



Principal Newsletter

December 2022

Hello HBS Families!

I hope this finds you well and enjoying the holiday season. While it can be a busy (really busy) time of year, make sure you appreciate this time with your family. As the father of a senior, I am going to treasure every moment knowing that my daughter will not be around as much in the future. Trust me, it goes quicker than you think. The days are long, the years are short.

My staff continues to keep your child engaged in their academics. They are a talented group of educators that I have had the pleasure of working with for the past eleven years. In addition to their studies (see more below) your children have experienced many fun activities. Our fourth graders went on the first of their two river trips. Our fifth graders visited the DaVinci Science Center. This year we offered fourteen clubs from Cooking to Sports. Some teachers offered second sections to accommodate the huge amount of interest.

We just completed our annual Turkey Trot fundraiser. This was tremendously successful. Thank you all for your donations which will go directly to our field day in June.

On November 28 we started offering virtual homework assistance. This is offered every day, Monday through Thursday. Your child can visit with a teacher for assistance or just to have a study buddy there while they work. Please visit our website for the link and hours.

Make sure you read the weekly Wednesday parent blast to be aware of all upcoming events. Past emails are available on the Virtual Backpack link on our school website.

Below are photos from our Turkey Trot.





What follows is an overview of your child's academic school year written by their teachers.

I hope you have a great holiday season. Stay warm!

Mr. Nigro :)

Fabulous Fourth Grade

Our 4th grade Bobcats have been busy this quarter! They kicked off the year by meeting their new teachers and learning about each other. They loved playing on the amazing H.B.S. playground and learning in the outdoor classrooms.

They also wrote personal narratives and realistic fiction stories during our first writing unit. During the second writing unit, they have been writing opinion essays all about what matters most to them. During this unit, they wrote a thesis and supported their reasons with evidence. Some popular topics include sports, holidays, technology use and climate change. We look forward to writing persuasive pieces in the upcoming weeks.

During the first reading unit, students read realistic fiction stories. Students enjoyed meeting with their partners to discuss the characters and lessons they learned from the books. They have been reading nonfiction weather books and learning about how to tackle tricky vocabulary, how to determine main ideas and details, and how to take notes. They look forward to working in teams to create weather research projects and present them to their classes.

Math class has been tons of fun for the fourth graders! The students began the year by building on to some familiar third grade skills, while pushing their understanding into the fourth grade material. They have been working with numbers as large as six-digits in the hundred-thousands place! With these new and challenging numbers, they have been investigating place value, comparing whole numbers, rounding to various places, as well as addition and subtraction. In the new unit, mathematicians have begun to delve further into their third grade work with multiplication and division, by way of thinking of multiplication as a comparison, organizing information into a bar model, recognizing multiplication and division as inverse operations, using various strategies to solve a word problem, and identifying both prime and composite numbers as well as factors and multiples. As the year continues, the students will begin to multiply and divide multi-digit numbers before heading into more fraction work!

Science class is very exciting for students. Our hands-on experiments have been a hit, and the children are truly learning what it means to be a scientist by practicing what scientists do in real life. These skills include: asking questions, planning, making claims and supporting them with evidence, and keeping detailed notes in their science notebooks. We also study phenomena to notice and wonder about the world. The students engage in accountable talk based on their findings. This is all done through experiments such as soil identification and weathering of rocks through the sugar cube simulation. Please ask your child about their experiences in science class.

In social studies class, fourth graders are realizing that history is alive in artifacts, monuments, and buildings around us. Every social studies lesson gives students the opportunity to explore a variety of historical sources and the various perspectives reflected in them. Learners are encouraged to ask critical questions of their sources and make inferences about how these sources reflect the history of our state. In the first unit, students investigated the physical environment of New Jersey and how early Indigenous peoples were connected to the land. Moving forward in time, students explored the changes that people experienced as colonists arrived from outside North America. Students investigated cause-and-effect relationships connected to events of early state history and took a closer look at the reasons for migration to the region. Students also took a closer look at issues related to rights and freedom in our state's history. In the next unit, fourth graders will explore the rich natural resources across the US, learn about how people use them, and consider ways people can help sustain them.

