



# Goosehill Primary School

Weekly Notes- September 30, 2016



Dear Parents,

Our students have been busy writing and drawing every day. Our classrooms are **writing workshops** where children engage in the writing process---thinking about ideas, drafting, illustrating, revising, and editing their work. It is wonderful to watch our students as they ponder ideas, consider new topics, and share their writing and drawings with their peers.

Daily experience in writing is essential to the development of children's reading skills. Writing gives children a deeper understanding of how letters and words are used to create meaning. During writing workshop, students write to share their experiences, opinions, and information. The workshop begins with a lesson targeting a specific writing skill and then the children write for extended periods of time while the teacher confers with individuals and small groups to coach and support them. In kindergarten, lessons have focused on teaching students to tell their stories using pictures. Gradually, they will begin to label their drawings using beginning consonants and words they can copy from the class Word Wall. The goal is for them to develop an idea in a drawing and then to write words to match it. In first grade, students are drawing and writing stories from their lives. They are adding great detail to their drawings and sounding out words using the phonics and spelling patterns they are learning. Units of study in both grades will teach students to write in different forms and for different purposes, including to inform, entertain, and persuade their readers.

At Goosehill Primary School, we are committed to helping children develop their "**voice**"---a sense that they have the ability to influence the world around them. We want children to be able to make **choices** in how they approach their work and share their learning. We teach them to exercise those choices thoughtfully. We want our students to know that their ideas, efforts, and choices are important. We encourage every child to use writing to express his/her opinions, ideas, and to give us suggestions to make our school and world better.

This week one of our first graders, Weston Mavronicolas in Ms. Villa's class, wrote a persuasive note to our librarian, Mrs. Fraiberg. Weston felt strongly that all students should be able to check two books out of the library every week (rather than one). He supported his request with a persuasive reason: "*Kids will read more!*" Mrs. Fraiberg was very impressed with Weston's idea and decided to make a change. As a result, all students may now check two books out of the library every week! Weston's voice was heard and he made a difference in his school. (It was wonderful to hear students thanking Weston and giving him "high-fives!")

As you read your child's work this year, we hope you will celebrate his/her efforts to share ideas and influence the world. Help your child feel empowered enough to state an opinion, ask for a change, or send a message to his/her audience. Let your child know that his/her drawings and stories are interesting and make you smile. We want our students to develop as competent, confident citizens who know that words have the power to make people think, smile, and even change their minds.

To all of our families celebrating the holiday with family next week, we wish you a Happy and Sweet Year!

Have a wonderful weekend!

Warm regards,

Lynn Herschlein