

# South Fayette Elementary School

## Board Report

### August/September 2018

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## Elementary News

Welcome Back to School!

We hope you had a wonderful summer. We were busy here at the Elementary School. We had EDS Summer Camp, conducted interviews, and enrolled 71 new students!

Congratulations to Mrs. Dornish on the birth of her twins, Thomas Wolfgang and Maeve Marie, born on July 26, 2018. Also congratulations to Mrs. Morally on the birth of her daughter, Nora Rose, born on August 1, 2018.

Wedding bells rang for Kristen Sadaly this summer. She married Bryan Johnson on June 30, 2018.

We extend a warm welcome to our new staff for the 2018-19 school year!

Haylee Ali – Kindergarten Special Education teacher and K-2 Reading Specialist

Jamie Violi – First grade teacher

Chelsea Pendergast – One year substitute for Mrs. Dornish

Jenna Vuono – One year substitute for Mrs. Morally

Amy Guarino – Paraeducator, previously in the Intermediate School

Lora Mowery – Paraeducator

Christina Madden - Paraeducator

Jessica Franklin – 1<sup>st</sup> semester substitute for Mrs. Blystone

Stefanie Hudgins – student monitor

## Kindergarten

Finally Part of the Pride!

The Kindergarten children are adjusting after their first few weeks of school. They have been reviewing classroom rules and procedures, and are ready to learn!

We have finished our first two weeks of Language Arts titled “Welcome to Kindergarten.” This involves many familiar nursery rhymes along with basic letter recognition skills. The students are excited about learning their first sight word next week!

In Math, we are working on the numbers 0-5 and will be taking our first test in school! From here, we will move on to our Unit called Comparing Numbers.

The children have enjoyed the beautiful weather during recess time at Explore each day. We have also had “emoji-mania” kicking off our fall fundraiser with collecting animals to put on our lanyards as rewards for donations. Thanks, PTA!!

Submitted by: Mrs. Simms

## **First Grade**

It is back to school time! First grade students are adjusting to attending school all day and are working on learning the rules and routines. Students are learning how to navigate the cafeteria, and are enjoying their time outside for recess as well. For many, they are adjusting to life without an afternoon nap.

As we get back into the new year, students are reviewing the short vowel sounds, reading new stories, and learning about nouns and verbs! The children are excited to take their reading books home to read their stories to mom and dad.

In math class, we are using a new edition of the Envision math series. The students are learning how to solve problems using part-whole mats. They are learning to solve for a missing part, how to subtract for both take away and comparison, and finally how to construct an argument to prove your work.

In science, the students are learning about weather, including the instruments meteorologists use to forecast the weather. They are also conducting weather experiments to explore temperature, clouds, wind speed and direction, as well as exploring the effects of water on different fabrics.

In Learning Lab, the children are building houses for the three little pigs. They have to choose the materials they think will work best when the wolf, a smartly decorated hair dryer, tries to blow their house down. For this activity, they have to work together with a group of students to accomplish one goal. This may involve compromise, teamwork, and focusing on the thinking habits good problem solvers rely on when working with others.

Submitted by: Mrs. Sarnowski

## **Second Grade**

Second grade has been busy adapting to being upstairs in the elementary school and being the “big” kids in the building. Students have been working on learning classroom routines and getting to know both our teachers and our classmates. We have been very busy working on reading and math, and getting reacquainted with apps on our iPads.

In Language Arts, we are reviewing short vowel sounds from first grade. We are participating in word building and phonemic awareness activities. We have enjoyed two stories so far in our reading book, *Henry and Mudge* and *My Family*. We have taken pictures of our families with our iPads, too.

Addition and subtraction strategies are on the menu for math. We love working on IXL and Splash Math on our iPads, and are getting so much better with completing our basic facts.

Learning how not to be a bully and what to do if you encounter a bully is very important to second graders. We talk at great length about respecting others and caring about others' feelings. Second graders listened to the story *Rainbow Fish* and completed a project to show how not to be a bully.

We have been off to a great start this school year!

Submitted by: Mrs. Colangelo

## **Learning Lab**

Second grade students kicked off the school year by learning about something many of them experienced over the summer: Rollercoasters! Teams of students worked together to construct their own paper rollercoasters that could carry a marble from the top, through some twists and turns, and ultimately land safely at the bottom of their track. Second graders had to think about the speed of the marble, the shape of the track, and the distance the marble needed to travel. After experimenting with marble runs, "riding" a rollercoaster using virtual reality glasses, and practicing how to construct and tape a sturdy base for their projects, students had two days to build. At the end of the challenge, everyone took turns testing the rollercoasters.

Meanwhile, first grade students tested their building skills against the strength of the Big, Bad Wolf! After reading *The Three Little Pigs*, students turned into architects as they designed structures that could withstand even the strongest attempt to blow their houses down! Using sticks, straws, notecards, and more, students had to collaborate with each other to decide on a design, and then execute their plan in only a brief amount of time.

Based on the products and excitement in the Learning Lab over the first few weeks of school, it is sure to be a wonderful year!

Submitted by: Ms. Unger

## **Music**

The 2018-2019 school year has been off to a wonderful start as the sounds of music fill the main hallway of South Fayette Elementary School.

At South Fayette Elementary School, our students use the Orff Schulwerk approach to music education to learn about and encounter music. Students learn musical skills and techniques through hands on experiences and playing! For more information on the Orff approach to music and how your child will be learning in the music classroom, please visit: <https://aosa.org/about/what-is-orff-schulwerk/> .

The second grade students began the year reviewing the musical skills they acquired in first grade by demonstrating rhythm and pitch reading from the staff. We also recently discovered how to identify the form of a song by listening to and labeling the sections of various pieces of music.

Truthfully, the most fun in second grade is that we have been pretending to be wolves in a forest while singing the song and playing the game, *We are Dancing in the Forest*. Students will be using this song and others to continue to explore rhythm, pitch, and form. The second graders have been working very hard on becoming expert musicians!

The first grade students have had a fabulous start to music class by learning to identify and demonstrate keeping a steady beat. Some of the ways we have demonstrated finding the steady beat include using beat sticks, dancing with paper plates, and doing a rather silly thumb dance.

We have also been using loco and non-loco motor movements in the first grade music classes to dance and move to various pieces of music. The students have enjoyed sneaking like ninjas, stomping like they are angry, skipping, galloping, and swimming through Jell-O.

I am excited to learn and grow with your children this year while helping them discover the joy and beauty of music!

Submitted by: Mrs. Rudolph