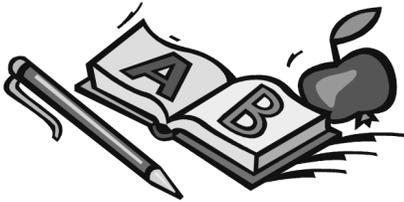




# VFES MONTHLY REPORT

September 2015 – Team Updates

## Kindergarten:



It's always so exciting and bit scary for our kindergarten students at the beginning of the year. We are well on our way to learning the daily routines. We learned how to write the date on our calendar each day, how to unpack our backpacks, and keep track of our mail. We celebrated Constitution Day, Peace Day, and Johnny Appleseed's birthday. Wow! Each class developed their own set of rules for the classroom and created a classroom constitution which each member signed. We began our study of the alphabet and started our Writer's Workshop. We visited the Science room and learned about "thinking like a scientist". We used our sense of touch to feel different objects and made a list of describing words for each object. In Math, we got to explore flat shapes and solid shapes. We have made some great new friends and are looking forward to a great year.

## First Grade:

Welcome back! The first grade teachers and students were very busy during the month of September. All of our boys and girls have adjusted to the daily life of a true first grader. During large group reading time, the children are making personal connections between the literature we read and their own life. This connection helps the children better understand the stories we are reading. In the area of writing, the first grade teachers (along with our occupational therapists) are reviewing letter formation and proper pencil grip as we work our way through the alphabet, studying letters and sounds. During Writing Workshop, the children are learning how to create lists.

In math, the children are learning about numbers, number words, ordinal numbers, and position words.

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. 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.

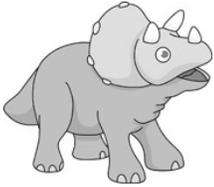


At the end of the month, all first graders celebrated Johnny Appleseed's birthday. The children enjoyed participating in many apple activities as they learned all about the life of John Chapman (Johnny Appleseed), the life cycle of an apple tree, and the parts of an apple.

We are all very excited for our upcoming field trip on October 2<sup>nd</sup> to Milky Way Farms. This field trip will connect to our theme for October . . . pumpkins! Happy Fall!

## Second Grade:

The second grade teachers enjoyed meeting parents and guardians during our curriculum night. We hope you had the chance to find your child's "Who Am I?" riddle hanging in the hallway. This was the first of many writing pieces students will compose this year using the steps of the writing process. Our budding authors also wrote Acrostic Name poems this month.



Science classes have begun with the study of balancing and weighing and everyone seems to be enjoying learning about dinosaurs in social studies. We have been studying the three dinosaur time periods. Ask your second grader to name and describe them! We celebrated Constitution Day by reading a book explaining the preamble in a way our students could understand. We connected the Constitution to school and classroom rules and why they are important to all.

Math classes have been formed and students are learning about place value. They have been comparing and ordering numbers. Second graders also participated in Peace Day. We read a book describing what peace means to different people and students wrote what peace means to them.

In whole-group reading and reading groups, we are working on making connections to texts, visualizing story details, and realistic fiction. We have been learning and using new vocabulary words. The spelling words sent home for practice each week are connected to our reading program.

Class meetings have centered around using good manners. We see many super heroes using their manners throughout the school day! Thank you to Mrs. Wills and Mrs. Swetkowski for coming into our classes to read and discuss the book *Do Unto Otters, a Book About Manners*. In another health-related area, Mrs. DeMaris, one of our guidance counselors, has been presenting BABES lessons to each second grade class.

The second grade teachers are looking forward to a fantastic year, filled with many opportunities for learning. Have a happy fall!

## Third Grade:



Third graders have easily settled into their new routines and classroom expectations! Students completed a variety of back-to-school activities to help them get to know their new classroom, classmates, and teachers.

In Reading, our first theme focused on community. Students read about communities from a nonfiction story about Ogbo, Africa to a fiction story about a butterfly migration festival in Lakeville, USA. Through these stories, we began practicing close reading by thinking deeply about what the text means as we read. This can be done through think-a-louds, Post-it notes, or making notes in the margin of a text using reading codes (exclamation point for important, star for main idea, LOL for funny, etc). Students also began to practice answering text-dependent questions. These questions not only ask students to answer a comprehension question but also to cite evidence and explain how they know that is the answer. This will be a skill continually practiced throughout the year. Third graders were excited to share their newly decorated writer's notebooks. These will serve as great inspiration when it comes to writing their narrative pieces this year!

In Science students are excitedly exploring their egg cartons full of rocks and minerals. We will perform a variety of tests on the well-known minerals and at the end of the unit be able to identify them. In Social Studies, we have been learning about a variety of maps and globes, using the compass rose, and most importantly, where we live! All of the third grade teachers are looking forward to a fabulous year together filled with lots of learning, growing, and fun!

The Fourth Grade Students are off to a great start of the new school year! We have been working very hard during our first several weeks of school. We learned about each other, the school rules, and our daily classroom routines. The students are currently learning about the Five Themes of Geography in Social Studies, and we will soon move onto studying about early European explorations and settlements in North America.



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 would like to thank the parents and guardians for attending Curriculum Night. We are excited about all the great things we will learn throughout this school year and all the fun and exciting things we will be experiencing.



**What's your super power?**

## Special & Support Area Updates

### Library



“The only thing that you absolutely have to know is the location of the library.”  
— **Albert Einstein**

Now that we’re entering the second month of school, all of the students should know the location of the VFES library. After a summer make-over, we hit the ground running and we’re all enjoying the new paint, carpet, and layout. Students, staff, and parents have all noticed that the library seems larger and brighter.

This year Mr. Wong is joined on Days 3 and 5 by Mrs. MacMichael (NEES) and Ms. Davis (BES) who will be teaching some of the second and third grade classes. We welcome them to our VFES community.

Kindergarten students are learning about book care, the roles of authors and illustrators, and how to “read” the pictures in a book. Primary division students have been enjoying many of the new books and some selections from the Pennsylvania Young Reader’s Choice Awards list. Older students have been working with the OPAC to understand call numbers and how to locate desired materials in the library.

Students started borrowing books on the very first day of school and as of 9/28/15, we’ve circulated over 3,600 books. As you can see, the library is a very busy place!

Class schedules, borrowing policies, Falcon 100 Book Club instructions and forms, and the library catalog can all be found at the VFES Library webpage (<http://www.tesd.net/domain/900>). Please be sure to “check it out!”

