

Ruby Team Newsletter

April 2012

We have arrived at the last marking period, and spring is finally here. While many students will be spending more time outdoors and playing spring sports, please help us to make sure your child stays on track with his/her schoolwork.

Here's a look back at our third marking period and a glimpse into the



Science

Ruby Scientists completed Earth Science studies during Term 3. We learned about weathering, erosion and deposition with a focus on how these processes affect landforms in Connecticut. Students also completed a fine-tuned research paper about volcanoes, earthquakes and Plate Tectonics. The Term ends with an introduction to Physics concepts of speed, velocity, acceleration, friction, gravity and mass versus weight. We continue physics in T4 with Newtonian physics and the concepts of Force, Work and Energy.



Language Arts

Ruby readers spent most of the third quarter reading, discussing and making meaning of Lois Lowry's dystopian novel, *The Giver*. Biweekly discussion groups allowed students to examine the guiding questions for the assigned reading. Wonderful conversations took place as students asked probing questions, made meaningful connections, insightful inferences, and honed their discussion skills.

Ruby writers recently completed a cross-discipline research paper; the topic was science-based, while the research process and writing lessons were taught during language arts class in the library media center. Students reviewed how to access the school's search engine, Destiny. They learned techniques that would help to ensure the reliability of a source, how to keep track of various sources, and organize information. Additionally, students employed multiple strategies to help them paraphrase in an effort to ensure that their own voices were evident in their final products. Finally, students were required to complete a Works Cited to include with their research paper. This process should give all Ruby students a strong set of research skills that they can draw from during the remainder of their academic careers.



Geography

Ruby geography students are continuing their exploration of the global world with Ms. Ardine and Ms. Van Nostrand. Earning her Masters of Teaching at Quinnipiac University, Ms. Van Nostrand is student teaching throughout Terms 3 and 4.

Throughout the third marking period, students focused the majority of their attention on Europe. In their study of Europe, students examined the political and physical features of both the western and eastern regions. Students centered their cultural investigation of Europe on the importance of the European Union and the emergence of the euro. Students furthered their knowledge by engaging in a research-based project, "Unifying Europe". This project required students to conduct research on a European country in order to discover how that country could benefit the European Union. Students then presented their findings in a persuasive proposal with the goal of joining the European Union. Then, students narrowed their attention on Germany and her neighboring eastern countries. In doing so, students analyzed what impact the changing of political borders and political systems can have on countries. This analysis allowed students to more fully comprehend the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of modern Europe.

The crux of the fourth marking period will continue to concentrate on exploring continents and their role in the growing interdependence and globalization of our world. Throughout this study, students will be expected to consistently apply the knowledge and skills they mastered during the previous units. To do this, students will be asked to create political and



Math

Ratios, rates, and percents - Wow we really do use this stuff! As students worked through this chapter, they made connections to situations and places in their everyday lives where they see and use ratios, rates and proportions. They discovered many real world problems that can be solved using proportions and unit prices, as well as ways to display information using ratios and rates.

We then traveled through the world of geometry, learning more about area and perimeter of polygons, and volume and surface area of geometric solids.

Before we end the year students will get a preview of next year as they learn how to solve multi-step equations and inequalities. Students will begin to make their leap into the unknown territories of linear functions and graphing. First, they will identify relations and functions, and then graph linear equations. They will graph lines by first plotting points and then using the slope and y intercept. Students will learn to write rules for linear functions from words and from tables and use their graphing knowledge to find trends and make predictions from scatter plots.

Algebra students strained their brains trying to grasp graphing linear functions and solving systems of linear equations using graphing, substitution and elimination methods. They also saw the applications of systems of linear equations when solving complex real-world word problems.