

# VFES MONTHLY REPORT

November 2017 – Team *Updates*

## Kindergarten:



We began the month of November with our very exciting tradition of Bear Hunt Day! This fun day consists of 5 stations where the children learn about Native American culture and traditions. To prepare for our special day we learned about picture writing and practiced it on our Teepee paper. With the help of two of our parents, Ms. Quarles and Dr. Miller Shinal, we erected a huge teepee using the paper the students decorated as our walls. At the stations the children learned about the Native American's use of corn or "maize", storytelling, crafts, games, and tracking animals. We are thankful for all the volunteers who dedicated their time and resources to making our Bear Hunt Day such a success. We all had a great time and the children learned all about Native Americans. Of course, we connected Native Americans to Thanksgiving and the Pilgrims with several activities related to Thanksgiving traditions.

In Science we completed our unit on Farming with an engaging lesson that helped the children make a connection between the clothes they wear and the farm it comes from. We moved from farms to properties of matter. The children learned about solids, liquids, and gases.

Numbers, numbers are every where! We continued working on numbers in math and practiced counting and composing numbers.

We continue to work on the alphabet and learning our sight words as we practice each letter's sound or sounds, the proper formation of the letter, and drawing pictures of words that begin with the letter.

## First Grade:

Where did November go? First grade has been so busy, we can't believe December is near!

In reading, we have been learning about determining importance and synthesizing strategies. The children are getting very good at practicing these strategies as they read. In social studies, we have started our unit on Japan. As we travel through this island country, the children will create projects that will help them remember facts about Japan. In Science, we are learning about the weather. As the unit progresses, the children will have the chance to learn about various weather-measuring instruments and take home student-created models to practice what they have learned. In math, we are learning about Geometry. The children have learned all about plane and solid shapes. They can name and recognize these shapes in our environment.

In addition to our academic studies, first graders attended an assembly presented by Ball in the House. Thank you to the PTO for providing us with such a great opportunity. We had the chance to "Mix It Up" in the cafeteria as we celebrated "Mix It Up Day" on November 1st. First graders had fun meeting new friends and sitting with different people (including teachers) during lunch. There is SO much fun in first grade!

Lastly, November and the Thanksgiving holiday remind us to express our thankfulness. Our first graders spent time learning about the first Thanksgiving and wrote about things for which they are thankful. The children are thankful for many things . . . parents included. The first grade teachers are thankful for our fabulous first graders and their families. We wish you a happy Thanksgiving!



## Second Grade:

This month second grade has had many fun event that have made November a month to remember!

Second Grade traveled to Longwood Gardens on November 15<sup>th</sup> to explore nature and math. Students used math concepts to notice shapes and patterns in the world around us. Students were able to explore the newly modeled grounds and enjoy a phenomenal instructional experience led by the Longwood Gardens educational department. It was a wonderful day and a great experience for the kids!

Second grade students also enjoyed the PTO/Delta sponsored assembly “Ball in the House”. Students loved listening to the singing style of this all male a capella group that performed for both our lower division and upper division. Students participated with some song sof their own and it was a really fun way to spend the morning!

Second grade continued to work on reading and writing skills as we practiced making inferences as we read and asking questions to make connections to stories.

In science, we started our chemical change unit which looks at how a substance can go from a solid to a liquid to a gas. Students enjoy this unit as we create these changes in the classroom and write out our findings using our science notebooks.

Second grade also did many fun Thanksgiving themed activities to help our students be excited about the holiday season! We look forward to welcoming in December with many fun and exciting activities and learning opportunities!



## Third Grade:

Third graders have had a wonderful month of learning and growing! We are proud of the effort they put into their work each day they come to school. It is amazing to see how much they have developed since the beginning of the year and we look forward to this continued progress throughout the school year! We have enjoyed sharing our students progress with you during our fall conferences!

Students were thrilled to finally be able to share the rocks they gathered for their rock collection! It was exciting to see all of their hard work and also to show how much they learned about testing and identifying rocks and minerals. We have also begun our unit on Land and Water. This is always an exciting unit where the students will focus on the relationship between land and water through a variety of experiments using our very own stream table. They were amazed that we could make a model of the water cycle in it! Erosion is our key word that we are looking for and understanding that the faster the water flows, the more erosion occurs.



