



VFES MONTHLY REPORT

January 2019 – Team Updates

Kindergarten:



The kindergarten classrooms had a dreamy January with our Sweet Dreams theme. The children listened to many stories and completed activities related to the theme. To go along with the winter weather, the children decorated their own snowman for the hallway. We read many stories about snow and snowmen. We worked on word families and sight words throughout the month.

In Social Studies, we listened to the story “Martin’s Big Words” and came up with our own dreams. In math, we began learning about time to the nearest hour. We learned about animal coverings and Hibernation in Science. Our little scientists explored different types of animal coverings and guessed which animal it may have come from. We also learned about the rotation of earth and how day and night occur.

We look forward to our Valentine Program in February and to Kindergarten Math Night.

First Grade:

Happy New Year! First grade started off 2019 by making New Year resolutions. A new year is a great time to establish better habits in school and at home.



First graders are very excited about the season of Winter. They can not wait to go out and play in the snow. While we are all busy wishing for accumulating snow, we are busy learning about this season with activities that center around snowmen, snow, and winter animals. Although we haven't had a ton of snow YET, please remember to dress your child for the winter weather. When the temperatures allow, we head outside for some fresh air and exercise. When the snow does arrive, your child must have hat, gloves, waterproof snow pants, and boots to play in the snow during lunch recess and they also need a change of shoes for the classroom.

In Science, the first grade started the month with a study of magnets. The children explored with magnets and discovered amazing magnetic facts. Our study of the rainforest followed our unit on magnets. The children are enjoying learning about the rainforest and the animals that live there. Our study of the rainforest is one of the most anticipated units in first grade. Tradition at VFE is for first grade classes to create the rainforest mural in our first grade hallway. The children cannot wait to partake in this activity which will take place at the end of our unit . . . stay tuned for further details.

First graders love birthdays! In January, we celebrated the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. We read books about Dr. King and wrote our own dreams for the world. First graders may be little but their dreams are big!

The month of January ended with an author study of Jan Brett. Jan Brett is an author and illustrator of many children's books. The first graders enjoyed reading her books and completing lessons and activities to go along with each book. Be sure to ask your first grader which Jan Brett book is his/her favorite!

February will continue to bring a LOVE of learning! We are looking forward to a great 2019 with our first graders!

Second Grade:

During the month of January, our school had the opportunity to participate in the Mini Thon! Our second graders were so excited to celebrate spirit week and dance on stage to raise money for cancer.

In Language arts our students are building reading skills by learning comprehension strategies. In whole group lessons and small group lessons, we have been learning new spelling words and new vocabulary.

In science, the second grade is finishing up a unit on changes. We have been learning all about chemical and physical reactions. As the month of January comes to a close, we are moving on to our unit called "Go Green".



In Social Studies, the second grade has been learning all about ancient China. We celebrated by doing a Chinese Round Robin where each classroom had a chance to rotate around the building learning new things. We had the privilege of guest speakers coming to teach us all about China. We are excited to continue learning about ancient China and celebrating the Chinese New year in our classrooms!

Third Grade:

The third grade was excited to get back from break and continue our learning adventure together!

We kicked off the month participating in Spirit Weeks and Mini-Thon. The third graders had a blast dancing to raise money for Four Diamonds to support kids with cancer. Students followed up this fun event by writing encouraging letters to Penn State students who are participating in THON weekend.



Third graders had a special assembly on January 10th with Betsy Ross to learn about our nation's flag. The students learned many interesting facts about Betsy's life and the history of our flag! We have also been busy continuing our Social Studies unit on Native Americans, focusing on the Lenni Lenape as well as our science unit, Land and Water. This science unit will end soon and we will move onto chemical tests!

The third grade is wrapping up our reading theme which focused around forces of nature. We read many pieces of fiction and non-fiction pieces about weather and the impact it has on our lives. Students also practiced determining which information was important to the main idea and which was interesting but unimportant. A focus is not only being placed on citing text evidence in our responses but also providing an analysis of what the text means in our own words. Students are now going to be asked to answer one question for homework that requires this type of response to the text. We are proud of the effort our students put in each day during their whole group reading lessons and also their small group meetings!

In writing, students are either working on opinion pieces or imaginative narratives. Opinions allow the students the opportunity to cite reasons and examples to defend their thoughts. Imaginative narratives allows them to let their imagination soar and use some ideas from a variety of mentor texts that we will read together. After this unit, we will spend time on writing informative pieces.

The third grade also spent time learning about Martin Luther King Jr. this month. We watched a video, did a close reading, and other activities as well as completed a timeline of his life. The children learned that Martin Luther King Jr. protested for equal rights peacefully with his words, marches, and sit-ins.

The third grade is enthusiastic about the learning experiences ahead in February!

Fourth Grade:

The schoolwide Mini-Thon was a great way to come back from winter break for the 4th graders! They enjoyed showing off their dance moves and writing letters to encourage the Penn State students that will participate in THON next month. We are so proud of the money that was raised to help fight childhood cancer.

In the science lab, the fourth graders are beginning to wire their houses for the culminating electric circuits' activity. Soon we will have beautiful homes with working lights in each room. In social studies, we are learning all about the Revolutionary War and the important battles that took place as part of this war.

We are looking forward to Kit's Interactive Theater visiting next month, the kids always enjoy participating and learning even more about this time period in history. A perfect way to enhance what we are learning in the classroom!

In language arts, the students are practicing the creating images, or visualization, reading strategy. They use their senses to imagine what the author is saying in the text. We are practicing these strategies in both whole group and small group reading. The students are also working hard on the opinion pieces that they have been writing. They are supporting their opinions with strong evidence and reasons to convince their reader.



The fourth graders are also getting set to present their cereal box book reports soon. They chose a fictional book to read over winter break and have developed a cereal based on that book. Then, the students will create commercials to advertise their cereal in a fun and creative way. The teachers are looking forward to seeing what the students have come up with!



Special & Support Area Updates

Art

Kindergarten artists made clay snowman this past month. We learned how to make a slab by pressing our spheres into flat clay. We rolled and pressed pieces to form the body and head and “glued” them using slip with “scratch and attach” technique. We used tools to carve details. We can’t wait to glaze!

First grade artists used simple shapes to draw Koi fish and lily pads in a pond. We carefully outlined our drawings and then used watercolor to blend colors creating an illusion of water. First graders are learning about Grandma Moses and her famous winter landscapes.

Second grade is continuing to explore the art of China! We have been working for several classes on dragon drawings. We began with a simple curvy line and then added simple shapes to build the rest of the dragon’s body. We are coloring with bright color sticks which look stunning on the black paper. We can’t wait to add these to the hallway displays!



Third grade artists painted a cardinal on a birch branch inspired by the artwork of John James Audubon. We used a piece of cardboard dipped in white paint to create the bark of the birch tree and used simple shapes to form the bird. We also used the other end of our paintbrush to dot in some light snow on the crisp blue paper.

Fourth grade artists are working on a painting of a red fox in the snow. Using simple shapes, we sketched the fox adding details around our focal point. Artists used different sized paintbrushes, blending colors, and adding layers of details to the background.

