



VFES MONTHLY REPORT

October 2019 – Team Updates

Kindergarten:

October was a busy month in the kindergarten classrooms. We had a visit from Mother Goose who provided us with an interactive lesson that combined Mother Goose rhymes with the alphabet. She is very entertaining and educational at the same time. The children could hardly contain their laughter throughout her program. Thank you to the Cultural Arts committee for providing us with that.



We learned all about fire safety through our visit from the Berwyn Fire Company! It was really fun to see all the cool tools on their truck!

We also loved the visiting authors program by Robbi Behr and Matthew Swanson.

In language arts we continued working on our letters and sight words. We began working on stretching and writing words in our Writer's Notebooks.

Our hallway is beautifully decorated with our scarecrows. The children used their fine motor skills and direction following skills to complete the scarecrow.

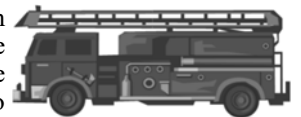
Science was exciting as we learned about different types of farms and about all the things we get from a farm.

In math we learned about numbers, the concepts of bigger, smaller, taller, shorter, and practiced writing numbers.

We topped off the month with Scary Gym and our very fun Halloween parties!

First Grade:

October is so much fun when you are in first grade! We celebrated fire safety month with a visit from the Berwyn Fire Company. Firefighters came to our school to teach the children about fire safety. The children had the opportunity to see a fire truck and learn about the equipment on the truck. The teachers then continued the study of fire safety in the classroom. Each first grade student was able to pretend to be a firefighter with a paper-made firefighter hat!



In reading groups, the children have been working on creating images and determining important information as they read. So far, our first graders learned that readers who determine important information, create images, and make connections better understand what they read. Please practice the strategies when you are reading at home.

In spelling, we have been focusing on short vowels. For the month of October, we covered short o and short u words. Every spelling unit introduces a new phonics skill or word family. The children love to be detectives and figure out the skill of the week when they receive their spelling list each week.

Our Science unit on the Solar System is in full swing. The children have enjoyed learning about the planets, stars, sun, and moon. With each lesson, the children created a project that coincides with what they have learned. Be on the lookout for a souvenir from our trip to the moon.

We finished our Social Studies unit on Maps and Communities. The students will now use these map skills as we "travel" to Japan. The children will learn about the geographical location of Japan as well as the culture of Japanese people.

In Math, our first graders are busy learning different strategies for solving addition and subtraction problems. The children are getting very good at finding different ways to solve math problems. We encourage our first grade families to practice math facts at home...practice makes better!

At the end of the month, Valley Forge Elementary had a very special visit by an illustrator and an author. The children were wowed and inspired by the work of Robbi Behr and Matthew Swanson. The children enjoyed learning about the bookmaking process and can't wait to become authors and illustrators for the Valley Forge Publishing Center. While October consisted of many exciting lessons, the most anticipated events were connected to the end of October. Scary Gym, Halloween parades, and classroom parties all added to our exciting month. The children had a fantastic time celebrating! Our Halloween was SPOOKTACULAR!!!

Second Grade:

During the month of October, the second grade was able to attend an author visit from Robbi Behr and Matthew Swanson, participate in Dot and Mix-it-Up Day, and learned about fire safety from our local fire department. We will be finishing up this month with classroom Halloween parties and an exciting parade!

In math, our students have been working on regrouping in the ones, tens, and hundreds using addition and subtraction. We are excited to announce that the second grade has had the opportunity to use a program in math class called ST math. ST math is a visual math program that helps students to build problem-solving skills.

In science, the students finished their unit on balancing and weighing and we started our newest unit on sound. The children are learning about how sound waves travel and how the inner workings of our ear helps us to process information.

In social studies, we are finishing up our unit on dinosaurs. Students have loved learning about the different types of dinosaurs and the time periods in which they roamed the Earth.



In Language arts, our students are building reading skills by learning comprehension strategies. In whole group lessons and small group lessons, we have been making connections and learning new vocabulary. We have been exploring the genres of fiction and nonfiction books and connecting our spelling list with our reading program.

We are excited to finish another great month full of exciting activities and new learning!

Third Grade:

The third grade has had a busy and exciting month of October! In Language Arts, we have continued our practice of being close readers and focusing on the skills of making connections, asking questions, and making inferences while reading. Students were asked to think about things they could infer from the text, based on what the text says. Our current theme focuses on light and electricity.

In Writing, we started learning about ways we can “show not tell” in our personal narratives. We read When the Relatives Came and noticed ways the author, Cynthia Rylant, used this writing technique by showing how happy the characters felt when they saw each other rather than saying they felt happy. Students began thinking about special memories they have with their own families and relatives and tried out examples they could use in their writing. They are working through the writing process as they craft their first personal narratives.



