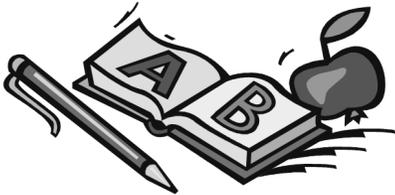




VFES MONTHLY REPORT

September 2017 – Team Updates

Kindergarten:



It's always so exciting and bit scary for our kindergarten students at the beginning of the year. We are well on our way to learning the daily routines. We learned how to write the date on our calendar each day, how to unpack our backpacks, and keep track of our mail. We celebrated Constitution Day, Peace Day, and Johnny Appleseed's birthday. Wow! Each class developed their own set of rules for the classroom and created a classroom constitution which each member signed. We began our study of the alphabet and started our Writer's Workshop. We visited the Science room and learned about "thinking like a scientist". We used our sense of touch to feel different objects and made a list of describing words for each object. In Math, we got to practice numbers to 5 and learned some strategies to help us be detectives and spot small differences. We have made some great new friends and are looking forward to a great year.

First Grade:



Welcome back! All of our boys and girls have adjusted to the daily life of a true first grader. The first grade teachers and students were very busy during the month of September!

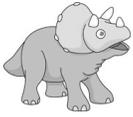
During large group reading time, the children are making connections between the literature we read and their own life, other texts and the real world. Making connections help the children better understand the stories we are reading. In the area of writing, the first grade teachers (along with our occupational therapists) are reviewing letter formation and proper pencil grip as we work our way through the alphabet, studying letters and sounds. During Writing Workshop, the children are learning how to create lists. In math, the children are learning about numbers, number words, ordinal numbers, and position words. We started our study of addition and are busy learning about the various strategies for adding. Our units on How to be a Scientist and Comparing and Measuring were our focus in Science for September. The children learned the scientific method and used their senses while they conducted an experiment. We are currently learning how to compare and estimate as well as measure with a ruler and balance scale. In Social Studies, the children are studying maps and communities. While learning about their place in our world, our first graders are also learning how to read maps. This understanding will continue to develop throughout the year as we "travel" to different parts of our world.

At the end of the month, all first graders celebrated Johnny Appleseed's birthday. The children enjoyed participating in many apple activities as they learned all about the life of John Chapman (Johnny Appleseed), the life cycle of an apple tree, and the parts of an apple. We also used our science skills when we conducted an apple experiment. Be sure to ask your child about the experiment and see what they learned!

We are all very excited for our upcoming field trip on October 4th to Milky Way Farms. This field trip will connect to our theme for October . . . pumpkins! Happy Fall!

Second Grade:

September is off to a great start in second grade. Students have been busy learning our classroom routines, meeting all their teachers, and getting into the flow of the year.



Students have started their first units in both Social Studies and Science. They are studying dinosaurs in Social Studies. We are learning about what the world looked like when dinosaurs roamed the Earth and the time frame in which they lived. We are also learning about specific types of dinosaurs and what they ate.

In Science, we are balancing and weighing objects on scales. The students have been learning about fulcrums and weight distribution to help objects to stay balanced.

Second grade has also started the Math curriculum. Students have met their Math teachers and are starting their units on place value.

The second grade teachers enjoyed getting to meet with families at Curriculum Night on September 12th and are excited for a fun-filled year of learning. October will be a busy month filled with exciting activities for our students to learn and grow!

Third Grade:

All the third grade teachers were excited to welcome in a new group of third graders to the 2017-2018 year! We know that third grade will be filled with lots of fun and exciting learning adventures!

In Language Arts, we kicked off our reading theme with “Community Spirit!” We read many fiction and non-fiction pieces about different types of communities and compared them to our own towns. The students also thought about what makes our community, both at school and in their neighborhoods, so special! While reading each piece, they began to practice close reading. Close readers dig into the text a little deeper and carefully examine the piece they are reading. Ways to be a close reader are through repeated readings, using a highlighter,



making codes on sticky notes, recording thoughts and notes on bookmarks, and finally sharing these thoughts with classmates. We look forward to practicing this skill all year to help our third graders become lifelong readers!

In Math, all classes began the year working on place value. Problem solving will also be incorporated into each chapter. Please feel free to use the math websites on the VFE website and the online access to the math book for extra practice at home!

In Science, we kicked off our year with our Rocks and Minerals theme. Students are spending time exploring both rocks and minerals during our science lab time and thinking about how they are similar and different. We are currently performing a variety of tests on each mineral to see if we can figure out which mineral is which!

In Social Studies, students are exploring maps and globes and thinking about where they live in the world. Students will complete a variety of activities in the classroom that will help them be able to identify different types of maps, use a compass rose and map key, and various other map features. We will also study the continents and oceans.

Decorating their writer’s notebook was a great way to kick off our Writer’s Workshop time! We loved seeing their amazing notebooks come back to school and we know this will serve as an excellent place for them to get ideas for their writing. This year we will focus on writing personal narratives, opinion writing, and informative pieces.

We are looking forward to another amazing year in third grade and watching our students grow and blossom along the way!

The fourth graders have had a great start to the new school year! We have definitely “hit the ground running!” The students have completed many exciting back-to-school projects that have helped their teachers get to know them a little better. We start the day off with math - the fourth graders were very excited to learn who their math teacher would be this year!



In Science, the students have really enjoyed learning all about ecosystems, food chains, and food webs. The classes have been busy creating their own terrariums and aquariums complete with guppy fish, snails, crickets, and pill bugs. We can't wait to examine how these ecosystems depend on one another and change over time.

We are wrapping up the Geography Unit in Social Studies and are looking forward to learning all about the Early Explorers and Settlements which will lead into our study of the Thirteen Colonies.

In Language Arts, the kids are doing great with our first comprehension strategy of the year, making connections. Fourth Graders have been focusing on the difference between a “surface connection” and a “deep connection”. In our small reading groups, we are using interactive notebooks to reinforce these comprehension strategies. Our classrooms have been alive with technology!

The students have loved using the iPads and checking out some cool fourth grade apps. We are all looking forward to a fun-filled final year at Valley Forge Elementary!



We make a great team!

Special & Support Area Updates

Art

Kindergarten artists have learned about the art room by making a colorful puzzle together. We are now ready to use scissors, glue, and paper to create fun glasses to see the world through artist eyes.

First grade artists made their first sketchbooks and currently are working on a colorful sun paintings. We are observing how people around the world over time have used the sun as inspiration for their art.



Second grade artists dug into dinosaur art after making their sketchbooks. We made drawings of dinosaurs using shapes to sketch. We used bold outlines to enhance our dinosaurs and texture sheets to color the skin. We are currently working on detailed paintings of dinosaur bones.

Third grade artists began a painting after making their sketchbooks. We learned about folk artists Grandma Moses and Maud Lewis as we painted beautiful seascapes to remind us of summer fun.

Fourth grade artists made big pastel drawings after their sketchbooks. We looked at the beautiful artwork of Georgia O'Keeffe as we used chalk pastels to make our large seashell drawings. It was so much fun blending pastels to color our shells.

