



# Goosehill Primary School

Weekly Notes-December 16, 2016



Dear Parents,

Social Studies in kindergarten and first grade involves teaching children about **diversity**. As young children, they are just beginning to learn about the similarities and differences between children, families, and communities of the world, as well as the holidays, symbols and traditions that unite us as Americans. Here are a few concepts from our curriculum:

- Children and families from different cultures all share some common characteristics, but also have specific differences that make them unique.
- Diverse cultural groups within the community and nation embrace unique traditions and beliefs, and celebrate distinct holidays.
- Unique family activities and traditions are important parts of an individual's culture and sense of self.
- People and families of diverse racial, religious, national, and ethnic groups share their beliefs, customs, and traditions, which creates a multicultural community.
- Awareness of America's rich diversity fosters intercultural understanding.

When teaching children about diversity, we emphasize that all people are the same on the "inside" and have many, wonderful differences on the "outside." We celebrate and respect people's differences in the way they look, dress, speak, and celebrate holidays. Because many of our families celebrate a holiday in December, the children are very interested in sharing their traditions with their peers. We will also have a Spirit Day Assembly on Thursday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> when we will discuss three December holidays- Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa, and all they have in common: *family, food, prayer, lights, gift-giving, and love!* We will sing songs that represent all three holidays at a school-wide sing-along on Friday. Our morning announcements often include information about diversity in our world, and end with the phrase, "*That's diversity...and that's cool!*" We believe that by celebrating and honoring diversity, we are teaching our students important lessons, most importantly, to respect and honor each other's differences.

If you would like to continue the conversation at home, try reading books to your children about the traditions of families that may be different from your own. Of course, there are many, many wonderful books to be found in the library and book stores. Try series books such as *My First Holiday* series by Karen Katz and *Rookie Read About Holidays* to help you explore holidays and traditions around the world. There are also wonderful videos, such as ones produced by Sesame Street, that teach children about diversity in the world.

The teachers, staff, and I hope you enjoy talking with your child about diversity and all s/he is learning about holidays and traditions. We thank you for your ongoing support of our work.

Warm regards,

Lynn Herschlein

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