

SPRINGFIELD APRIL POSITIVES

VPI/Bonnie Snyder

If you ask our four year olds what sound the words under, up, and ugly begin with, they will say /u/ (short u). If you ask them what letter makes that sound they will say “U”. With their hands under their balloons, it was their job to keep the balloons up while they repeated the “u” words under and up. The experience with the balloons also helped them to increase their listening vocabulary with the words inflate, inhale, exhale, and elastic. They are busy learning letter sounds, letter names, and how to write those letters. Most of them know 20 or more letters along with their sounds. We have read books like *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Ugly Vegetables*, and *Growing Vegetable Soup*. The children enjoyed their Garden Day at Springfield. First they collected lots of specimens on our Nature Hike. They looked at them through magnifying glasses. Then they were able to plant sunflower seeds in the garden bed that the first grade classes had prepared. We read *Planting a Rainbow* and they have been watching for their sunflowers to send shoots up through the soil. This week we planted seedlings in the garden and saw that our sunflower seeds have begun to sprout. The children were so excited and will enjoy eating the lettuce that we planted when it has grown some more.

Kindergarten/Melissa Morrison and Rebecca Fairbanks

Our students REALLY enjoyed the African Acrobats. The way that they balanced on chairs amazed the whole group. We had to remind our age group NOT to try those things at home.

The Rainforest Assembly was also enjoyed. Listening to the presenters tell about the rain forest habitat, and seeing the animals was a special treat. ALL of the Kindergarteners especially LOVED the alligator and his antics!

We have been working on time to the hour (they really like using the small clocks), map skills (outside drawings of maps of the playground were cute), and having the older students come in during POWER UP time to read/work with them has produced positive results all around.

Sight words and writing have been a focus, especially this month.... and we are seeing results!

First Grade/Susie Holsinger and Bonnie Judd

Everyone in first grade certainly enjoyed their Spring Break and seemed eager to return to school. In reading, the students are continuing to improve their reading levels and fluency. They are also becoming excellent spellers, which is becoming very evident in their creative writing. We have begun doing "quick writes" in our journals, and they have enjoyed the topics presented. Telling time has been our focus in math, and all students are able to tell time to the hour and half hour. We work daily on addition and subtraction facts to 18. In science, the children have been learning about plants (their needs, their parts, and how they grow). We enjoyed a gardening day when the students prepared our raised beds for planting and took a nature walk to learn more about plants. We now have lettuce and collards in our garden, as well as, sunflowers. Hopefully the students will be able to enjoy eating these by the end of school.

Second Grade/Kathleen Bauserman and Michelle Garber

2nd grade had a WONDERFUL afternoon in nature on our Gardening Afternoon. We took a nature walk and looked at the many different habitats around our school. We also planted

Marigolds to watch them life cycle of a plant. We will be sending these plants home for Mother's Day (home grown gifts!). In our 2nd grade garden we planted Sunflower seeds and we are planning on plants corn, beans and squash, just like the Powhatan Indians did as soon as the weather is a bit warmer.

The 2nd Grade will be taking a field trip to the Washington National Zoo on Friday, April 20th. We will be looking at different habitats and animals from around the globe.

The second grade class started off the month of April in math, finishing the unit on time and starting our unit on measurement. We practiced measuring different items in the room and worked in groups measuring each student's height, feet, arms and legs. The students had fun measuring each other and seeing the results.

In Social Studies, the students wrapped up their unit on the Pueblo Indians. We are starting our unit on China.

In Science, the students finished up their unit on weather/seasons. We discussed what deciduous trees look like during each season. We started our unit on plants. We made a garden outside of the school and have planted several plants in our garden. The students got to see their plants starting to grow.

During Literacy, the students read individualized reading books learning about main idea, character, fact and opinion, graphic sources, realism and fantasy. We learned many interesting things about dinosaurs and each student picked a dinosaur to research on the computer. The students also made fossils impressions out of coffee grounds that went along with one of their reading stories.

We also celebrated D.E.A.R. Day where the students Drop Everything And Read. Many of the students brought towels to sit on and we went outside and read our favorite books for thirty minutes at the end of the day. What a great way to promote reading at Springfield!

Third Grade/Linda Duncan and Kim Whitman

In reading students are practicing strategies to comprehend the stories they are reading. They have been identifying the main idea, setting, character analysis, plot, and solution. They have been reading within in their guided reading groups and working on these skills also. On national Drop Everything And Read day our entire school stopped and read for 30 minutes outside. Everyone picked a spot and enjoyed the sun while reading their favorite book. The students wrote about their favorite activity the next day.

In math we are getting really close to finishing our skills for the year. We are currently in geometry and finding out that shapes and solids are all around us. The students are identifying solids in their environment and comparing them to what they are learning. We are taking practice release SOL tests to enhance our skills to prepare us for the tests in May.

