



West District News

Farmington Public Schools Website
www.fpsct.org

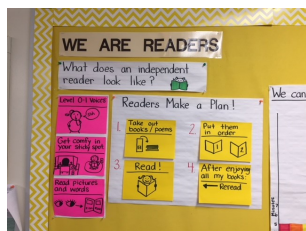
November 2017

Principal's Message

Dear West District Families and Friends,

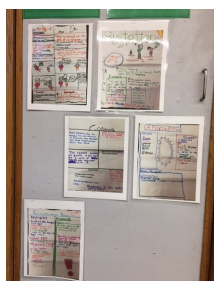
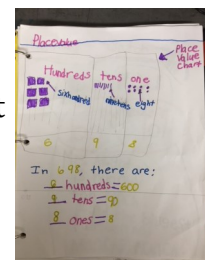
In my newsletter last month, I shared that our work this year is focused on purpose-driven learning. When students see their work as authentic, meaningful, and connected in some way to a real audience, they are eager to take on challenging tasks and to produce high quality work.

As I spend time in classrooms across our school, I see many examples of students engaged in tasks that are both challenging and purposeful. Students take on these challenges with excitement, studying models, and then evaluating and revising their work to make it even better. Here are some examples of the opportunities our students have to engage in purpose-driven learning:



- Kindergarteners are studying what fourth grade readers do during independent reading time. They are using their observations to create criteria for their own independent reading. They are discovering through this study that they can increase their own focus and stamina during independent reading time when they study the habits of their fourth grade mentors.

- Second Graders are creating resources for one another, including a Math Resource Book. When they are done with a unit, they create different pages for their book that summarize what they have learned. This booklet is available for the current students, but also for students in other grades who may need work.



- In Fourth Grade, small groups of students are studying how authors use different kinds punctuation to convey a message. Then, each group is responsible for teaching the other groups what they have learned.

We look forward to working in partnership with you to help our students meet challenging expectations while being self-directed leaders of their own learning.

Warmly,

Farmington Board of Ed. Meetings
November 13th—WWUES—7:00 p.m.

West District PTO Meetings
November 14th—7:00 p.m.



¡Hola Familias!

It was so nice to meet many of you at the Curriculum Night this month. If we haven't met, my name is Dana C. Tracy. It is my pleasure to be teaching your child Spanish this year. We have lessons three times a week for twenty five minutes in grades two through four and fifteen minutes in kindergarten and first grade each day! Here is a peek at what we are up to each of these grades.



Kindergarten Spanish Program:

Kindergarten has been working hard every day to learn how to greet each other, to say their name, to say how they are feeling and to observe the weather. Students brought home a worksheet that says "Yo me llamo_____". This says "My name is_____". Students practice the language through songs and answering questions. Repeating the language and using picture prompts has helped them recall vocabulary and perfect their pronunciation. Students at this early age learn quickly and have excellent pronunciation!

First Grade Spanish Program:

The students jumped right back into Spanish! Students have shown they retained what they learned last year and are now expanding their language skills. Building on previous knowledge they are now not only describing how they feel, but also describing their hair and eyes to each other. They can say someone is tired, happy, sad, and angry as well as ask someone how they are feeling. First graders are reading short sentences in Spanish and beginning to write more in the language, but with a primary focus on speaking.

Second and Third Grade Program:

Second and third grade students began the year with polite conversations about how they are feeling. Building on last year's learning they are now learning to describe not only themselves, but other people's eyes, hair length, texture and color which will help us identify famous Hispanic people.

Fourth grade Program:

Fourth grade students were welcomed to the program for the first time this year and are already able to talk about the date, their birthday, their age, the weather and have short polite conversations with a friend. Ask them about the songs we sing to remember days, months ect.

Questions? Please visit our webpage found on the school's main page under the link "World Language Program" to find songs and other resources your child can use at home to practice or just have fun!



Warmly ~ Señora Tracy ~ tracyd@fpsct.org

Kindergarten News

We are excited about learning how to write in Kindergarten!

In Writer's Workshop, we've been working on writing true stories across pages. We've been learning that all stories must have beginnings, middles, and ends. Our focus is on creating very detailed pictures that convey our stories wordlessly – but clearly – to our readers. As your child draws pictures at home, encourage him to tell you the story behind the picture. Help your child in using story language. For example, your child may draw a picture of himself at the beach and say: "This is me at the beach!" Help him mold that language into a story by using such language as: "One day, I went to the beach. We built sandcastles. Then we jumped waves. Finally, we were so tired out that we went home. It was a great day!" By practicing telling stories orally and conveying stories through pictures, students will begin to build a solid understanding of story structure which will help them in becoming great writers!



