

THE STORM REPORT

CAPE HATTERAS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL'S OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

MUSINGS FROM MS. BENTON

As we begin the second semester at Cape Hatteras Elementary School, there is a renewed sense of focus and momentum throughout our building. During the first half of the year, we worked hard to help our students settle in, rebuild strong routines, and feel confident and comfortable in their school environment. Now, we're ready to truly kick things into high gear.

The months ahead will be all about deepening learning, strengthening skills, and helping students apply what they know every single day. Our staff is committed to keeping children motivated, purposeful, and engaged as they continue to grow academically, socially, and emotionally. This is the time when effort and consistency really pay off, and we are excited to support students in pushing themselves to meet their goals and demonstrate their very best work.

We also know that families play a powerful role in student success. Simply asking children about what they're learning, talking with them about their day, checking in on their behavior, and having regular conversations about the importance and joy of school can make an enormous difference. When students feel that school matters both at home and at school—and that learning can be exciting with the right mindset—they are more engaged, more confident, and more willing to give their best.

As always, we are here to support you and your family in every way! If there is anything we can do to help. Please don't hesitate to reach out!

Love, Mrs Benton

THIS MONTH AT A GLANCE:

06 First Day Back

09 Report Cards Available

19 Holiday/No School



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

KINDERGARTEN

☀️ Encouraging Independence in Kindergarteners ☀️

We are off to a great start in kindergarten, but we need your help. Our kindergarteners are working hard to gain confidence and learn to do things on their own! Encouraging independence at home will help your child develop responsibility, problem-solving skills, and self-confidence.

It will also help your child's kindergarten teacher, as you can imagine, it is nearly impossible for us to do everything for every student in our class. Imagine all 18 students needing help to open their snacks, fill their water bottles, tie their shoes, wash their hands, and so on, all at the same time.

Here are some simple ways to help:

- Assign small, age-appropriate chores – Have your child put away toys, help set the table, feed a pet, or water plants.
- Encourage problem-solving – When little challenges come up, give your child time to think through solutions before stepping in to help.
- Let them make choices – Offer two or three options for things like snacks, clothes, or activities. This helps them practice decision-making.
- Teach routines – Show your child how to get dressed, pack their backpack, or put on shoes independently, then give them space to try.
- Praise effort, not just results – Celebrate when they try to do something on their own, even if it isn't perfect.
- Model independence – Talk through how you solve problems or complete tasks so they can learn by example.

Remember, independence takes practice! Offering guidance and patience now helps your child grow into a confident, capable learner.



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

1ST GRADE

Dear Families,

This month, the students will be completing their mid-year reading and math assessments. Please make sure your child is well rested and at school on time to help them complete their assessments successfully.

For the new year, the students will focus on setting reasonable goals and finding ways to achieve them.

It's that time of year for the sniffles! We could use some supplies to help stop the spread of germs.

Wish List:

- Tissues
- Hand soap
- Clorox Wipes



2ND DLI

Dear Families,

We've had an energetic and exciting start to the new month in second grade! After winter break, students have returned refreshed and ready to learn. We've spent these first days revisiting routines, rebuilding good habits, and getting back to work with enthusiasm and a positive attitude.

In ELA, students will keep working with UFLI Foundations to strengthen their phonics skills. They will have many opportunities to practice reading with accuracy, blending sounds, and building confidence with more complex words. In Math, we'll explore new concepts through our Number Corner routines. Students will also

continue improving their fluency as they work with bigger addition and subtraction problems, applying strategies we've learned in class.

In Spanish, our focus will be on communication.

Students will create dialogues based on real-life

situations, practicing how to express ideas clearly, listen actively, and collaborate with classmates in meaningful conversations.

As we move forward, we'll keep encouraging students to build independence, stay organized,

and take pride in their learning every day.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. We're excited for the growth and learning this month will bring!

Profe Pablo Oregon.

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

2ND GRADE

Second Grade Families,

Happy New Year! We hope that you have all had a great Winter Break. We are excited to get back into the second half of the school year. Before the break, we had Holidays Around the World, which was a huge success! Students learned so much about how different countries celebrate during the holidays, and they had lots of fun.

