

VFES MONTHLY REPORT

November 2019 – Team Updates

Kindergarten:



We began the month of November with our very exciting tradition of Bear Hunt Day! This fun day consists of 4/5 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 how to track 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 everywhere! We continued working on numbers in math and practiced counting, composing, and decomposing numbers.

We continue working on the alphabet and learning our sight words as we practice letter sounds and the proper formation of the letter and then draw 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 synthesizing strategies and inferring. 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, 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. When snow arrives, waterproof gear is a must if your child plans to play in the snow!

In addition to our academic studies, VFE was treated to an amazing assembly by Cello Fury. The children were amazed by the beautiful music that had us clapping to the beat. 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. Happy Thanksgiving!



Second Grade:

It was time for turkeys during the month of November in second grade!

In social studies, the second graders are finishing up their unit on Dinosaurs and moving onto our new unit about Ancient China! Thank you to the PTO for having the Academy of Natural Sciences visit and show us fossils and teach us interesting facts about dinosaurs.

In science, second graders have begun working on the chemical change unit. The students will learn about solids, liquids, and gases. Students enjoy this unit as we create these changes in the classroom and write our findings using our science notebooks.

In language arts, the children are continuing to build their reading skills by learning inferences and picking out important information from a text.

Conestoga High School students visited our classrooms as part of the STARS program. The older students taught a lesson on kindness. Our second graders loved having them visit. Another special event in November was Cello Fury sponsored by our PTO. We all loved listening to the music played by these talented musicians and learning about the instruments. Many thanks to our PTO members!

We are excited to finish another great month with parent-teacher conferences and looking forward to welcoming December with many fun and exciting activities and learning opportunities.



Third Grade:

November has been 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 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 beginning to research and learn a great deal of information about, specifically the tribe's traditions/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. Every third grade student will have an opportunity to rotate through the classrooms taking important notes about the different tribes to show what they have learned!

In Reading, we completed Theme 4 which focused on how to synthesize information when reading based on the theme, "How Does Electricity Work?" They read various fiction and non-fiction pieces about how to describe electricity, alternatives to it, 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.

In Writing, third graders have 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

Fourth Grade:

November really flew by for us in fourth grade! If you visit our hallway, you will want to check out the 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.

In language arts, we are practicing 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 will soon learn all about conductors and insulators as well. The 4th graders are looking forward to creating their homes and buildings with working lights at the end of this unit!

In social studies, we are finishing up our study of the 13 colonies and soon will learn 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 and 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 Cello Fury assembly and it was a blast! It was fun to watch the talented musicians perform and explain how they play their music.

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

Art



Kindergarten artists made colorful owls from paper using many cutting techniques. We looked at shape and form as we assembled and layered our paper focusing on control of the glue stick. We also practiced making lines with our “art webs.” We divided our paper into sections and used construction paper crayons to make a variety of lines for our spider webs.

First grade artists were inspired by Claude Monet’s Japanese bridge as we took a picture tour of his gardens surrounding his house in Giverny, France. We made bridge paintings by folding our papers then painting on top and printing on the bottom to achieve a reflection. We added people, animals, and details on top with color pencil sticks.

Second grade has begun an exciting unit on China. We are working on detailed dragon drawings on black paper. First we drew a curvy line to make the dragon’s long body. Then using simple shapes we built up our drawing to make a head, arms, and feet. We are using colored pencil sticks to color in our amazing drawings as they pop off the black paper.

Third grade artists made clay owls in honor of American artist, John James Audubon. After looking at his artwork, his owls in particular, we rolled, textured, and folded clay into a cute owl shape. We added details with old marker caps, shells, and clay drawing sticks. We can’t wait to glaze!

Fourth grade artists have learned about American artist, Gilbert Stuart, as they practiced drawing figures from small wooden mannequins. We talked about proportions as we looked at Stuart’s work. We also made our own mini figures using pipe cleaners, beads, and straws!

