



VFES MONTHLY REPORT

September 2019 – Team Updates

Kindergarten:



It's always so exciting and a 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 learned 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 their first experiment. Our current Science unit is on comparing and measuring. The children are learning how to measure using standard and nonstandard units of measurement.

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!

From apples to pumpkins.... Happy Fall!

Second Grade:

September is off to a great start in second grade! We enjoyed meeting families during curriculum night and look forward to all the exciting learning that will take place this year. We hope you had the opportunity to look around our hallway and your child's classroom to see all of the writing projects the students have already completed.



The children have started their first units in both Social Studies and Science. In Social Studies, the students 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 have started the unit on place value.

The children learned about Constitution Day and participated in a round robin for Peace Day.

October will be a busy month filled with exciting activities for our students to learn and grow!

Third Grade:

All of the third grade students and teachers were very excited to begin the 2019-20 School Year! It will be filled with a lot of fun, exciting, and new learning experiences!



In Language Arts, we kicked off our Reading series with the theme, "Community Spirit." Students read various fiction and non-fiction pieces about different types of communities and compared their similarities and differences to their own. We also engaged in conversation about what makes their communities, both school and neighborhood, so special! While reading each story, the students began practicing close reading. Close readers dig deep into the text and carefully examine the story they are reading. Ways to be a close reader include repeating readings, using a highlighter, making codes and ideas on sticky notes, as well as sharing these thoughts with classmates during whole-group discussions. We look forward to practicing and strengthening this skill throughout the year in order to help our students become life-long readers!

In Math, our classes began the year working on the concept of place value. Problem-solving is also an important concept that will be incorporated into each chapter. Thinkcentral.com is the website for the Math in Focus Program. There is a multitude of activities available to students and parents to utilize at home. The VFES page of the school district's website displays this as well as other sites to visit for math practice.

In Science, we began the year with the unit, Rocks and Minerals. Students have been spending time exploring both rocks and minerals during science lab time, thinking about categorizing and classifying them. They are currently performing a variety of experiments on twelve minerals in order to identify each one!

In Social Studies, students have been examining various types of maps and globes as well as discussing where they live in the world. In learning stations, they will complete a variety of activities in the classroom that will help them to read maps and to identify the continents and oceans.

Decorating their Writers Notebook was a really fun way to kick off our Writer's Workshop time! Students had the opportunity to share these amazing notebooks they spent time decorating at home! This notebook will serve as an excellent place to create story ideas for the year. This year we will mainly focus on writing personal narratives, opinion pieces, and informative pieces.

Our school celebrated Peace Day on September 13. It was a great opportunity for third graders to bond as they rotated through four stations. They engaged in responding to what peace means to them on a butcher paper banner, painted their own peace plate, played Peace Bingo using different peace symbols, and played peace-themed games with Mr. Johnson! The day was a reminder to us all the importance of peace in our own lives.

The fourth graders have had a great start to the new school year! Together, we have kicked off our new schoolwide theme, "TEAM VFE!". We are reminding the students how to work together as a team as they learn inside and outside of the classroom. 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 soon to be 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. On November 1st, the 4th graders will be taking their first field trip of the year to Adventure Aquarium, a perfect link to our science unit!

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 are beginning to use the iPads to check out some cool fourth grade apps.

A reminder that 4th grade lunch is now at 1:15, so morning snacks (nut-free please!) are important! We are all looking forward to a fun-filled final year at Valley Forge Elementary!



TEAM VFE

Special & Support Area Updates

PE

We have had an exciting start to the year in physical education class.!



First and second grade students have been demonstrating spatial awareness and basic locomotor movements. They have also been introduced to the main mechanics of swinging golf clubs.

Fourth graders and third graders have been working on golf as well and had more time to work on the fine motor skills. They have also had the chance to show respect for others and setting goals. Third and fourth grade also worked on a lot of character-building activities and team-building activities.

Kindergarten has been learning a lot about safety and moving around in open space. Kindergarteners have also started to work on basic hand-eye coordination activities and practicing a lot of new locomotor movements.

The circus has just come to Valley Forge Elementary and students in all grades have had the opportunity to work on new skills and demonstrate their persistence and resiliency.

We are looking forward to a great year in physical education. Please remember to have your student bring sneakers when they have PE class.

