

Teacher Write-Ups
Board Meeting 10/24/17

Class 1-2

Hello Board,

My class has really enjoyed School Spirit Week. I've had several new families share how excited they are about Three Rivers this week. Though it leads to wound up children I think it truly does build their school spirit!

In the academic realm we a cruising ahead in all the curriculum- math, reading, spelling etc. and I continue to tailor the learning to each student's needs as I learn more about each of them.

We took our first field trip to the Botanical Gardens last week and it was successful. Our current science theme has been plants and it was exciting for the class to see so many varieties...and be outside walking about all morning on a beautiful day. This year's parents are proving to be engaged and helpful with 11 of them attending our first trip.

I've been using our new social emotional learning program, Sanford Harmony, and the class has responded positively. Each week they have a new buddy that they pair with on various activities and get to know better. The program is really helping build our classroom community so far.

I am excited to have the opportunity to attend the CCSA Conference in March! It was quite worth it the last time I went and I look forward to the professional development.

Please get in touch with any questions or concerns. Once again, thanks for all you do!

From the 3rd/4th grades classroom:

Students loved the School Spirit Week Art project and activities!

Students completed the reading of Andrew Lost in the Kitchen; a wacky, science-based chapter book. We worked hard to complete the companion workbook which I created to accompany the chapter book because nothing of the sort had yet been created. The workbook emphasizes many CCSS priorities such as opinion writing, making projections, and thinking critically. It also emphasizes academic vocabulary and reading comprehension, both topics historically very challenging for the 3/4 population. After fall break we will begin a new chapter book.

Also after break, we will begin our annual directed acrylic painting on canvas. I plan to direct a painting with a redwood theme, based in perspective; a view of looking up at the trees. I will also bring this same acrylic exercise to 6 high school students enrolled in art as their elective.

I often use the game platform, Kahoot, as a learning activity to help with memorization of math facts. Recently, I used it as a quiz. I discovered that Kahoot provides a very powerful analytical breakdown of responses. In reviewing the data, I saw that my third graders were not effectively able to critically think through directions, such as instructions on a math test. I have since conducted some workshops exclusively with the third graders, focusing on breaking down directions in the math book, or a math test. We will continue to have occasional intensives, along with skill-based review work, infused into the rest of the math agenda.

Many of the 4th graders have presented their first slide show on Early CA Explorers. At the end of the month we will start the CA Native American projects for 3rd grade, and CA Mission Projects for 4th grade. This semester students will conduct research and write a research paper using Google Docs.

Jr High

Hello Everyone!

The students enjoyed our First Friday REACH assembly focused on Empathy with a guest speaker and furry visitor from the Human Society last Friday. Students also partnered up with students from other classes to trace each other's shoes and learn something from their perspective. A number of students also attended the NaNoWriMo Book Launch last Wednesday at the library and some are so eager for the project that they have already started writing their novels! I have met with the majority of families for first semester parent-student-teacher conference where we discuss NWEA testing results, grades, and discuss any improvements or support that the student can benefit from.

In English this week students will start our unit on suspense with titles "The Dinner Party", "A Running Brook of Horror" and "The Lady or the Tiger". These stories focus on strategies to create suspense in writing and illustrate how to use cliff hangers to make your audience interpret the ending. Students will begin their study of verbs and helping verbs in Grammar and will begin Lesson 4 in their Vocab books. In Life Science, students will begin Chapter 5 "Cell Energy" which will teach students the many processes that cells utilize to create and use energy, such as photosynthesis and cellular respiration. Students will also learn how cells replicate through the process of mitosis. In art students will be drawing their own version of one of the California missions using chalk on black construction paper.

We also had another successful School Spirit Week! My students' favorite part was drawing anime for the school-wide art genre quilt. They also look forward to Field Day next week!

High School

This month in the high school classroom we have been focused on three things.

1. Of course Spirit Week, as always, was a central focus of our classroom. The students easily agreed upon an art theme - graffiti- and spent quite a few hours researching and learning about this pop-art form of expression, especially learning about fonts and imagery/iconography that is often used in this art style. Because it is essentially an art style focused on self expression, it created interesting conversations about freedom of speech and appropriateness. I think it has opened the door to deeper conversations on these topics; I tried hard to allow freedom of speech to act as a vehicle for creating conversations that otherwise might never have been had about the values of our society and history and how we choose to discuss current issues or remember the past and represent our values in a pluralistic society.

In general it seemed a quieter Spirit Week than in the past and I am once again reminded how important it will be to get our school family back together again as soon as we can all make that practical. But despite the quieter week than usual I think the high schoolers enjoyed a break from routine and a chance to be part of something bigger.

2. The 10th and 11th graders have been studying for the PSAT since the beginning of September, and took this exam on October 11. This is the practice SAT exam required for college admission in all 4-year college and university programs for highschoolers applying to enter as Freshmen directly after graduating from high school. There is the perk of automatic entry in a scholarship competition for all of those who score high enough on this exam which is quite an incentive! We have been automatically requiring all of our 10th and 11th grade students to take this exam as part of our college preparatory program which also helps the students to get information on how their educational level compares to other students their age who will also be applying to colleges/universities directly after high school graduation. Score reports, which will be available in a few

months, will be discussed with all of our students who took the exam and their families. I think that the constant conversations in class as we prepared for the exam, also serves to create a college-bound culture for our freshmen even though they do not take the exam.

3. Of course there is the constant focus on our classes and our daily work. The high schoolers have been working hard to be ready for this week off and tried hard to get ahead in their online classes so that they have as little work as possible while we are on vacation. Yesenia Huerta, our new classroom aide who has proved herself invaluable, and I worked hard to develop a new set of Career Technical Education Pathways to show the California Department of Education in language which they will understand, the work we have always been doing to prepare our students for the work world and future careers. This year, I am noticing more than every before, a particular drive on the part of a majority of our students, to truly own their educations and work with our staff to direct and personalize their educations - a fact which I find incredibly inspiring.

Thank you for all that you do as a board to give of your time to help our students have the opportunities necessary to realize the importance of owning their educations.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Kasperson
High School Program Coordinator and Teacher