

HCE School Report to PTO

March, 2021

Early Childhood: The EC class recently wrapped up our unit about pets. We learned new vocabulary words and practiced taking care of pets. Our new unit is about nursery rhymes. We are having such fun acting out Humpty Dumpty, Jack Be Nimble, Hey Diddle Diddle, and more! The research is clear that practicing nursery rhymes is a wonderful basis for learning language and literacy skills. It's wonderful to see each of our diverse learners participate in these pre-literacy activities!

K4: Last month we learned all about "Building". We built with shapes, drew lines and designs, used tools and explored rocks and magnets. We had our own "construction site" and workshop in the room. This month we are learning about transportation. We had many fun stories and activities about vehicles. We continue to learn our alphabet, writing and math skills. The students are learning life long skills such as problem solving, social skills and good school behaviors. There has been so much progress that it was wonderful reporting to the parents at conferences about each child's growth. The students are having so much fun they don't even realize how much they have learned!

Kindergarten The Kindergarteners are working on becoming avid readers! We are learning many new activities to use with our reading partners and small groups. In writing, we are continuing to work on writing "How to" books. The students are writing steps to complete tasks. We are also always working on stretching out words, using spaces, writing snap words, and using ending punctuation. In math, we just started some very engaging shape work places. We are making pattern block puzzles and we are playing many shape games. Finally, we just started our severe weather unit in science. We are hoping not to see any of it here!

First grade: First graders are poets, and they didn't even know it! They have been writing poems and using creative expression to make ordinary things come to life. In reading, the children are connecting with characters in their books, making comparisons and discovering life lessons in their reading. Although the weather is getting warmer, math has brought us to Antarctica where the first graders are exploring math concepts using penguins. They are exploring strategies using doubles, how many more, measuring and fact strategies to 20. We just finished our social studies unit on American leaders. The students researched famous leaders, past and present, used a choice board to choose how they wanted to represent their chosen leader and then presented their research to their class. They did a fantastic job! We are now heading into a new science unit called animal and plant adaptations. This will be a fun, hands-on unit for the first graders as they will explore and examine reasons as to why and how animals and plants have adapted to survive.

Second grade: In reading, the children have been learning all about reading a series. The children are working on becoming experts on the star characters in the series. In writing, the students are continuing to practice writing like scientists. Lab report writing has its own unique characteristics which the students seem to enjoy. In math, the students have been working hard to understand numbers up to 1,000 and that 3 digit numbers have groups of 100's, 10's, and 1's. We have also been counting collections of coins. In social studies we have been studying the different regions of the US. Students are enjoying traveling around our country. We are missing the programs and field trips that PTO have provided to us in the past but are enjoying the student of the month assemblies that help showcase students that are safe, respectful and responsible here at HCE.

Third Grade: Third graders are getting to know characters by studying them deeply during our Character Traits reading unit. They will also compare and contrast characters across books, examining their traits, motivations, and the life lessons they learn and teach. In writing, we are just wrapping up our non-fiction unit and will start our baby literary essays before spring break. In math, students have been working hard to learn multiplication facts with fluency and to understand the relationship between multiplication and division. We will move into our Geometry unit next. In science students are learning about the effect of unbalanced forces on the movement of objects, and in social studies students will learn about the History of Milwaukee. Students will begin working on testing taking strategies to prepare for the upcoming Forward Exam.

Fourth grader: Fourth grade has recently started our Historical Fiction Book Club Unit. We will be using the mentor text Odin's Promise written by one of our former teachers, Sandy Brehl! Student writers are also wrapping up their literary essays comparing and contrasting the stories of Cinderella and Adelita. Students will be starting to work on writing their own piece of historical fiction in our next writing unit. Students will begin working on testing taking strategies to prepare for the upcoming Forward Exam. In Math, students are reviewing addition and subtraction strategies and beginning to work with different measurement units. In Science, we have started our unit on plants and animals, Molecules to Organisms. Students will get the opportunity to combine their research with informational writing.

Fifth grade: Fifth grade has just started our Reading History unit. We are building on strategies we learned in our first nonfiction unit and adding some strategies specific to reading about history. In writing we are learning how to be better fiction writers. In both reading and writing, we are also working on test taking strategies in preparation for the Forward Exam. In Math, we are just finishing our unit on multiplying and dividing fractions, challenging for fifth-graders. After completing Junior Achievement - BizTown (virtual style), Social Studies changes to a study of American history beginning with the early European explorers and expanding to Colonial times. DARE is almost halfway through, and we have been learning and practicing strategies to resist negative peer pressure. We have already had a few meetings to move us toward middle school scheduling.