Authors: Jen Higdon, Rachel Brodsky, Shelly Gass, and Kelly Neuberger

Fantastic Fifth Grade

What 5th graders have been learning and what they will be learning...

Math: 5th grade math students have been exploring and refining their skills of measurement of volume. Students have been applying operations of multiplication and addition while solving real world problems relating to volume of solid figures. Additionally, students have been applying different multiplication and division strategies to solve up to four-digit numbers by two-digit equations. As we move to marking period 2, students will gain an understanding of decimal place value by learning to read, write, and compare decimals up to the thousandths place value.

Science: 5th grade students have been studying Earth & Sun. They have been demonstrating their understanding of how the Earth, the Sun, and the Moon interact to reveal predictable patterns, as well as exploring the distance relationship and relative size of the Sun, the Moon and the Earth. They have explored the Earth's atmosphere and learned where air is found, specifically in the troposphere where weather happens. Students will continue to explore how energy transfers between the Sun and Earth. Additionally, students will be exploring the stages of the water cycle as they continue to explore the Earth atmosphere. Throughout science students are regularly applying their scientific understanding and knowledge by supporting their claims using evidence and reasoning when responding to the lessons focus questions.

Reading: 5th grade reading students have been delving into complex nonfiction texts. Students have been exploring ways text can challenge readers. Students are identifying how to orient themselves to complex non fiction text by taking a closer look at text features. Students are working on strategies for determining implicit main ideas, using context to determine meaning of difficult vocabulary, and identifying and thinking about how texts are structured.

Writing: 5th grade writing students have been growing ideas to craft interpretative essays about stories that hold meaning for them. Students

are analyzing the structure of this type of writing, examining the elements while making a deeper connection to literature. Students are working to develop and support claims with textual evidence as they write to improve volume, content, and stamina.

Taking a break from the core subjects is a great way to explore new areas by showing your creative side. The special classes are a great place for this to happen! So far this year many exciting lessons and activities have been happening in the classrooms of the special areas. Below you will find some of the cool things that have been going on as well as some activities that will be occurring in the upcoming weeks.

Authors: Trish Noonan and Mary Padavano

Innovation & Design

Grades 4 & 5 - Students have learned about the Engineering Design Process and have begun applying it during their challenges. Students had to 'Save the City' by creating a contraption to dump "Toxic" marshmallows into a safe bucket. Students worked in groups and were able to use only 4 ropes and a deflated tire tube to create their contraption. Students were unable to enter the Hazardous zone which added to the challenge!

Grade 4 learned about logos and slogans and are currently designing field day t-shirts. Later this year students will be creating an Innovation - (taking an already existing product and making it better.)

Grade 5 learned about canoes and have started building canoes. Their canoe must look like a canoe, it must hold 2 Lego figures and be able to float for 3 minutes. Students may choose from specific materials to use in their design. Other projects this year will include creating Rube Goldberg machines, using Makey-Makey boards and creating Recycled Race Cars.

Art

Grade 4: Students are continuing to learn about the color wheel and color theory. They have explored using texture, crayon watercolor resist, oil pastels and the warm and cool colors. They will soon be learning about Vincent VanGogh and his wonderful movement, which is shown in Starry Night.

Grade 5: Students have been learning about layout and design. They have explored using watercolors, oil pastels, complimentary colors and collage art. They will soon begin learning about the amazing Pablo Picasso and his style of Cubism. They will be using a new medium, tempera paint.

Music

4th grade: We are reviewing how to read notes on the Treble Clef staff. We are doing this by playing the recorder.

Students were unable to use recorders last year because of COVID, so this is a big treat for our students and they have been so excited about this unit! Each week, students work together on a series of activities that help reinforce music reading skills, tracking, rhythm notation/reading, and coordination. These stations include games like Treble Clef Uno, Ultra Dash, and Roll & Play (students roll a die and play the excerpt on that number).

