



VFES MONTHLY REPORT

April 2022 – Team Updates

Kindergarten:

April was an exciting month in kindergarten!

During the month of April our wonders topics covered different types of animal homes, different types of transportation, and what we know about our country. We continue to practice our letters and writing complete sentences using our sight words and sound spelling. In addition, the students continue to practice phonological skills in order improve their reading and writing skills.

In math we worked on addition and subtraction number sentences. The students learned about the symbols for adding, subtracting, and the equal sign. Using picture stories, the students wrote their own number sentences to describe what was happening in the picture.

In Science, we learned about helping our environment by reducing, reusing, and recycling materials. We also learned about animals who live in a freshwater habitat. We are excited to have caterpillars in our classroom so that we can watch and learn about the lifecycle of an insect. We are eager to see the chrysalises form and eventually watch the butterflies hatch.



The highlight of the month was our celebration of Earth Day! The students rotated from one teacher to another completing different activities. We had the chance to learn about how worms help our soil, painted special Earth Day T-shirts, planted a seed, and planted a flower in the front of the school by the sign or in the back where the vegetable garden is. We had beautiful weather and were very appreciative of the parent volunteers who were able come in to help with this project.

First Grade:

The flowers are in full bloom and so are our first graders! Everyone returned from Spring Break energized and ready to learn.

During the month of April, our students set off on a journey to Africa during their Social Studies times. The children are learning all about the African culture as they visit various stops along the way.



In Science, we completed our study of the rainforest. The children spent the first part of the month learning about the insects and arachnids that live in the rainforest. We even created a few to add to our murals. The children learned SO much about the rainforest! Our next Science unit is dedicated to green efforts. During this time, the children will learn about reusing, reducing, and recycling to help keep our earth clean! VFE is remembering that “Earth Day is Everyday” as we work to keep our school (inside and outside) litter free. WE ARE VFE PROUD!

In Math, the children are doing a great job learning addition and subtraction with and without regrouping. Your child should be able to complete these problems while explaining the process. Our next unit will be loved by all . . . MONEY! Please review the names of coins and their values at home. Knowing how to count by 5s and 10s will make learning how to count money much easier!

Reading in first grade is an amazing skill to see develop. The children have learned so much and are practicing what they have learned each day. Currently we are learning about diphthongs and practicing the vowel combinations in our reading, spelling, and writing. We reflect on our reading and answer questions that are both text-based and inferred. The children are learning to think about what they are reading by asking questions before, during, and after they read. We are so proud of our first graders!

As we approach the upcoming month, MAY your days be filled with warm weather and sunshine!

Second Grade:

Second graders and their teachers have been enjoying many spring activities!

In Language Arts, the students began Unit 5 of the Wonders program. The genres the students learned about included biographies and realistic fictions. The beginning of this unit focused on learning about heroes and being a good citizen. The students enjoyed learning and thinking critically as they explored biographies and realistic fictions.

We are coming to the end of our study of the solar system. Students have studied each planet, the sun, and our moon. They have been working on activities and writing important facts they have learned. Our next unit of study will be the life cycle of the butterfly. This is always a favorite!



In Social Studies, the students started the unit on Immigration. The children have enjoyed listening to literature and learning about the land bridge.

We are looking forward to all the wonderful May activities and the warmer weather!

Third Grade:

April was a busy month for our third graders.



We have now moved onto our Plant Unit which correlates wonderfully with all of the beautiful flowers blooming around us. Students are watching and observing the growth of a Wisconsin Fast Plant in the science lab. It is exciting to see how quickly the plants grow! In the classroom, we observed seeds germinate and planted lima bean seeds. It was so fun to come back from Spring break and see how quickly they grew!

In Social Studies, we have been continuing our study of Pennsylvania! We have gone on a “road trip” and have seen and explored all the regions and many sites. Students are now exploring some very important cities and Pennsylvania symbols!

April also had our students busy preparing for their Famous Pennsylvanian/American Biography project. They have started researching their famous person at home and are taking notes as they go. Students will be asked to share their research on Thursday, May 12th by dressing as their famous person and making a speech about them in first person. We are looking forward to hearing and enjoy all of their efforts!

In Language Arts we have covered a lot! We spent time reviewing many of the strategies and concepts we have learned throughout the year as well as reviewing parts of speech and figurative language. We also continued to practice responding to text-dependent questions! In writing, we worked on an imaginative narrative and have begun work on our How-Tos and making sure to use a lot of detail to describe a process.

We ended the month taking the ELA portion of the PSSAs. We are so proud of the effort we saw the student put forth!

Some of our flat twins have made their way back from around the world. They had some pretty fabulous adventures. We are excited to see the pictures that our friends and family send back to us as they are returned!

Third grade is excited for all the fun and exciting activities coming up in May!

Spring is such a fun and busy time for all of us at VFE, especially in 4th grade!



We are getting ready to start our P.A.L (personal achievement in learning) presentations. The students have been working so hard putting together their research and becoming experts on their topics. It will be so exciting to see what they present next month.

In writing, students wrote and published narrative nonfiction stories about a famous woman in history. We learned so much about these brave and inspiring women.

In science, students took a break from their motion and design unit to study about Earth Day. The students are learning why it is so important to take care of our Earth.

In social studies, we are continuing to study how our new nation was formed. The students are learning the steps our founding fathers took to help make the United States the nation it is today.

In language arts, we began a new novel study. Each class is reading “Absolutely Almost” by Lisa Graff.

In May, we are looking forward to our visit to tour the middle school and other fun end-of-the-year activities that are planned for our 4th graders!



Special & Support Area Updates

Music



Music lessons at VFES this past month were filled with singing, dancing, and playing instruments! Here are just some of the things we have been doing and learning in each grade...

The past two months, Kindergarteners have been exploring opposites in music. We started with long and short sounds then fast and slow sounds in music. Now we are moving on to quiet and loud. We explore these sounds through singing, playing instruments, and moving.

The 1st graders have been learning to read rhythms like the quarter note, eighth note, and quarter rest. We also learned how to read pitches off the musical staff like “Sol and Mi.” When we put the rhythm and pitch together, we can read an entire song! Additionally we have been learning about instruments, songs, and dances from Africa and Japan matching with the 1st grade social studies curriculum. The students are so excited to perform this music in their 1st grade concert on May 19th at 9:45 AM! A letter was sent home with more information for parents.

This past month the 2nd grade has also been expanding their knowledge of different rhythms and pitches. We have been using these rhythms and pitches to sing, play instruments, and play games. Some of our favorite musical games include *Doggie, Doggie, Where’s Your Bone?* and *We are Dancing*.

The 3rd graders have been studying a musical form called a *Theme and Variation*. We have also been reading and playing the notes “B, A, G” on the xylophones. We are now combining those concepts to compose our own variation on the famous three note song, Hot Cross Buns! We are also working to learn songs for our Pennsylvania Play on June 2nd. Stay tuned for more information!

The 4th graders have recently explored music by American composer, Aaron Copland, and his use of a simple folk song in one of his orchestral pieces, *Appalachian Spring*. We have also been studying musical form. Most recently, we learned about *Theme and Variation* and even composed our own rhythmic theme and variation as a class.

The chorus, orchestra, and band students have also been practicing very hard for their upcoming concert on May 25th! More information will be sent home to those students in the next weeks.