In Social Studies, we have begun to learn about the Native American tribes of North America. We are learning about how where they lived influenced their food, housing, clothing, and transportation. Our learning will then shift to each class focusing on a specific tribe. The Pow Wow will be held in mid-December during which the students will be sharing their research on their class’ tribe’s shelter, ceremonies, art, food, clothing, climate, and location through creative presentations. The third graders will rotate through each class, listening to the other class’ presentations on each tribe. It is always an exciting day in third grade!

In Language Arts, we continue to practice using our close reading strategies to help us be better readers. Students have been working on citing the text when responding to a comprehension question. We read a variety of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry pieces ranging in topics from alternative forms of energy to “Female Firsts,” a piece about females who were leaders now and then!

In Writer’s Workshop, we are continuing to practice the art of writing a personal narrative. We are working on the skill of “showing not telling” and staying in one moment of time. The students really enjoy writing about things that matter the most to them, their own personal experiences and lives!

In Math classes, we are working on multiplication and problem solving as well as estimation and number theories. They are always encouraged to practice all of their facts at home!

We look forward to a fabulous December filled with fun activities and learning opportunities!



November really flew by for us in fourth grade! If you visit our hallway, you will want to bring a QR code scanner to scan the “I’m Thankful” songs written by the kids. You will also find some very creative fall poetry leaves hanging on display.

We have been hard at work writing our Personal Narratives and developing our “seed ideas”. The children have been working on showing not telling when writing as well as developing interesting beginnings to hook their readers. We have some incredibly talented writers in fourth grade! We have also been focusing on making inferences while we read in our language arts classes. Using these deeper comprehension skills can be difficult but our fourth graders are using apps, a variety of texts, and even riddles to help make inferences!

In science, we are learning all about electricity. We are using wires, batteries and lightbulbs to make a circuit. We are learning all about conductors and insulators as well. All of the kids are looking forward to creating their homes and building with working lights at the end of this unit! In social studies, we are finishing up our study of the 13 colonies and have started talking about the causes of the American Revolution, beginning with the French and Indian War.

We have all been busy in math as well. Fourth graders have been working with fractions, multi-digit multiplication, and division. Each of the classes have been using a variety of strategies to solve problems and we are practicing being flexible thinkers when faced with a challenging math problem.

This month, we attended the Ball in the House assembly and it was a blast! It was fun to hear the acapella singing and the kids learned a lot about teamwork, performing, using different musical techniques and tools, as well as some history of music.

We are so proud and THANKFUL for all our amazing 4<sup>th</sup> graders and their families. We enjoyed meeting with everyone during fall conferences this month. We are looking forward to another fun and busy month here in December!



## Special & Support Area Updates

### Music

 The music classroom at VFES this year is 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 learned a variety of songs about bears to go along with Bear Hunt Day! We sang *The Bear Went Over the Mountain*, *Goin' on a Bear Hunt*, and we even added instruments to the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. We have also been exploring the difference between our speaking voices and our singing voices.

The 1<sup>st</sup> graders have been learning about dynamics, *forte* and *piano* (loud and soft), through singing, moving, and playing instruments. We learned about a composer named Franz Joseph Haydn, famous for writing the *Surprise Symphony*. We are constantly learning new dances and singing new songs! Most recently we sang, *Shoo, Turkey* and *Over the River*.

In 2<sup>nd</sup> grade we are learning about form in music. Form is the way a song or piece of music is organized. We have been singing and playing instruments to a variety of American folk songs in AB Form. Some of them include *Old Dan Tucker*, *Tideo*, and *Rocky Mountain*.

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders just began playing recorders! We learned how to produce a proper sound and play together as a group. We are also learning songs by rote and soon we will begin to read songs with note names off the musical staff.

Recently, the 4<sup>th</sup> graders have been singing songs and playing instruments using sixteenth notes. Next month, we will be continuing the use of sixteenth notes by composing songs for our recorders and performing the compositions for the class. Through singing, listening, and moving to music this year, we have learned about tempo and we also explored music written by the great composer, Ludwig van Beethoven.

Our band students and beginning orchestra students are making tremendous progress as they learn their very first notes and songs on new instruments! Keep up the practicing!

The VFE Chorus and Encore Orchestra have also been working very hard to prepare for the Winter Concert! Don't forget to mark your calendars! Parents are invited to the 2:00 pm performance on Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>. The students are very eager and excited to perform for their family, friends, and teachers!

