

VFES MONTHLY REPORT


November 2021 – Team Updates

Kindergarten:

November News from Kindergarten

The children are understanding the routines of school and are showing wonderful progress so far! This month our hallway is alive with turkeys displaying what the students are thankful for on their feathers.

Our Wonders topics this month were tools, shapes, and bugs. We read stories to go along with these topics and talked about key details in the stories and used the strategy of asking and answering questions to help us understand the story. We continue to discuss authors and illustrators and what their jobs are. We learned the sight words “a” and “like” and practiced using the sight words we learned earlier in the year. You might have heard some clapping of syllables in the kindergarten classrooms. The children were introduced to the concept of syllables and practiced clapping out the syllables in words.

 In Social Studies we learned about Native Americans, Veteran’s Day, and Thanksgiving. We completed various art projects and mini books to help the students understand these special holidays. We read the Thanksgiving book which is part of the district Holiday curriculum.

In science, we learned about motion and how things move. Kindergarten scientists explored making predictions about whether certain objects would roll, slide, or both based on their properties. We discovered that objects with rounded sides usually roll and objects with flat side usually slide. In addition to motion, we began our unit on farming. We learned about different types of farms.

In math, we learned about ordinal numbers and measurement. We know that all kindergarten students know who is “1st” in line but we also practiced identifying who is 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and even 5th! We used nonstandard units such as unifix cubes and popsicle sticks to measure different objects.

The children are excited to have a whole week off to celebrate Thanksgiving!

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 short vowel sounds and story elements. The children are getting very good at identifying characters, settings, events, and key details in the stories we read together and independently.

In social studies, we are preparing for our “trip” to Japan. As we travel through this island country, the children will create projects that will help them remember facts about Japan.

In math, we learned about Geometry. The children learned about solid and flat shapes. We are currently working on learning the value of numbers to 20.

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. Please label all items with your child’s name. And remember to visit our school’s lost and found during conferences!

Lastly, November and the Thanksgiving holiday remind us to express our thankfulness. Our first graders spent time writing 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:

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

In language arts, the children continue in Unit 2 of the Wonders program. The focus during the first few weeks included expository texts and fables. The students learned key features such as, giving facts about a topic, reading texts that include charts and captions, learning about made- up stories that teach a moral lesson, and how fables may have animal characters that speak or act like people.

In social studies, the second graders are finishing up their unit on Dinosaurs and moving into our new unit about Ancient China! Thank you to the PTO for having the Dinosaurs Rock virtually visit our classrooms and show us different fossils and teach us interesting facts about dinosaurs. The children loved that they received their very own fossils at the end of the assembly!

In science, second graders are finishing up the unit on Sound and will be moving into the unit on Changes. 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.

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:

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 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 Indigenous People of North America. We are learning how the regional location of Indigenous Americans influenced their food, housing, clothing, and transportation. Our learning will then shift to each class focusing on a specific tribe and sharing research about the tribe's shelter, ceremonies, art, food, clothing, and location.



In Language Arts, we continue to practice using our close reading strategies to help us be better readers. Students have been working to cite the text when responding to a comprehension question. We have focused on making predictions, identifying the author's point of view, and finding the author's purpose for a piece of literature. We read a variety of fiction and non-fiction pieces ranging in topics from elections to immigration.

In Writer's Workshop, we are continuing to practice the art of writing in the form of an expository piece. Students are researching turkeys and learning how to organize information by headings. They are doing a great job, and we can't wait to see the finished product.

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

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

Fourth Grade:

November really flew by for us in fourth grade. We have been hard at work in our classrooms!

In writing, students learned the power of persuasion. Each student wrote an opinion essay persuading their readers whether children should have more recess.

In language arts, students have been reading a variety of texts including dramas, poetry, and trickster tales! Students are learning to use their reading strategies to help them think critically and make inferences!



In science, we have started our new unit, electricity! Students are learning how to make an electrical circuit with just a light bulb, wire, and battery!

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, 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.

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

It has been a busy start to the school year in the VFE Art Studio! Not only have students been hard at work on projects but they have also been putting effort into growing independence and confidence in the art room and as a community of makers.

Kindergarten has been busy exploring lines and shapes and how they combine to make objects. They have also started color theory; learning about primary, secondary, warm, cool, and complementary colors.

First Grade has been discussing patterns. They created drawn patterns in the form of Pennsylvania-inspired Alebrijies and are currently studying the work of artist Paul Klee to learn how he used musical harmonies to paint pattern.

Second grade has been focusing on elements of composition and perspective and have recently taken those ideas off the 2D surface and into the creation of 3D clay monsters by changing the orientation of a pinch pot.

Third grade students have been exploring the language of artistic process in printmaking to create prints of personal or cultural significance. Currently, they are working on hand control in watercolor painting, inspired by the works of Jaime Dominguez.

Fourth Grade students are also wrapping up a painting project focused on precision and color theory in the creation of acrylic canvas landscape paintings inspired by the work of artist Grant Haffner.

