



VFES MONTHLY REPORT

October 2012–Team Updates

Kindergarten:

October was a very busy month in the kindergarten classrooms! We continued to work on the letters of the alphabet in our classrooms as we practiced the proper formation of the letters and practiced keeping the letters between the correct lines. The most fun is learning to write words that begin with those letters.

In math we continued to work on numbers to 10 as well as the concepts same and different. The children love acting out the math stories that reinforce these numbers.

In Science we completed our unit on senses and began our unit on farms. We learned about various farms and about how much and which kinds of our food comes from farms.

Our Amazing Autumn theme had us making scarecrow faces for the hallway, cats, and pumpkins as well. The rain held out for us to see the Berwyn Fire Company's engine and learn all about fire safety. Our alphabet study was enriched by our visit from Mother Goose who presented an interactive program of Mother Goose rhymes that were all related to the letters of the alphabet. In addition to those visitors, we learned how to take care of our teeth in our dental health lesson given by the Dental Hygienist. Then we had the chance to visit the Book Fair, scary gym and to top off all that fun we had our fantastic Halloween parties and parades!

First Grade:

October in first grade is so much fun! In reading groups, the children have been working on visualizing. This is the third reading strategy that the children have learned this year. All of the strategies help our readers better understand what they are reading.

Our Science unit on the Solar System is in full swing. The children enjoyed learning about the inner and outer planets as well as the moon and sun. With each lesson, the children created a special project that coincides with what they have learned. Be on the lookout for a souvenir from our trip to the moon!

Our Social Studies unit on Maps and Communities is finished. They children will soon prepare for our "trip" to Japan. They will learn about the geographical location of Japan as well as the culture of Japanese people.

In Math, our first graders are busy learning different strategies for solving addition and subtraction problems. The children are getting very good at finding different ways to solve math problems.

We celebrated fire safety month in October with a visit from the Berwyn Fire Company. Firefighters came to our school to teach the children about fire safety. The children had the opportunity to see a fire truck and learn about all the equipment on the truck. The teachers then continued the study of fire safety in the classroom. Each first grade student was able to pretend to be a fire fighter with a paper made firefighter hat!

We also had a great field trip to Milky Way Farms this month. It was a beautiful day on the farm as the children learned about many farm animals. We learned all about a dairy farm and how it operates...we even saw a cow get milked by a robot. It was an awesome trip!

We had tons of fun learning, but the most anticipated events were connected to the end of October. The Book Fair, Scary Gym, Halloween parade and classroom parties all added to our fabulous month. The children had a fantastic time celebrating. Thank you for helping make our October memories Spooktacular!

Second Grade:

October has been an exciting month for second graders! We started the month by describing a day where a dinosaur followed them everywhere. What trouble did he get into? You can find out the answers in the dinosaur stories in our hallway. Each story is hatching from a colorful egg! Next, we wrote about a haunted house found on Halloween night. The students used the writing process and sequenced these scary stories. After completing these stories, the students followed the directions to complete their own haunted house.

We have completed our first Science unit on Balancing and Weighing. We are also studying ways to Go Green and help the environment. We are wrapping up our Dinosaur and Early Man unit in Social Studies.

This month Second Graders have also experienced a visit from the Berwyn Fire Company as part of Fire Prevention Month activities. They taught the students that they should know two ways out of their house in case of fire or an emergency. The students also enjoyed their visit to the Book Fair! They left the visit with very long lists of books they wanted to read!

As the weather begins to turn colder please remember to send a coat with your child for recess. We go outside almost every day.

Third Grade:

October has been a busy month for third grade students. Throughout the month all students have been studying geometry in math and have continued practicing making connections in their readings through our Literacy By Design reading series.

In science we are wrapping up our Rocks and Minerals Unit by using recorded data we have collected throughout the month to identify our mystery minerals. We will start our Land and Water Unit (a perfect connection to Hurricane Sandy!!!) in the beginning of November.

In social studies we are beginning our Native American Unit. Valley Forge will be having a kick off assembly for our unit as the Allegheny River Dancers come to perform on Tuesday, Nov. 6th. Throughout the next six weeks our students will learn and research about specific tribes and become experts on their culture and traditions. Then before the winter break, students will have a Native American round robin where they travel to all the different third grade classrooms to learn about different tribes.

This month we also had the chance to visit the Book Fair and to participate in Scary Gym and the Halloween Parade.

November will be filled with fun and exciting Thanksgiving activities and writing assignments. It should be another great month in third grade at V.F.E!