As we enter the new year, there is a lot to be done. We will be having Middle of Year reading assessments soon. To help your children work on skills learned in 2nd grade so far, you can do the following at home:

- Encourage your child to read (books, magazines, recipes, anything with words!)
- Ask your child questions about their reading to practice comprehension skills
- Practice reading and writing UFLI irregular “heart” words
- Solve addition and subtraction flashcards
- Give your child real-life story problems to solve and have them explain their answer
- Skip count by 2’s, 5’s, 10’s, and 100’s using a hundred’s chart or number line

We are hopeful that 2026 will be an even better year than 2025! If you need any additional resources to practice with your child, please reach out to us. Thank you for encouraging your children to work hard in school and at home.

~ Second Grade Team (Ms. Jillian and Ms. Liza)

2026
Happy New Year!

3RD GRADE

Third Grade will be working on....

ELA: The phonics focus will be on reading and spelling words with the sound of long e, spelled ee, ea, _ie, _y, ey; reading and spelling words with the sound of long i, spelled with _igh, _ie, _y; reading and spelling words with long o, spelled with oa_, _ow. We will be reading stories (legends, non-fiction) and using different comprehension strategies such as asking/answering questions, visualizing, clarifying, summarizing, and making connections. In writing, we continue learning to write informatively. Students will learn about the different text features in informational writing and reading, including charts and maps, illustrations, sidebars, and diagrams. Students will further develop skills with story elements while reading.

MATH: We will be working on finishing Unit 3 in Bridges, which covers multi-digit addition and subtraction strategies. After taking the assessment, we will move into Unit 4, which focuses on measurements and the units associated with measuring (inches, pounds, gallons, etc).

SCIENCE/SOCIAL STUDIES: In science, we will continue learning about the structure of the human body. Students will learn about the different systems within the human body, along with the functions of organs. In social studies, we will begin learning about how Civics/Government contribute and work in our communities. This standard has students learning about our local and state government structures and what jobs people within these structures are responsible for in our state and communities. We will begin to address this standard toward the end of January.

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

3RD DLI

In the month of January, in math 3rd graders will complete Unit 4. This unit opens with a series of hands-on activities in which students estimate and measure mass, liquid volume, and length in metric units. They will solve measurement-related problem situations, tell time to the minute, and explore elapsed time problems. Students will also be introduced to fractions, using several different models to build, compare, and investigate the relationships among fractions. A short project at the end of the unit brings it all together, as students measure lengths to fractions of an inch and display measurement data on line plots. In English, we will review our vowel teams and diphthongs, learn about the silent letters of kn, wr, and mb, and lastly move on to suffixes of s, es, er, and est. We will continue reading passages independently and answering comprehension questions about the passages. In social studies, we are working on a unit titled, Local Communities: Values, Beliefs, Culture. We will work to understand how the values and beliefs of individuals and groups influence communities. In science, we will work on a new unit called "Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy and Dynamics." In this unit, we will try to carry out investigations to explain how environmental conditions determine how well plants survive and grow. We will also try to construct an explanation to infer how the basic properties and components of soil determine its ability to support the growth and survival of many plants. In Spanish, we will continue working on rotations.

At the reading station, we will work on choral reading and individualized reading. At the word study station, we will work on vocabulary related to the unit we are studying: food and drinks, household items, ordinal and cardinal numbers, personal pronouns, types of sentences, etc. Lastly, we will continue working with Level Learning.



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

4TH GRADE

Math — Fractions made friendly

This month in math, we're helping students build strong fraction skills: understanding what fractions mean (parts of a whole), comparing fractions to see which is larger or smaller, adding and subtracting fractions with like denominators, and beginning to convert simple fractions (for example, turning improper fractions into mixed numbers). At home, please encourage practice with everyday items — cut a sandwich into equal parts and ask your child to name the fraction, compare slices (which is larger, $1/3$ or $1/4$?), or add pieces together (if you have $1/4 + 1/4$, how many quarters make a half?). Short, 5–10 minute activities two or three times a week make a big difference.

Science — Exploring our five senses

In life science, we're exploring the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch — how each sense works and how they help humans and animals learn about the world. At home, try a simple senses activity: have your child close their eyes and identify different smells, textures, or sounds around the house; then talk together about which sense they used and why that sense is helpful. These quick activities strengthen observation skills and scientific vocabulary.

4TH DLI

In English, we will finish our novel study, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, by Scott O'Dell. We will also create a book project, which will be presented to the class, and highlight what we have learned from the novel. In our word study, we are focusing on reading and spelling single-syllable words that follow the vowel-r syllable pattern. Then we will complete an overview of the 6 different syllable types. Additionally, students will write opinion essays.