In the upcoming months, students will be learning about Folk Music, music that has been passed down from generation to generation, by performing it through various singing games and accompanying with barred instruments. This will be tied into reading new rhythmic/melodic notation and proper vocal technique.

5th grade: Our students are learning ways to describe what they hear and form opinions about what they like/dislike about music.

Words like tempo, dynamics, and form are being discussed during our class time. We are learning how musicians know what speed to play and how they know what volume to perform.

Students are using flashlights to help discover changes in music. Students are learning to actively listen to what is happening in a piece of music and listening for a certain phrase so they know when to perform their flashlight routine.

Students have been discussing instruments and how they're used in different genres of music. Students are discovering how instruments can be used differently based on the genre of music.

Students have explored improvisation by using the barred instruments to make up their own music.

Library/Book Study

4th grade Library: Started year by learning how to use Destiny to find books. Currently learning how the library is organized starting with alphabetizing fiction and then moving onto the Dewey Decimal System.

4th Grade Book Study: Started the year learning about story elements; the ingredients for making a good story include: plot, conflict, characters, point of view and setting.

Currently working on the nonfiction unit; including text features and structures, main idea and supporting details.

5th Grade Library: Started year reviewing the uses for the Destiny database. Currently taking a closer look at the Dewey Decimal System and what's on the other side of the decimal point.

5th Grade Book Study: Started the year learning about personal narrative then moved on to determining a story's theme.

Currently working on main ideas in nonfiction texts.

Spanish

Both 4th and 5th grade students are exploring a brand new curriculum this year called Que Bien! The program brings the Spanish language alive through conversations with Rita and Mario and their friend Rocky el

mapache (the racoon) who always seems to be getting into some kind of trouble.

4th grade students have begun learning how to greet and meet people in Spanish and describe how they are feeling and counting to 50. This year we will continue to work on our conversation skills and be able to describe our classroom, our hobbies and our families.

5th grade students continue to review and sharpen their basic conversation skills and have learned to count to 100. This year we will learn so many things including our rooms and homes, how to order in a restaurant, and our favorite sports.

As usual, Spanish is surely an active special where students play games, hear music, write a little bit, speak a little bit, get creative, and learn a little bit about all 22 Spanish speaking countries and where they are located in the world.

Discover Lab

Discover Lab is a place where students learn the importance of teamwork. Each week, through different hands-on challenges, we build on our skills of communication, collaboration, compromise, critical thinking, creativity, and perseverance.

In a favorite challenge, fourth grade students created a seat so that Humpty Dumpty could sit safely on top of the wall. Designs were tested for security using a real egg, just for added fun. In another favorite, students were asked to build a Thanksgiving table which could hold actual cans of food, the challenge being that they were only given 6 pieces of paper, 1 notecard and 12 inches of tape. While a table holding two cans was regarded as a success, many groups were proud to stack up to ten items on their table. Amazing feats of engineering with the few materials they were provided.

Fifth grade students had a blast designing, building, and testing a candy launcher. Many groups exceeded the 6 foot launch distance requirement, with some teams amazed to see their candy land over 30 feet away. In

another favorite, The Runaway Pumpkin, students were challenge to create a device to stop and hold a runaway 'pumpkin' which was a golf ball running down a ramp. This challenge took a lot of perseverance but resulted in a lot of successful pumpkin captures.

Our challenges not only allow the children to build and strengthen their team working skills, but have also led them to realize that failure is not something to be feared but simply a normal part of learning.

Physical Education/Health

PE is a place to move and get some exercise! Students have learned that 60 minutes of activity a day is important for our health. In Physical Education class we have been working on our Team work, Communication and Cooperation skills in activities like "Save our Ship", "Hula Hut", and "Pin Guard". These large and small group activities are designed to get students thinking outside the box, creating team strategies, and of course moving. Oh, and don't forget to ask your children about the Gaga Pit!

In the upcoming weeks we will be turning to a Sport Ed program. Learning basic skills in Tennis, Basketball, and Volleyball.

In Health, we have learned why exercise is important and have changed gears to our digestive system and nutrition.