Grade 1 News

October continues to be a busy time for your child in first grade as we up the level of your child's independence related to learning routines, transitions, procedures, and expectations. We continue to focus on the critical work of establishing the tone for a successful school year. Please take the time to talk frequently as a family about what is being learned at school. Your attitude about school is very important and your excitement about learning goes a long way! Instead of asking, "What did you learn at school today?" try to be more specific. Prompts that begin with "Tell me about..." are more generative than "What did you do/learn..." type questions. Here are some specific things to ask your child to tell you about related to the learning happening in the classroom:

Reading:

- Tell me about how you take a **sneak peek** before reading (preview the book by looking at the pictures before reading the words)
- Tell me about how you set a **reading goal** (number of books). How do you try to read more and how does that help you?
- Tell me what first grade readers do at the **end of a book** (talk about a favorite part, reread the book, or tell about all of the important parts in the story (characters, setting, problem, events))
- Tell me how first graders **scoop up words** into meaningful phrases and how it helps your reading (reading should sound smooth and expressive, like talking and not like a robot).

Writing:

- Tell me what a **small moment/seed story** is. How is this different from a watermelon story?
- Tell me about strategies you know for **unfreezing the people in your stories** (make them move, talk, think and feel)
- How do first graders **make their words beautiful**? How do we make our pictures beautiful?

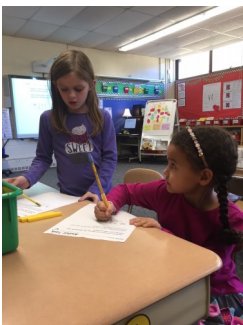
Math

- Tell me about all the ways first graders **show their math work** (with a number sentence, using a picture, using cubes, with words)
- Tell me about making **number bonds**
- Tell me about **adding** and what it means/when we do it



Grade 2 News

Second-grade students have taken an active role in their math learning over the first two months of school. They have studied place value and addition and subtraction of three-digit numbers using regrouping strategies. If you walk into a second-grade classroom during math instruction, you are likely to see children working together to solve problems. You will notice children demonstrating their growing understanding of concepts by manipulating and regrouping base ten blocks. You will hear meaningful dialogue among students as they work to apply what they have learned to solve new problems. You will marvel at children engaged in constructing their own knowledge and their comfort with struggling a bit to find an answer. You might be surprised to see that students are not afraid to make a mistake, but are learning to embrace mistakes as opportunities to learn. All of this active engagement and challenge help students take ownership of their learning and develop flexible thinking, which is the hallmark of good problem solving. Enthusiasm for math is in the air in second grade. The students are pleased with their growing ease in solving three-digit addition and subtraction problems using regrouping strategies and are looking forward to our next unit on bar models. Thank you, parents, for having your children continue to practice basic facts at home as part of our daily homework routine. Fluency with basic facts makes solving more complex problems much easier!



Grade 3 News

Third graders enjoyed an exciting and active field trip at Winding Trails earlier this month! During this day, third graders participated in dynamic, small group lessons that focused on key topics related to habitats and organisms. Students learned about adaptations of different plants and animals, how organisms obtain food and protect themselves from predators, and how to survive the elements. Students also engaged in hands-on activities and collaborative tasks in order to build understandings and make connections among these concepts. What is more, third graders were also able to apply their knowledge as they observed and recorded data on local animals that live in the Winding Trails community. Students are eager to put their new learning to use when we begin our new unit on Habitats and Organisms in the coming weeks.



Grade 4 News

Research has shown that student engagement plays a key role in student learning. Students who are engaged are more motivated to learn. Engaged learners therefore learn more. The age old question has been how do we engage students? In fourth grade, students have identified that they are more engaged when they are provided with opportunities to share their thinking with others. Recently, students participated in a lesson activity called "Conver-Stations."



In this activity, students had the opportunity to grow their thinking by talking to each other in small groups. One student from each group then rotated to a different group, so that every few minutes there was a different person in the group to share a new perspective on their understanding. Students were engaged and motivated to participate. At the end of the activity, every student stated that they were able to add on to their original thinking thanks to the conversations they had in their small groups. As one student said "It was a great way for us to be able to socialize and learn at the same time, even if we were socializing about our learning!"