In Mathematics, we will work on addition and subtraction with numbers over 10,000, and we will also focus on measurement units through word problems.

In social studies, we are working on a new unit regarding the role of citizens in local and state government.

In Science, our main focus will be on research about animals and their structures and functions for survival.

In Spanish, we will continue exploring and learning about the culture of various Spanish-speaking countries, as well as providing one-on-one support to students.



CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

5TH GRADE

English Language Arts (ELA): This month in ELA, we are focusing on storytelling and analyzing characters. Students will learn to recognize themes and summarize important details from the texts we read, concentrating on the standards RL.5.2 and RL.5.3. We'll examine various character types and their motivations, aiding students in understanding how these elements contribute to the story as a whole. Encourage your child to consider the characters they encounter and how they relate to the message of the story!

Mathematics: In Math, we are continuing our work with fractions, exploring equivalent fractions, and practicing the addition and subtraction of fractions and mixed numbers. Students will learn to identify and create equivalent fractions, which are fractions that have the same value. We will also explore the connection between fractions and decimals and start working with decimals. You can support this learning at home by encouraging your child to find fractions in everyday activities, such as cooking or measuring.

Science: This month, we are exploring matter and its different states: solid, liquid, and gas. Students will learn about the characteristics of each state and how matter can transition from one state to another. We will conduct engaging experiments to observe these changes firsthand, enhancing their understanding of the concepts. Discussing examples of matter in different states at home can help reinforce what your child is learning in class.

5TH DLI

In Math, students started exploring place value with whole numbers and decimals. They practiced reading, writing, comparing, and rounding decimals, and learned how multiplying or dividing by powers of ten changes a number. Students expanded their vocabulary, writing, and understanding of the world around them. In ELA and Spanish, they practiced using transition words, quotation marks, and strong academic vocabulary.

Students also worked on grammar, opinion writing, informative writing, and summarizing information.

In Science, our unit on matter included hands-on investigations with mixing materials and observing how heating or cooling changes different substances. We did this by making a famous food from Colombia called Arepas. Students followed the science process by asking questions, collecting data, and explaining their findings through writing and discussion.



CONNECTING WITH ESSENTIALS

MUSIC

It has been a Nutcracker-themed December in the music room. The Nutcracker has become a holiday tradition here in the US. Novice and professional ballet companies put on a version of the ballet. The music is in various holiday movies and used in commercials.

Students in all grade levels have been working with this wonderful music written by Peter Tchaikovsky in 1892. Kindergarteners learned a scarf routine to the Trepak, also known as the Russian Dance. First and second graders watched a puppet version of the Nutcracker that helped introduce them to the story and music. Third, fourth, and fifth graders watched parts of the ballet.

Third and fifth-grade students did a wonderful job performing at the Winter Concert. I am incredibly proud of how hard they rehearsed to get ready to sing for their families.

CHES was visited by the CHSS High School Concert Band for their annual Holiday Concert at our school. The wonderful musicians play a variety of songs that culminate in a holiday sing-along. We have so much fun singing along with the band!



ESL AT HOME

I hope you all enjoyed a wonderful winter break filled with love, joy, and special moments together! As we begin this new year, let's bring lots of positive energy and excitement into our learning.

Please continue supporting your children at home by practicing their heart words, encouraging them to read daily to build fluency and vocabulary, and helping them write at least one short paragraph each day about something they enjoy. This daily habit strengthens their details, confidence, and overall language growth.

Thank you so much for all you do. Together, we make a powerful team for our students' success!



CONNECTING WITH ESSENTIALS



Media Moments

Ms. Jenn & Ms. Hooper

January 2026



Students enjoyed Scavenger Hunts in the Library.



January Events

3-5 Grade Book Club

Celebration- 1/30

Makerspace Week 1/26 - 1/30

Upper Elementary students had fun searching for Non-Fiction Text Features during our November Turkey Hunt. Lower Elementary students searched for hidden pumpkin pie slices to decode a secret message. We love moving around during hands-on learning in the library!

Student Book Club

We had over 25 students read our November book of the month! During our celebration, students played a round of Jeopardy to quiz each other on elements of the story. All students received a “brag tag” charm and can collect a new tag for each book of the month that they read.

