

PTA Meeting 10/8/19
Teacher Update

Kindergarten

Science: We launched our Living Things Unit with our scientist in residence, Amanda Nugent, who taught the children about sorting things from nature. The wind and a bit of a chill didn't dampen the children's enthusiasm to learn and sort outside on our Kindergarten playground. They build their science vocabulary while learning about different kinds of attributes- smooth, pointy, bumpy, rough, etc. They also learned that you can sort one particular item in multiple ways- not just feel but size or color. Being able to touch and sort the items themselves, made this hands-on learning experience a big hit for all!

Social Studies: We wrapped about our units about learning All About Me, which included learning about their families and friends. We sang name songs, read books about families and friendships and all the while building our own community in our Kindergarten classrooms.

Math: We're almost ready to wrap up our unit 1-10. An important piece of the way we are teaching math is not just one to one corresponds (pointing to an object and counting that number) but rather being able to show that number in different ways. For example, when studying the number 6 the children are expected to show us their understanding of 6 in a ten frame, tally marks, a drawing, and more. This is the challenging work along with handwriting of course!

Reading Workshop: We just celebrated our unit on being Storybook Readers. The children were taught that reading begins with looking at the pictures, remembering what happened in the story and then "reading" it to themselves. Each book we introduce the children to read in the classroom has already been read aloud to them about 5 times, so they are very familiar with the text. Most of the stories have beautifully rich repetitive lines in the stories so the children get into the rhythm of the book and are more likely to remember the words. The Three Billy Goats Gruff was a great example of the children really getting into using the character's voices and loved "reading" the story with all of the vivid illustrations and fun characters. One of the favorite lines in our classrooms is "Who's that trippin' over my bridge"! It's making learning to read a whole lot of fun!

We even extended this book into a STEM activity where the children built a bridge with blocks and then used three dramatic play goats that we purchased with our PTA STEM money from last year. Once they worked together to build the bridge, they each had a character and a book and retold the story using the bridge as their prop. This STEM project was also a bit hit and challenging as well especially to work together and sharing the materials- all wonderful skills for Kindergartners to practice.

Writing Workshop: It's under way and the children are focusing on understanding that drawing a picture is showing meaning and teaches us something they know and therefore is writing!!! They have great ideas to share with the whole class, so we are building enthusiasm and therefore boosting confidence to take a chance to write a label and even write a few words to tell about their picture.

As you can tell, it's an exciting time in Kindergarten where we're launching reading, writing and math. We're into our steady routines and building important friendships and fostering our community in our classroom and McKenzie as well!

1st Grade

The first graders have been busy working on their personal narratives in writing workshop. They are learning about different strategies to spell unknown words, the difference between a watermelon and a seed story, and adding details to make their stories come to life. They have learned the good habits of readers, and the roles of partners during partner reading. They are now learning different strategies to decode tricky words. During math they have been focusing on number bonds and looking at numbers as wholes and/or parts of the whole. They will start working on word problems in the next unit, and they continue to work on reading and writing their numbers correctly. We are very excited to go on a field trip to the Chicago Botanic Gardens at the end of the month. The students will be doing a workshop about the wonders of worms and soil.

2nd Grade

Second graders have been busy exploring the Sun, Moon & Stars as they study the patterns of change we experience each day, month and year, the moon phases and how a shadow is formed. 2nd grader scientists measure a shadow outside 3 times during a day to test

their hypothesis that a shadow changes over the course of a day. In math, we continue to review place value, skip counting and number patterns and will begin our three-digit addition unit this coming week. In reading, we are learning strategies and word attack skills for tricky words. In writing, we are writing personal narratives as we read mentor texts. Last week, we completed 4 weeks with our social worker, Nadine Ibrahim, and participated in social/emotional lessons on listening, tattling vs telling, settling disagreements and inclusion.

3rd Grade

The third graders have been enjoying their engaging science lessons! Thank you to IGNITE, we enjoyed a hands-on lesson from Amanda Nugent about prairie plant adaptations. Coming soon, the students will be exploring the prairie at Heller Nature Center to support their learning about adaptations and plants. The students recently wrapped up a unit in math focusing on place value and they are now transitioning to learning various mental math strategies. Classes continue to build reading and writing workshop skills as they craft true narrative stories and employ various comprehension skills as they read *Stone Fox* and other good-fit books.

4th Grade

Math: The fourth graders are beginning work on multiplication and division strategies, including estimation and using bar models, arrays and area models to show their understanding.

ELA: The students are learning how to develop a character as they write their own realistic fiction stories. They are using mentor texts to identify some elements of author's craft to incorporate into their own writing.

Science: Students are continuing to enjoy the hands-on experiments with their stream tables. In two weeks, there will be a SCARCE program in the Makery space of the Learning Commons that also goes along with our science curriculum.

Each class will have their own Halloween activities on October 31.

Music

1st grade "informances" are 2 days in December, the 10th and 11th, when parents of 1st graders are invited into their child's music class to participate with them in the activities. They will be held in the auditorium during their child's regular music class time. Parents will receive more information from me in November, and the dates are in the school calendar, and in the Music at McKenzie website.

Spanish

Kindergarten is working on colors- ask your child their favorite color in Spanish and to sing our colors song!

1st graders Have been working on adjectives to describe ourselves, check out seesaw projects!

2nd graders have also been working on adjectives to describe ourselves, check out our seesaw projects!

3rd graders are "traveling to Spain" to learn about the culture there as well as how to talk about ourselves and the classes we are taking at "our new school"

4th graders are wrapping up alphabet and moving into learning how to describe our day from morning until night- stay tuned!

Technology:

1st Grade: collaborating with Ms. Lawniczak, dinosaur research and voice over a picture, a three-week project

2nd grade: Digital Citizenship, drawing in KidPix, a self portrait

3rd grade: Digital Citizenship, Plant pollination with Sphero robots

4th Grade: Digital Citizenship, Green screen project