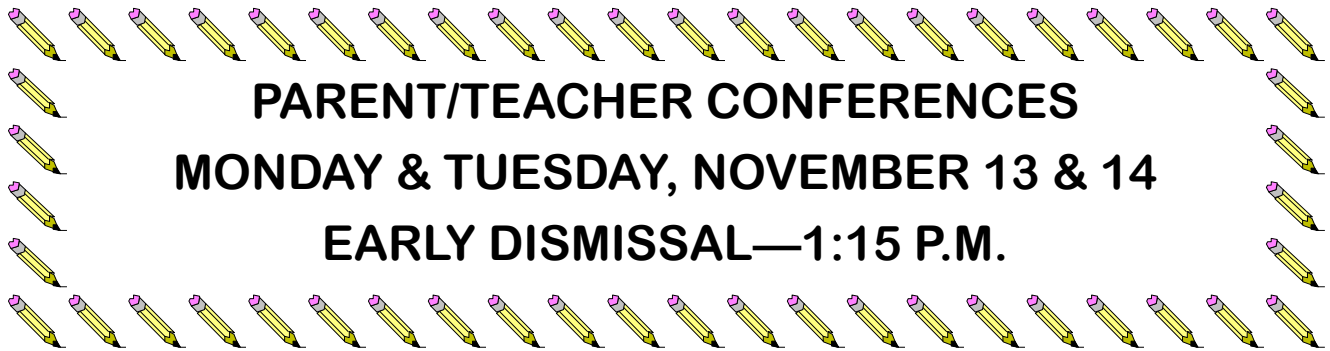


*From All of Us at
West District School
Happy Thanksgiving*

Music Notes from Mrs. Raczkowski



This month's Music Spotlight is on...drum roll please!... Second Grade! Wow, they should be crowned the Solfege Superstars! Second graders have been working very hard in the music room learning songs which contain different combinations of the solfege syllables do, re, mi, so, & la - such as: Bounce High-Bounce Low, Old Mr. Woodpecker, and Here Comes a Bluebird. Now it's time to compose their own songs! Second graders have already started working in groups on their very own Thanksgiving Dinner Songs! They have been brainstorming Thanksgiving dinner words and figuring out the rhythm of these words to incorporate into their songs. Sprinkle on the solfege, add lots of practice, and their compositions will be ready in time for Turkey Day! Make sure to ask your second grader to share his/her song with you! Way-to-go Second Graders! Please "tune" in next month to see who's in the Music Spotlight!



PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES MONDAY & TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13 & 14 EARLY DISMISSAL—1:15 P.M.

Artistic Updates



Mrs. Bastiaanse-Fritch Art Newsletter: Check out our learning targets in art!

Kindergarten: I can study the work of Wassily Kandinsky! I can create concentric Circles!

First Grade: I can blend colors to make new colors! I can study the work of a master artist to inspire my own **still life!**

Third Grade: I can create a realistic **portrait** using proportion and value.

Fourth Grade: I can use what I know about the elements of art to create patterns and symbols in my landscape. I can create a building (architecture) that reflects the choices I used in my landscape. This is how I can use **Design** in my art work!

I hope you are enjoying our online art gallery artsonia.com. If you have any questions, please send me an Email: bastiaansefritchn@fpsct.org

Miss Burbank Art Newsletter

Second grade just finished creative Laurel Burch patterned cats focusing on **Design**. They are now beginning Pumpkin Patch **Landscapes** showing that objects can look further away than others if we draw them different sizes

Mark your Calendars!

Monday, November 13 and Tuesday, November 14 ~1:15 Dismissal for Parent-Teacher Conferences

Tuesday, November 7 ~ School Closed (Teacher PD)

Friday, November 10th ~ Veteran's Day Assembly—9:40 a.m.

Monday, Tuesday, November 13 & 14 ~ Early Dismissal—1:15 p.m.—Parent/Teacher Conferences

Wednesday, November 22 ~ 1:15 Dismissal for Thanksgiving Recess

Wednesday, Thursday, December 13 & 14 ~ Early Dismissal—1:15 p.m.—Teacher PD Day

Friday, December 22 ~ Annual Sing Along—2:15 P.M.

December 25—January 1 ~ Holiday Recess—School Closed

Tuesday, January 2 ~ Community Assembly—

Monday, January 15 ~ School Closed (Martin Luther King Day)

Tuesday, January 16 ~ Winter Concert—2 & 7 p.m.

Friday, January 26 ~ Community Assembly—

Wednesday, Thursday, February 7 & 8 ~ 1:15 dismissal for Teacher Professional Development

Monday, Tuesday, February 19 & 20 ~ School Closed—Winter Recess

Friday, February 23 ~ Community Assembly—

Friday, March 16 ~ Report Card Distribution

Monday, Tuesday, March 19 & 20 ~ 1:15 Dismissal—Parent/Teacher Conferences

Thursday, March 29 ~ Community Assembly—

Friday, March 30 ~ No School (Good Friday)

Monday-Friday, April 9-13 ~ No School—Spring Recess

Friday, April 27 ~ Community Assembly

Thursday, May 10 ~ West District Art Show—5-7 p.m.

