



VFES MONTHLY REPORT

September 2012–Team Updates

Kindergarten:

The Kindergarten classrooms are bustling already. We have been busy learning the classroom routines and rules as well as making new friends. During our first science lesson we learned to think like a scientist and we are having fun learning about numbers up to 5 in Math. We began our work on the alphabet and practiced the proper way to hold a pencil. Johnny Appleseed's birthday was exciting because we got to graph the apples we each brought in. However, the most popular activities so far have been snack, recess and riding the bus! We are looking forward to pumpkins and so much more in the month of October!

First Grade:

Welcome back! The boys and girls have adjusted to a full day and are enjoying their time as first graders. September was a busy month! Our theme for the month was apples. The children enjoyed participating in many apple activities as they learned all about the life of John Chapman (Johnny Appleseed), the life cycle of an apple tree and the parts of an apple.

During large group reading time, the children are learning about making personal connections to literature. In writing, the first grade teachers are reviewing letter formation and proper pencil grip as we work our way through the alphabet studying letters and sounds. The children and teachers are enjoying our new math program, Math in Focus. The children love working with manipulatives to develop a deep understanding of the concepts presented. We are currently working on creating number bonds for given numbers and finding missing addends.

Our unit on comparing and measuring was our focus in Science for September. The children learned to compare and estimate as well as measure with a ruler and balance scale. Mrs. Krause, our school's math specialist, presented a lesson on liquid measurement for our first graders. During this lesson, the children learned all about cups, pints, quarts and gallons. Our next unit in Science will take us on a trip to Outer Space!

In Social Studies, the children are studying maps and communities. While learning about their place in our world, our first graders are also learning how to read maps. This understanding will continue to develop throughout the year as we "travel" to different parts of our world. The first grade teachers are excited to share this amazing year of learning with you! Happy Fall!

Second Grade:

Welcome Back! The Second Grade Teachers were very excited to meet their new students! September has been very busy with many activities. We are all busy learning our new classroom routines in Second Grade. One of our first get to know you writing activities was a "Who Am I?" Riddle. Parents had a chance to view them on Curriculum Night. What fun it was for them to find the apple of their eyes!

In Science, our first unit is balancing and weighing. Each student made their own mobile demonstrating balance of different objects. Each one was unique to the individual student. Then, during our Social Studies lessons we are learning about Dinosaurs and their time periods. The students were very excited to read many of the curriculum books in this unit. Our Whole Group and Small Group Reading groups have begun. The students love to make connections between the stories and their own life experiences.

The students experienced Math Rotation lessons with each second grade teacher presenting a different aspect of the math curriculum. The second grade teachers are very happy to be beginning a wonderful new school year with their new second grade classes!

Third Grade:

Third grade has gotten off to a great start of the school year. Students are adjusting well to our classroom routines and are learning our new procedures. It was great to see so many parents at our Curriculum Night on September 24th. We hope we were able to help you learn about curriculum and our homework procedures. This month students have been busy with our language arts theme based around community. We are working on making connections to text in class about our own communities and the importance of being involved with a larger group.

In social studies students are studying maps and globes. We are reading and designing maps, learning about directions, and making connections to our own world. In science students are learning about rocks and minerals. We are classifying each rock and mineral into different groups based upon their specific properties. All next month we will be conducting field tests that will give more information about each rock and mineral.

October will be busy with ERB testing, our annual Book Fair and Halloween! We are very pleased with how the students have started off this year and are looking forward to a great year in third grade!

Fourth Grade:

The Fourth Grade Team is very excited to welcome Mrs. Amy Ferguson to our team. We are looking forward to teaching with her. The Fourth Grade Students are off to a great start in the new school year! We have been working very hard during our first month of school. We spent the first couple of weeks learning about each other, the school rules and our daily classroom routines. We are excited to be "Bucket Fillers", and had a great time at our "Bucket Filler" assembly.

The students are currently learning about the Five Themes of Geography in Social Studies, and we will soon move to studying about early European explorations and settlements in North America. We will be using computer classroom for our Global Studies lessons, and the students are looking forward to "visiting" England, Spain, France, India, and Brazil during this school year.

In Science, we are excited about our Ecosystems unit. We have already created our own terrariums and aquariums and have just finished adding our living organisms to their new environments. We are most curious to see what happens when we begin to upset the natural balance of our ecosystems with certain types of pollutants! (Please do not worry we will be taking the living creatures out of the ecosystems prior to polluting them).

We also want to thank all the parents that were here for Curriculum Night and for making it the success it was. We are excited for all the great things we will learn throughout this school year, and all the fun and exciting things we will experience.

Math:

We are very excited to begin the year with the implementation of our new math series *Math in Focus* in Kindergarten and First Grade. *Math in Focus* emphasizes problem solving by connecting concepts, processes and skills while helping students to develop positive attitudes and self-awareness about their own math learning.

The series has many resources for students, teachers and families and is aligned to the Pennsylvania Common Core State Standards for Mathematics. *Math in Focus* is equally or more rigorous than our former Scott Foresman series. It places a greater emphasis on problem solving and visual representations through the use of manipulatives, number models such as number bonds, and graphs. It is flexible enough to meet the needs of all our students.

The series is up and running and students and teachers alike are having a great time learning math!

Physical Education:

We have had a wonderful start to our Physical Education year!

Kindergarteners are working on spatial awareness, loco motor skills and being introduced to ball skills. **First and second** graders have been working on more advanced ball skills, fitness, teamwork and some basic game strategies. Students in **third and fourth** grade have worked on throwing, catching, fitness exercises, kicking, teamwork, cooperation, social skills/responsibilities and more advanced game concepts. All second, third and fourth grade students also had the opportunity to practice their golf game. Students were chipping on the driving range to see how far and accurate they could be, and a little bit of putting on the greens. **All parents are encouraged to play games with their children that involve throwing, catching, and kicking a variety of balls.**

Just another reminder - please don't forget to send your child to school with sneakers on PE days so that they can participate. If you are buying sneakers at some point this year please try and buy sneakers that don't leave skid marks. Also please do not buy fashion or trendy sneakers for playing in. The shoes that just slip on or zipper up are not appropriate - once they are broken in this type of sneaker comes off very easily! **For safety reasons students need to wear sneakers that can be laced up or velcroed.** The strap that gets tightened with a toggle - **does not count!** Please only buy regular old sneakers - **the kind you grew up playing in.**



October Events

- 10/1-10/5 ERB Testing Gr 2-4
- 10/3 General PTO Meeting
- 10/4 Bucketfilling Day
- 10/10 Mother Goose to Kindergarten
- 10/12 First Grade to Milky Way Farm
- 10/15 Fire Truck comes to visit K-2
- 10/22–10/26 PTO Book Fair
- 10/29–4th Gr to Adventure Aquarium
- 10/29 Scary Gym
- 10/31 Happy Halloween—Parties & Parades

