

VFES MONTHLY REPORT

November 2018 – 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. 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 as well as composing and decomposing numbers.

We continue to work on the alphabet and learning our sight words as we practice letter sounds and the proper formation of the letter then 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 math, we are learning about Geometry. The children are learning about solid and flat shapes. Our Science unit is on 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. Speaking of weather, we had our first snowfall this month.

First graders experienced our first early dismissal and 2-hour delay. First grade teachers would like to remind families to send children to school dressed appropriately for the cold weather. We will go out for recess whenever the temperatures allow us, so warm coats, hats and gloves are necessary. Winter gear is a must if playing in the snow!

In addition to our academic studies, VFE was treated to an amazing assembly by Audiobody. The children were amazed at the tricks performed while learning a message about resiliency. Thank you to our PTO for providing us with such great assemblies.

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 hope you had a happy Thanksgiving!



Second Grade:

During the month of November, the Academy of Natural Sciences came to visit the second grade and taught us all about Dinosaurs! In Social studies, the second graders are finishing up their unit on Dinosaurs and moving onto our new unit about Ancient China! In science, our students finished a unit on sound and vibration. Our students have been learning about sound waves and vibrations. We are beginning our next unit called Changes where they will learn more about solids, liquids, and gasses.

In math, our students have been working on subtraction and addition using regrouping. They finished their chapter on bar models and are starting multiplication and division! In Language arts, our students are continuing to build their reading skills by learning inferences and picking out important information from a text. In whole group lessons and small group lessons, we have been making inferences and learning new vocabulary.

We are excited to finish another great month with parent-teacher conferences and we are looking forward to another month full of exciting activities and new learning!



Third Grade:

November was a busy month in third grade! Students have been contributing to our school's annual food drive for the last few weeks. We are all very proud of and thankful to the VFE families for their generous donations.

In our new Science unit, Land and Water, our classes have been experimenting with various types of water flow to predict, observe, and make conclusions about the effects of soil erosion on land. They have been working together at lab tables to perform the experiments using a small model of the land called a stream table and then sharing their results with the rest of the class.



In Social Studies, students have also been working very hard learning about Native Americans tribes. Each class has been assigned a specific tribe that they are researching to learn a great amount of information about them, specifically the tribe's traditions and ceremonies, shelter, clothing, food, and art. They will then create a presentation for the rest of the grade to share their facts about that tribe in the form of a Native American Pow-Wow. After presenting, every third grade student will have an opportunity to rotate through the classrooms taking important notes about the different tribes to show what they learned!

In Reading, we completed Theme 4 which focused on how to synthesize information when reading based on the theme, "How Does Electricity Work?" The students read various fiction and non-fiction pieces about how to describe electricity and how it is part of everyday life. Third graders are continuing to practice answering text-dependent questions in writing by restating the question as well as citing text evidence. It can be a challenging task but students are progressing very well with it.

Third graders have been very busy putting the finishing touches on their formal writing pieces. They wrote personal narratives based on one small moment of time that they wanted to share with an audience. Students are practicing the steps of the formal writing process that include starting with a graphic organizer for ideas then composing a rough draft, self-editing/peer-editing the draft, rotating it to the teacher for the teacher edit, and finally writing the final draft for publishing. The stories are impressive and fun to read.

November really flew by for us in fourth grade! If you visit our hallway, you will want to definitely check out the "I'm Thankful" songs written by the fourth graders. You will also find some very creative turkeys that have disguised themselves so they will not get eaten on Thanksgiving.

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! Soon we will practice making inferences while we read in our language arts classes. Using these deeper comprehension skills can be difficult but our fourth graders will be trying some 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 students 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 AudioBody assembly and it was a blast! It was fun to watch their amazing tricks and the students learned a lot about teamwork, performing, using different techniques and tools, as well as some cool lessons on electricity.

We are so proud and THANKFUL for all our amazing 4th 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 1st 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 2nd 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 3rd 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 will begin to read songs with note names off the musical staff.

Recently, the 4th graders have been singing songs, canons, and rounds and learning about pop music! We have been discussing how to make chords and how a musical scale is made. 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 Tuesday, December 18th. The students are very eager and excited to perform for their family, friends, and teachers!