In Science, students identified minerals by putting together all the results from our mineral tests over the weeks. We tested the minerals for their hardness, luster, magnetism, light, color, and texture. To further students’ learning, they are being asked to collect rocks and create their own rock collection at home and complete the same tests we completed in school. As a culminating event, they will present their collections to the class!

In Social Studies, we are wrapping up our study of maps and globes and moving into Native Americans. Third graders will explore many popular tribes of North America then each class will focus their studies on one tribe and share their research with the rest of the third grade in a few months.

In Math, classes have been focusing on problem solving with bar models among other concepts. In addition to practicing math facts and skills in the classroom, we encourage students to practice them at home as well through flashcards, websites, and various apps.

Last, but not least, the third grade had a blast as they dressed in costumes on Halloween Day and marched in the school parade . This was followed by a fun craft and movie!

They are all very excited and are anticipating another fun month of learning and activities in November!

October is always an exciting time at VFE! Scary Gym and the Halloween parade and parties were also super spooky and fun. Thank you to our PTO and all of the volunteers for making each of these events so memorable!

Our fourth-grade hallways are lined with haunted house advertisements and subject predicate spiders. Soon we will see beautiful fall poetry leaves hanging. The fourth graders just finished up their Doodle Day stories which will be submitted to the publishing center. Now, we are starting to prewrite and brainstorm for our personal narratives. In reading, we are focusing on the comprehension strategy of “determining importance” which helps our readers decide important information vs. unimportant but interesting information in a passage. This helps build our summarizing skills as well as locating the main idea in a reading selection. In our small reading groups, we are continuing to work on this strategy with both fiction and non-fiction pieces.

In the science lab, we are just wrapping up our Ecosystems unit and are looking forward to an exciting visit to the Adventure Aquarium! It was interesting to see how the different types of pollution affected our terrariums and aquariums. We will soon begin our next unit, Electricity.

In social studies, we are continuing our study of the early colonies. The students are learning how the colonies were established and are working in groups to make brochures and presentations for five of the early settlements.

Last, but certainly not least, we enjoyed the author visit from Matthew and Robbi. They taught us a lot about collaboration and how to be persistent! Thank you to Cultural Arts for bringing them here to share their work! As you can see, we have been very busy and are looking forward to the fun and exciting things to come in fourth grade!



Special & Support Area Updates

Media



“The only thing that you absolutely have to know, is the location of the library.”
— Albert Einstein

Now that we’ve finished the second month of school, all students should know the location of the VFES library. It’s been a busy place with 41 classes in each cycle. Students started borrowing books on the very first day of school and as of 10/28, we’ve circulated over 6500 books!

Kindergarten students are learning about book care, the roles of authors and illustrators, and how to “read” the pictures in a book. We’ve all enjoyed the antics of Epossumondas, the noodle-headed opossum who is the main character in a series of books by Colleen Salley and Janet Stevens.

Students in first grade have been enjoying many of the new books and books from the Pennsylvania Young Reader’s Choice Awards list. We’ve learned and practiced using the 5-finger rule to help select “just right” books for independent reading. We are nearing the end of an author study using the beautifully illustrated and wonderfully thought-provoking stories by Chris Van Allsburg.

Second graders are getting to know the library “neighborhoods” and have the opportunity to choose books from all over the library. Ms. Lucy’s classes have been enjoying Torben Kuhlmann’s Armstrong and Edison books and Mr. Wong’s classes have been reading selections from the Pennsylvania Young Reader’s Choice Awards List.

Third graders have been working with the OPAC to understand call numbers and how to locate desired materials in the library. Each student created a puzzle piece for an art project that will be displayed at the Paoli Library from November 7th-15th. All VFES families are invited to join us for a reception at the Paoli Library on Thursday, November 7th from 6:00 pm-8:00 pm. If you don’t already have a library card for the Chester County Library, you can get one at the reception. Be sure to bring proof of residency.

In fourth grade, we’re finishing up a mini-research project that required students to use the World Book Online, take notes, create a PowerPoint presentation, and present it to their classmates. We’ll continue to build on research and presentation skills throughout the year during library time.

Thanks to Mrs. Sachs and the over 90 parent volunteers who help keep our library running smoothly by covering books, doing morning check-in, staffing the circulation station, and reading shelves!

Class schedules, borrowing policies, and the library catalog can all be found at the VFES Library webpage (<http://www.tesd.net/vfelibrary>). Please be sure to “check it out!”

