objectives. If you have any questions concerning your child’s progress, please contact the Special Education Department.

In addition to working on their academic goals, the 5th grade students in special ed take care of the Stony Point animals. The animals require constant care and supplies. Our students do an outstanding job attending to their needs.

*If you would like to donate animal supplies, we would be happy to receive Care Fresh bedding (any color), timothy hay, guinea pig food and treats, and rat food and treats.* Thank you and Happy Holidays from the Special Education staff!

Fifth Grade News

As the 5th graders are busy wrapping up the decade, we would like to thank everyone for all they do for our students. As a new member of the 5th grade team, Mr. Rocky has been helping students in and out of the classroom. He has built a great rapport with the students working in the classroom, with small groups, and one-on-one with students.

Mrs. Owney has started the second season of the Stony Point Drama Club, working on a production of *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*. Look for many 5th graders singing in this wonderfully sweet production. Ms. M and Mrs. M.J. have also been working with our 5th graders, keeping them on track in and out of the classroom.

In November, the 5th graders traveled to the Wilderness Battlefield and toured the headquarters of the Southern Army. In addition, they participated in a battle simulation that brought the harsh realities of the Civil War to life. Ask a 5th grader about the Osage oranges. We also went on a trip to the Paramount to watch a C.S.I. forensic science production. The show was both entertaining and educational as students helped the crime scene investigators solve the case. We will be returning to the Paramount in February to see the Kennedy Center Production of "Chasing George Washington".

Next year will bring many exciting opportunities for students to explore and learn as they start to prepare for middle school. We will be visiting middle schools, talking to counselors, and selecting courses for 6th grade. Ms. Mac will be working with the 5th grade to talk about the transition from elementary to middle school. She even teaches them how to open a locker.

Please enjoy the holiday break. We can’t wait to return in January to hear about all the fun and exciting adventures that 5th graders had over break.

Tres & Daisi

Gifted Services News

Enrichment Opportunities

UVA Saturday and Summer Enrichment Programs

There are still openings for students in grades 2-5 in the Saturday Enrichment Program. The programs for grades K/1 are full. Programs are offered on grounds at the University of Virginia, Saturdays running January 23rd - February 20th, 2010.

Applications for the Summer Enrichment Program are now being accepted online, please visit
http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/overview-enrichment-201 for applications and additional information on both the Saturday and Summer Enrichment Programs.

Third graders have been having fun playing "24" in the "24 Game" lunch club. Get one of them to tell you about the math game "24" if you aren't familiar with it.

Visit www.PortaPortal.com Guest Name: ajohnson2 (a link is also on the Stony Point Home Page) for links to educational articles, learning activities for students and parent/teacher resources.

Nominations for the second cycle of identifications are now in progress. Completed nominations for the third and final nomination cycle are due by March 1, 2010. Please contact Mr. Johnson (ajohnson2@k12albemarle.org) if you have any questions or would like to schedule a conference.

Contact Mr. Johnson at ajohnson2@k12albemarle.org if you would like to be added to his email distribution list.

Thank You

Thank you to 1st graders whose art work is featured in our newsletter. Students have been busy with research projects on animals, learning about note-taking and putting information into our own words.