May 9, 2017

Dear Fifth Grade Families,

 We have had an eventful week. Since the last Tuesday note, we went on a field trip to Robert Crown, completed MAP testing and spent part of the day outdoors at the Track Meet hosted by Grace. The weeks ahead will continue to be full, and despite other special events, we still have significant curriculum to cover. Please help your student buckle down even with all the extras so that he/she can end the year on a positive note.

 One specific concern, which requires your support, is regarding fidget spinners and cubes. These cleverly marketed devices are toys, not tools. If you feel as if your child has “fidget” issues, Miss Washburn has a lengthy list of tools that we can try that do not spin, light up, make noise or generally distract the class. Please contact her if you want to discuss these educational tools. Thanks for your kind follow up to keep the toys at home.

 The final formal writing project of the year is in process. Narrative writing, in my opinion, is oddly the most difficult. The students understand how to research, collect facts and write topic sentences which is a good thing. In contrast, narrative writing is a story that lives inside each person and the most difficult task is getting that story on paper. I’ve tasked the kids to think of time when they felt successful. Not the kind of success that is measure by trophies and blue ribbons but an experience that creates an internal change. Please ask them about the topic that has been selected and help them recall any details.

 Our Literature Circles are in wrap up mode. I’m so impressed with this group of readers. The groups are working effectively and are in self-pacing mode so it will be a good transition to summer reading. In addition, we’ve been working to improve our MAP scores through the non-fiction reading on Newsela. I’m really pleased with the growth. I look forward to sharing all the successes of the school year including progress reports, MAP scores, and more at the last conference of the year on Thursday, May 18. If you haven’t turned in a conference appointment time, please do so by tomorrow.

 Finally, thanks for the thoughtful acts of kindness during teacher appreciation week and the careful coordination by room parents, especially Ms. Katie Buesser.

Together in Christ,

Mrs. Massmann

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