



# VFES MONTHLY REPORT

September 2021 – Team Updates

## Kindergarten:



Yay! We were so excited to be in school this month! For many of our students, this is their first school experience in a long time and for some it's their first school experience ever! We are well on our way to learning the daily routines such as unpacking backpacks, taking care of our supply boxes, lining up, and packing up at the end of the day. We learned about lots of rules for inside of school and for outside of school on the playground. Each class developed their own set of rules for the classroom and created a classroom constitution which each member signed. We celebrated Constitution Day by listening to songs and books about the US Constitution. We also celebrated International Peace Day and drew a picture of what peace means to us. We began our Social lessons which are part of the Wonders program. We began learning how to use our Reading Writing Companions which also go along with the Wonders program. In the Reading Writing Companion, we practiced responding to prompts such as draw a picture of something you do with your family. Additional skills we introduced were book handling skills, concepts of print, rhyming, and a review of the alphabet.

In math, we learned how to manage our math books or math packets and reviewed numbers to 5 while following directions. Our first lesson in science introduced us to the scientific method and how to "think like a scientist". That lesson was followed by a lesson on our sense of touch. The children got use their sense of touch to feel different objects in a mystery bag and make a guess about what that object might be. This lesson also helped the children practice taking turns!

We ended the month with a wonderful PTO-sponsored program from Mother Goose! She provided a wonderful learning experience combining Mother Goose rhymes with the alphabet!

The month flew by and the children are settling in to school and enjoying being with each other.

## 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, students spent the first three weeks of school learning about nursery rhymes, fairy tales, and non-fiction literature. We also reviewed the letter sounds and discussed vowels and consonants. Currently, our Large Group reading time is focusing on Realistic Fiction and the sound of short a.

In the area of writing, the first grade teachers (along with our occupational therapist, Mrs. Lewis) are reviewing letter formation and proper pencil grip as we work our way through the alphabet, studying letters and sounds. We are practicing writing sentences and making sure our sentences have a capital letter at the beginning, finger spaces in between words, and a punctuation mark at the end.

In math, the children started the year learning about numbers, number words, ordinal numbers, and position words. We are currently studying number bonds, addition, and subtraction. First graders are busy learning the various strategies for adding and subtracting.

Our units on How to be a Scientist and Comparing and Measuring were our focus in Science for September. The children learned about 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 students celebrated the fall harvest with a study of apples. First graders learned about 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!

Next stop? From apples to pumpkins.... Happy Fall!

## Second Grade:

The 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teachers were so excited to welcome in our new group of amazing second graders to the 2021-22 school year! We kicked off the school year with many classroom activities that involved getting to know each other, classroom routines, and beginning unit 1 in our Wonders Language Arts curriculum.



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.

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 grader have also started the math curriculum. Students have met their math teachers and have started chapter 1.

The children learned about Constitution Day and participated in Peace Day activities.

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

## Third Grade:

Our third graders are settling into their new routines and classroom expectations! Students completed a variety of back-to-school activities to help them get to know their new classroom, classmates, and teachers.



In Reading, we began our new reading series, Wonders! Our first unit is encouraging us to think about how people from different cultures come together to share their traditions and contribute to our communities. Through these stories we began practicing close reading by thinking deeply about what the text means as we read. We are working on asking questions, visualizing, and sequencing! We also began to practice answering text-dependent questions

which not only asks students to answer a comprehension question but to also cite evidence and explain how they know that is the answer. This will be a skill continually practiced this year.

Third graders were excited to share their newly decorated writer's notebooks. These will serve as great inspiration when it comes to writing their narrative pieces this year!

In Science students are excitedly exploring their egg cartons full of rocks and minerals. We will perform a variety of tests on the well-known minerals and at the end of the unit be able to decide which is which.

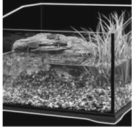
In Social Studies we have been learning about a variety of maps and globes, using the compass rose; and most importantly, where we live!

All of the third grade teachers are looking forward to a fabulous year together filled with lots of learning, growing, and fun!



The fourth graders have had a great start to the new school year! We love our new school mascot Forge Fox. He is helping us “Focus on Excellence! 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.

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 studying different expository texts. We discussed the features of an expository text and how these text features help us understand what we are reading.

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 4<sup>th</sup> grade lunch is 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

### Library

It has been wonderful to welcome students back into the library for classes and from the looks on their faces as they are checking books out, students are excited to be back too!

This year, Mr. Wong is joined on Day 1 by Ms. Taylor (BES) who will be teaching a first and a second grade class. We welcome her back to our VFES community.

Kindergarten students are learning about book care, the roles of authors and illustrators, and how to “read” the pictures in a book. Primary division students have been enjoying some selections from the Pennsylvania Young Reader’s Choice Awards list and learning about different sections of the library. Upper division students have been working with the OPAC to understand call numbers and how to locate desired materials in the library. Ms. Taylor and Mr. Wong have also selected a special read-aloud to share with each class in observance of Hispanic Heritage Month.



Students started borrowing books on the very first day of school and in just one month, we’ve circulated over 3,500 books! We appreciate the PTO for donating so many books from the book fair! Thanks to parents and caregivers for helping students to remember to return their books to the boxes outside of their core classrooms on any school day.

