



# VFES MONTHLY REPORT

March 2021 – Team Updates

## Kindergarten:

Wow March has just flown by! We have reached an exciting time this year by adding some new students to our “in person” experience! All the children continue to do an amazing job learning either in a virtual setting or in person.



We practiced our rhyming skills. The children practiced various literacy skills embedded in the theme of St. Patrick’s Day. Each child colored and cut a leprechaun and practiced their writing skills by completing sentences about their leprechaun.

We worked on the writing process in conjunction with the leprechaun activity. We learned about creating a draft, editing, and proofreading.

Our Wonders themes were all about weather, seasons and animals. Our stories were related to those themes and our comprehension strategies were visualizing and rereading the text. The skills we focused on while reading were sequencing and comparing and contrasting. We continue to work on handwriting and learning our kindergarten sight words.

In math, “first” we learned about ordinal numbers. “Second”, we focused on specific calendar skills such as what is the date of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in March. “Third”, we had fun with patterns and learned about a pattern unit. That is just the group of objects that repeat. “Fourth”, we combined many concepts we have learned by putting sets together and finding out how many more we will need to get to a certain amount. This is a more concrete way of learning and understanding the concept of addition rather than just calculating the numbers or memorizing.

We are all looking forward to our Spring Break and hope everyone has a chance to get outside, relax, and enjoy time with family!

## First Grade:

Happy Spring!

While first graders eagerly awaited the official arrival of Spring, they have been very busy in our first grade.



In the month of March, first graders completed an author study of Jan Brett. They learned all about her life and read many great books that she wrote and illustrated. At the end of the unit, the first graders selected the book that they thought was the best. They learned how to write an opinion essay and then wrote opinions based on their favorite Jan Brett book. The children enjoyed learning about Jan Brett and reading her books. Please visit your local library and take out other books written by this great author.

In Language Arts, we started our Unit 5 in Wonders. The children are excited to see what stories they will be reading in this unit as we practice various phonics skills and reading strategies. Please include reading in your nightly routines.

During Math class, our first graders have been learning all about addition and subtraction of double digit numbers. Ask your first grader to tell you about regrouping. Better yet, have them show you...they are so proud! As with all first grade concepts, additional practice is encouraged!

Our study of Japan is wrapping up in Social Studies. When we return from Spring Break, the children will be packing their bags for another adventure. This time our adventures will take us to the continent of Africa.

In Science we are learning about magnets. The first graders are having fun learning about the Scientific Method as they explore magnetism.

April showers bring May flowers . . . may our showers be few and our flowers plenty!

Have a restful Spring Break!

## Second Grade:

The month of March has flown by and the second graders have been busy!

The genre study in Language Arts this month focused on expository texts and poems. The key concepts in the literature we read focused on how the earth changes and poems about nature. The students really enjoyed writing their own realistic fiction and spring poems!

This month in Science, students are finishing their study on soil. The second graders loved looking at different soil mixtures, learning about worms, and photosynthesis! We are looking forward to our next unit, the solar system. This unit is always a popular and fun unit for our young learners.



In Social Studies, the second graders continued to learn about Ancient China. The children learned about panda bears, yin and yang, and calligraphy. When we return from Spring Break we will begin our Immigration unit.

As we prepare for Spring Break, we look forward to all the fun learning opportunities April will bring. We hope everyone enjoys the time off with family and we are excited for warm weather, spring projects, and an exciting third marking period!

## Third Grade:

This month Valley Forge third graders have been busy learning and reviewing reading strategies and applying skills they have learned to better understand passages and answer questions based on the text. We are proud of the efforts the students have put in all year to be close and careful readers and also more resilient math problem solvers!

In Language Arts, we have been working on a variety of topics such as: text structures, text features, determining importance, and cause and effect. Also we have been carefully working on not only providing text evidence in our responses but also supplying our analysis which helps completely answer the question being asked. Reading groups have enjoyed reading our second novel, *The Chocolate Touch*, and getting to know John Midas.

In writing, third graders focused on friendly letters. Students have been working on creating their own flat twin that will travel through the mail just like our inspiration, Flat Stanley. We are so excited to see where all our flat friends will go and what they will return with!

In Science, we wrapped up our Land and Water Unit by using everything we have learned about how water moves and shapes the land to design a landscape we felt would keep buildings safe. Up next...Plants! This hands-on unit will ask students to plant, grow, and harvest the seeds of a Wisconsin Fast Plant!



In Social Studies we learned all about William Penn, the state of Pennsylvania, and some Famous Pennsylvanians! Students were introduced to biographies and found themselves using World Book online and Epic to do some independent research on some famous Pennsylvanians or other Famous Americans. As a follow-up, students have been introduced to an assignment that asks them to research a famous Pennsylvanian or American at home. We look forward to seeing all they learned when they become this person on May 14<sup>th</sup>! Information will be posted and sent home after Spring Break!

As a grade, we look forward to warmer weather and even more exciting learning adventures to come!

## Fourth Grade:

The fourth graders are enjoying the sunshine that March is bringing!



In Science, we started the Motion and Design unit. The students are loving the hands-on materials that Mrs. Prothero provided us. They have built their racer cars and are now experimenting Newton's Three Laws of Motion.

In Social Studies, we are studying how our new nation was formed now that the Revolutionary War is over.

The students are continuing to work on informational writing pieces in the classroom as well. We are learning about non-fiction text features and non-fiction text structure.

In Language Arts, each class has started a new novel study. The students are practicing their reading comprehension strategies as they read their new novels.

The P.A.L. (personal achievement in learning) project has kicked off for us and is in full swing. Each student has chosen a topic that they are researching. They are very excited to learn more about their selected topic and present it to us later this year. The teachers really enjoy learning from the students during these presentations!

We are looking forward to spring and the warmer temperatures! There is so much to look forward to for the fourth graders in the coming months!



## Special & Support Area Updates

### Music



Happy *Music in our Schools Month*! 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...

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

The 1<sup>st</sup> 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, matching with the 1<sup>st</sup>

grade Social Studies curriculum later in the year.

This past month in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, we've been expanding our knowledge of different rhythms and pitches. We have been using these rhythms and pitches to create our own compositions and play them on instruments. Most recently, we've been using an app on our iPads to play our compositions on a virtual xylophone!

The 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 recorder and iPad xylophones. We combined those skills by composing our own variation on the famous three note song, *Hot Cross Buns*! Recently we started learning about the different instrument families in the orchestra and will continue with that throughout the month of April.

The 4<sup>th</sup> graders have been learning folk songs from America coordinating with the Social Studies curriculum. We recently explored music by American composer, Aaron Copland, and his use of a simple folk song in one of his orchestral pieces. Additionally, we have been studying some different forms in music composition, such as *Rondo*, *Theme and Variation*, and *Song Form*.

The chorus, orchestra, and band students have also been practicing very hard in their lessons and making great progress! Keep up the great work!!