Dec/Jan Book Club

3rd-5th Graders can stop by the library to sign up and read our Dec/Jan book club pick, *The Fantastic Secret of Owen Jester* by Barbara O'Connor. We will have our book club celebration on Friday, January 30th.



Thank you to all of our Book Fair Shoppers!!

CONNECTING WITH ESSENTIALS

ART

January is all about Clay!! This is the best way to start the year, and students are enthusiastic about learning about and creating artwork in this exciting medium.

In kindergarten, we are introducing clay as a medium and learning the basic properties of clay, how it is made, and how it has been made throughout history.

Our first graders are talking about Pottery, the concept of functional art or art that does a job, and how artists consider function when designing artwork.

Second grade is all about slab building. We are using slabs of clay to make relief sculptures of winter animals.

Our Third Graders are exploring coil-building techniques and how we can create a variety of sculptural effects with coils in clay.

In 4th grade, we are attaching clay using the Score, Slip and Seal method. Students are creating sculptures in multiple parts and connecting them to make larger works.

In fifth grade, students are learning about the stages of clay and working on longer-range clay pieces that give them the opportunity to explore leather-hard clay and carve into the surface with various clay tools.

P.E.

In January, we will focus on Basketball to go along with Parks and Rec and the upper grades.

We will be working on basic skills like dribbling, passing, and shooting. We will not be scrimmaging; however, I have small games planned, including shooting games and dribbling challenges.



CONNECTING WITH ESSENTIALS

TECHNOLOGY

Hour of AI: Celebrated In December!

In December, our Technology classes joined schools around the world in celebrating Hour of AI, a special event designed to introduce students to the basics of artificial intelligence in a fun, age-appropriate way. Just like the traditional Hour of Code, Hour of AI helped students understand the technology shaping their world—only this time, the focus was on how computers learn, recognize patterns, and make decisions.

Artificial intelligence, or AI, may sound complicated, but at its core, it is simply a set of tools that help computers “think” in limited ways. AI can sort photos by faces, suggest the next song someone might enjoy, or help us find the fastest route home. In school, students explored these ideas safely and responsibly. They learned that humans guide AI by giving it examples, setting rules, and checking its work—much like a digital helper that still needs supervision.

During Hour of AI, students participated in hands-on activities using child-friendly platforms to explore concepts. Our goal was to build curiosity, empower students to understand the technology they use every day, and encourage thoughtful digital citizenship.

We loved wrapping up the year with such inspiring learning!

AIG

ELA Readers:

- Fifth graders are on a journey with a famous writer, Suzanne Selfor, as she unveils the clues to the mystery, *Smells Like Dog*.
- Fourth graders are continuing their reading of *Chasing Vermeer* by Blue Balliett.
- Third graders have been enjoying *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo.
- Second graders are continuing with the adventures in *James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl.
- First graders are just starting their next Magic Tree House book, *Hour of the Olympics*, #16.

Great Math Stars:

- First graders are having fun building various shapes while also discussing their attributes.
- Second graders are developing Fraction Sense through a program designed by Henry Borenson, Ed. D., the creator of *Hands-on Equations*. His desire is for students to find that fractions are not so mysterious after all. He states, “Our brains are quite remarkable. If we apply ourselves, we will be amazed at how much we can achieve.”
- Third, Fourth, and Fifth graders are finishing up Math Stars before diving into Fraction Sense.





NEWS FROM THE NURSE

January 2025



Get Moving this January

January is the perfect time to begin a new exercise - especially after all of the wonderful and delicious holiday meals. Walking just 30 mins a day is a great way to incorporate exercise into your daily routine. In inclement weather, put on your favorite music and "dance" around your house as you do your activities. Shake away those winter blues and wind pounds and have a healthy and happy new year.

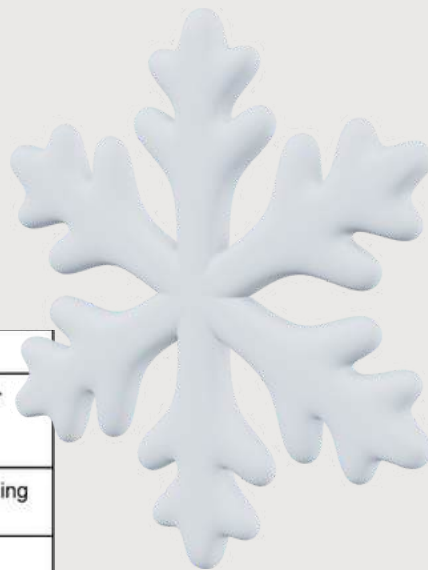
GET MOVING THIS
JANUARY!