Music-K5: Ms. Nowak: In February, kindergarten music students started off with some songs about friendship. We re-established our PBIS chart and how to work with, and speak with, one another in the classroom. We also listened to jazz music and learned about the history of jazz. In addition, we started to introduce the idea of beat versus rhythm in familiar songs. We continued with this concept into March and took it a few steps further. We looked at rhythms in unfamiliar songs and the students started to write out the rhythms they heard on a beat sheet. Thank you PTO!

Music - grades 1-5: Ms. Hekenberger: For first and second graders, the month of March has been all about animals in the music room. Each week we've learned new animal songs, games, and dances. Third graders recently finished a Music Around the World unit and now third and fourth graders are participating in Music March Madness. We're listening to a variety of genres and students are voting for their favorites in the style of a tournament. Fifth graders are in their third week of ukuleles and will be playing pop songs in no time. I also want to say thank you. I'm also the PBIS Celebrations committee chair and would like to say thank you so much to everyone who has made a donation to the falcon flyer. Our students look forward to this experience every month and really appreciate it!

Physical Education-K5 & Grade 1: Mrs. Baumgart:

Kindergarten and 1st grade had a lot of jumping to do during our Jump Rope unit. Here the students learn and practice how to turn the rope effectively and safely and jumping with two feet over the rope. After a few minutes of jumping I would have the students feel their heart thumping away and they were quick to realize that this is a great exercise for our heart. And thanks to the American Heart Association and our Heart Heroes program we were provided with many informative videos on how to make healthier choices like choosing water over sugary drinks and how wonderful it is to just be kind to one another. We are currently in our volleyball unit and with the use of a beachball learning how to set, pass, and serve. I have been quite impressed with how a number of our students can perform a pass and serve to one another. Thank you PTO!

Physical Education - Grades 2-5: Ms. Brossart:

We have been busy in Physical Education at HCE. In February, we had our Kids Heart Challenge (formerly Jump Rope for Heart). HCE students not only sharpened their Short and Long Rope skills- they, their families and friends collected donations for the American Heart Association. Well, our HCE community blew this year's donation total out of the water. We crushed it!! Our HCE school community collected over \$17,000!!! This is our largest amount ever!! So, I just want to Thank everyone in our HCE community for everything they did to make this year and all the years an amazing success. We have been participating in this event since 1986- so it is a great tradition and is for a great cause. Our school is rewarded with certificates to purchase PE and Recess equipment through US Games. The month of March has moved us onto the Volleyball Unit. Students are reviewing and refining their Setting, Forearm Passing/Dig, Underhand and Overhand Serving skills. This will take us right up to Spring Break. Throughout February and March, students have also been introduced to Mindfulness and Relaxation tools that they can use in a variety of situations that they experience throughout their day. Some of the tools include Mindful Breathing, Yoga, and Meditation and Relaxation. Ask them about it- it might be something that you can do together. Thank You to the PTO for all they do for our school.

Art - K5: Mrs. Tentoni:

We've been practicing our drawing skills with guided drawing lessons, including lots of fun themes such as animals and even portrait drawings. We love looking at the styles of different artists and talking about how they are similar and differ; the kindergarteners are astute observers and notice everything! We have been experimenting with lots of different media such as fibers and using paper in new and innovative ways, and we can't wait to create some spring-inspired art as the weather gets warmer. We are excited to bring home our sketchbooks in a couple months so you can see our progress with our drawing skills.

Art - grades 1-5: Mrs. Gelhar:

This past month all the students have been creating art with oil pastels. The first and second graders have been illustrating an animal that they are learning a song about in music class. They have learned how to mix colors and also learned that tempera cakes and watercolors will not stick to the pastels. The third graders have been using their observational skills to draw underwater animals and also a cupcake (in the style of Wayne Thiebaud). Their focus is also on mixing and layering with oil pastels. The fourth and fifth graders have been animating food for their artwork. Their focus was to experiment with mixing to see how many new colors they could create. Many of the 4th and 5th graders are

choosing to use the oil pastels in their choice projects. A few students have discovered the technique of sgraffito with oil pastels. It has been a colorful month!

Principal's Report - Mrs. Komas

We are moving through the school year at a pace that seems surprising. Days are filled with learning and before we know it we will be enjoying a much deserved Spring Break. When we return students in grades 3, 4 and 5 will be taking the Forward Exam which is the statewide test of achievement. Parents will often ask if they can help prepare their child for the exam and the answer is a simple one. YES! Ensure that your child attends school regularly and puts in the best effort in their learning while at school. Reading each day helps keep the practice from the day extended into the evening and weekends. Playing math games at home that reinforce thinking and understanding numbers is not only fun but shows your child that math is everywhere. Spending time talking about their learning reinforces that you care about this big part of their life. Parents have a major role in the academic success of their child and we appreciate your partnership.

The pride we feel for our school and the uniqueness that each student brings to our community of learners was at the heart of our recent mural project. Once compiled the mural was photographed and made into a weather resistant banner. You can view our *Stronger Together* mural on the Janesville Road fence.