Fourth Grade:

October has come and gone in a flash with many accomplishments during this time. The hallways are filled with so many Halloween themed writing assignments, flying bats, and grinning pumpkins. You can tell that we were gearing up for our big Halloween Parade.

In science, we saw first hand the effects of what agricultural runoff, acid rain, and road salt can physically do to an ecosystem.

In Social Studies, we are currently learning about the early French, Dutch, English, and Spanish colonies that came to North America for more freedoms, or to find the "streets paved in gold".

We want to say thank you to all the parent volunteers who helped make the Book Fair a smashing success for all the students and staff.

Another huge thank you goes out to all the volunteers who helped make the Scary Gym an outstanding time for all the students. We ended the month by having our traditional Halloween Parade and individual class parties, and we would like to say thank you again to all the homeroom parents for making the individual classroom parties a great success.

Special & Support Area Updates

Library

The library has been very busy with the beginning of the school year. It's been wonderful seeing all the children and talking about all the books they read over the summer. A number of ongoing projects in the library are in full swing. A few highlights include: (1) the challenge to read 100 books; (2) the "Bookmark of the Month" in which we highlight a staff member's favorite children's books; (3) participation in the Pennsylvania Young Readers Choice Award program and (4) our multisyllabic word contest to celebrate Dictionary Week.

In each grade level the goal is to increase the student's ability to utilize the library for both research and leisure reading. Each grade is introduced to new aspects of the library which build upon skills honed the previous year. Our goal is to make all students feel confident and comfortable in a library setting. In kindergarten we are reviewing appropriate library manners and the procedures for borrowing books. The students are learning vocabulary applicable to libraries and books, including author, cover, spine, and illustrators. First graders are building on the vocabulary learned in kindergarten and are presently being introduced to the books in the Pennsylvania Young Readers Choice Award program. Second graders are going over the organization of the library to prepare them for using the automation system. Third graders are currently working on a project requiring them to find information in a book, and then use that information to create a class book. Fourth graders have been learning about resources available in libraries. We are currently working on a unit focused on almanacs.

I would like to ask you to help us in reminding your children when their library books are due. Kindergarten, First Grade and Second Grade students' books are always due on their next scheduled library class. Third and Fourth grade students' books are due on the date stamped in the pocket of their books.

Thank you to all the volunteers who have been helping to make the library run more smoothly.

Happy reading!

Special & Support Area Updates (continued)

Reading

Kindergarten BRIDGE, First Grade Reading Intervention, and Reading Support programs have begun at Valley Forge Elementary. The purpose of these programs is to provide supplemental early literacy instruction in Kindergarten and supplemental reading instruction in First through Fourth Grades. Any child in Kindergarten through Fourth grades who qualifies for additional instruction may enter the program. These instructional sessions are scheduled in addition to the instruction provided by the children's classroom teacher.

The Reading Support staff at Valley Forge Elementary includes Mrs. Mary Anne Keith and Miss Jaelyn Klunder. Mrs. Keith and Miss Klunder both have their Elementary Certification and are highly qualified in the area of reading instruction.

Students are selected for the programs by their classroom teachers and the Reading Specialist. Eligibility is based on the review of Screening and Benchmark assessments along with the review of results of standardized testing in Second through Fourth Grades.

The Reading Support Program encourages parents to become involved in the program. Fall parent meetings are scheduled to provide an overview of the programs. Parents of children qualifying receive notification about these meetings. Parent workshops as well as newsletters regarding home literacy practice ideas are offered through the program. We also ask that parents help us establish good independent reading habits for the students at home. Parents are such an important key in helping our students develop literacy and reading skills. There is a strong home component piece in the Kindergarten BRIDGE, First Grade Reading Intervention, and Reading Support programs which encourages home literacy and reading practice.

Review of assessment results following participation in the program often show impressive improvement. Students gain confidence in themselves as they become more proficient readers through this program.

November Events

- 11/1 3rd Grade Audubon Trip (*Diamond & Steiner*)
- 11/2 "Bucketfilling Day"
- 11/2 4th Grade to Adventure Aquarium
- 11/6 Allegheny River Dances
- 11/7 Picture Retake Day
- 11/8 3rd Grade Audubon Trip (*Kennedy, Cleary, McCormick*)
- 11/9 Kindergarten Bear Hunt Day
- 11/9 Family Fun Night
- 11/19 (1/2 day) Parent Conferences; 1st Grade Bake Sale
- 11/20–(1/2 day) Parent Conferences; 3rd Grade Bake Sale
- 11/21–11/26 No School
- 11/26–Parent Conferences
- 11/29 Winter Concert