BABY, IT'S DRY OUTSIDE

Did you know that cold air holds less moisture?

That means the air is drier in the winter months. Dry air can wreak havoc on our skin, resulting in chapped/cracked lips, dry & itchy skin and even nosebleeds! So take care of your body's largest organ and follow these simple tips to combat the cold air:



Lips	Nose	Skin
Use petroleum, not wax based lip balm	Keep nasal passages moist with saline nasal spray	Drink plenty of water
Avoid licking lips	Apply petroleum jelly to nostrils	Moisturize after bathing
Use a cool mist humidifier in the home		

REMINDERS

Keep students home until they have been 24hrs free from vomiting, diarrhea, and fever 100 or higher.

Happy New Year!

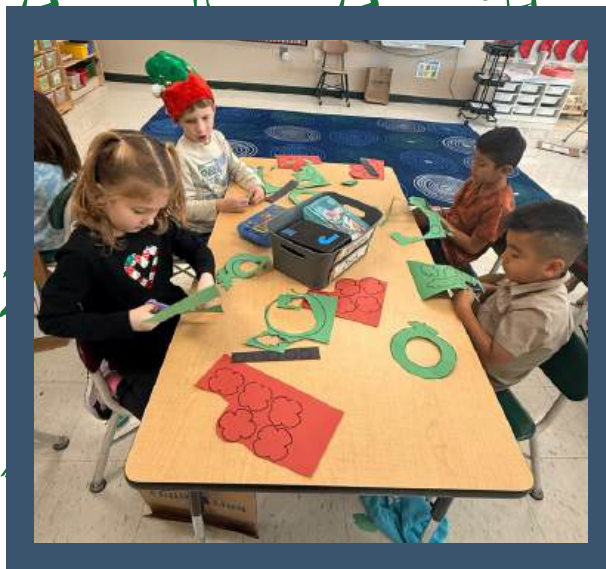
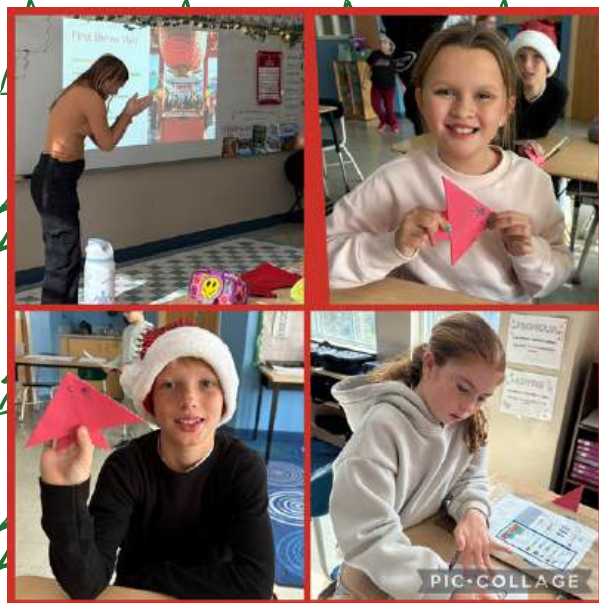
CONTACT INFORMATION



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HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD





Artist of the Month
Savannah Farfan

MS. JENN RECOMMENDS...

Thank you to the Cape Hatteras Electric Cooperative for donating several copies of "Cat & Duck Electric Safety" by Patrick Wood to CHES. We appreciate all you do. To read more about the new books coming to our shelves soon, visit <https://www.catandduck.org/>



SPOTLIGHTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Did you know...

that the Declaration of Independence wasn't signed on July 4, 1776? We formally declared independence on July 2, and it took two days to finalize the text of the document. The Declaration of Independence was actually signed on August 2, 1776.

Exercise of the Month -Skipping



- Start by standing with your feet together
- Step forward on the ball of one foot, hop on that foot, and land with your knee bent.
- Repeat with the other foot
- Make sure you point your toes in the direction you want to go
- Land softly

Q: How did the snow globe feel after hearing a scary story?

A: A little shaken up!

Joke of the Month