In social studies the students made life like drawings of the famous Americans they are required to know for the tests. We paired the students up and had them research their assigned person. They used the Internet, encyclopedia, and biography books. Once their research was completed and their report written they drew, colored, and cut out their person. We put them in the hall so that 4 and 5 graders could have a review also. The students are currently finishing what it means to be an American citizen and the responsibility that comes with that.

In science we are finishing our unit on soil and making dirt babies. This unit was in perfect timing with the planting of our grade level gardens. We talked about the types of soil and the benefits they have on the effect of plant growth. We planted sunflowers, morning glories, carrots that are different colors than the common orange, and petunias. We talked about the importance of weeding and watering to help our plants survive. Mr. Sours delivered some lettuce to us and we plan to put a few in our garden so that we can enjoy it in our salads before we leave this year.

Fourth Grade/Greg Morrison and Mary Alice Liscomb

Springfield fourth graders have had a fast but productive month of April. In Math, students showed off their prior knowledge of bar graphs and line graphs. They enjoyed surveying each other, collecting data, and displaying the information in graphs. We also used an IPAD application to review and practice reading the types of graphs. Students are now doing as much review as possible to find problem areas and get ready for next months SOL tests. We continue to use IXL and Study Island to practice skills on the computer. We are also using Math Madness practice booklets three to four times a week. Overall, the classes did very well on the first released practice test we took, but we are looking to make improvements on commonly missed items. The practice test we took on the new format on the computer was an eye opener, but students are starting to get used to having questions that are not just multiple choice.

In Social Studies, fourth grade finished their study of the Civil War and have been studying the rebuilding process known as Reconstruction. We learned first hand what segregation and discrimination are by acting out real life examples in the classroom. Fourth graders also learned the factors leading to the growth of Virginia cities. We watched some Virginia Trekkers Pod casts about coalmines, which is one of our favorite visuals to use. Using the SOL Pass study guides has also helped us prepare for quizzes and tests, and the activities on that website help us review for the SOL test as well. We are looking forward to the upcoming field trip to New Market Battlefield in May. To go along with our lessons dealing with early agriculture, we have started up our gardening project again at Springfield. Students fixed our raised vegetable gardens and we have been preparing our larger garden by removing rocks, getting the water system ready, and doing so preventative weed control. We will be planting very soon, so expect to hear from the fourth grade all about it.

Fourth graders have made two new friends from history. Our language arts studies this month have introduced us to the likes of Langston Hughes and Benjamin Franklin. For our Langston Hughes unit, students were challenged to use the library, as well as the computer lab, to find out more about this famous man and his lonely childhood. With our background information secured, we then busied ourselves putting the events of his life in chronological order, reciting some of his famous works, as well as writing original poetry. If you happen to run into a fourth grader by all means please ask about Langston Hughes. You will be in for a treat!

Ben Franklin took us into a scientific direction with his practical inventions. Students were challenged to come up with a simple plan to better their lives. Create an invention to rid them of a problem. Once the plans were carefully drawn, fourth graders constructed their inventions and then presented them to their classmates. So if you are in need of an odor mask for litter box duty or a catapult dog toy launcher for when your arm tires, let us know and we will gladly share an idea or two!

Fifth Grade/Rachel Paxton and Hunter Derrow

During our study of fractions, students had fun using fraction bars to discover why fractions with unlike denominators cannot be added or subtracted. Now at the beginning of our patterns unit, students are working hard to determine the rules for patterns. The flowers planted during Garden Time for the 5th grade garden are beginning to germinate and we are excited to watch them grow! 5th graders enjoyed DEAR time, particularly the SCA students who had the opportunity to read to a younger student.

The fifth graders really enjoyed the Wildlife Assembly last week. When we got back to class, we discussed the animals. I asked them which ones they liked and the lemur was definitely the most popular. Of course, they all thought the funniest moment of the assembly was when the alligator peed all over the floor. I really hope the students have the opportunity to see more assemblies like this in the future because not only was it fun, but also they definitely learned a lot!

In addition, the fifth graders have been working on creating inventions in social studies. Next week, we are heading to D.C. to visit the Smithsonian museums. While there, the students are going to see an exhibit that highlights important inventions in the U.S. In order to have the students think more about this, I had them partner up and create their own invention. I'm impressed with the ideas they have come up with so far. Some include a teleportation device, a baseball that helps you learn to pitch, a golfing club that helps train you to swing the right way, and so much more. I'm proud of all the hard work they have put into this project!

Title One/Priscilla Judd

The After School Tutoring for first and second graders began on April 10. It appears to be going well for those students.

We are seeing gains in student reading levels in most all grades. They are increasing their word knowledge. Their comprehension is improving. The fifth graders are being motivated in Reading Plus by receiving certificates for work completed.

Library/Brenda Davis

The fifth graders are continuing to read The Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth George Speare. We're studying the relationship of the Native Americans with the white men who've settled on their hunting grounds. The fourth graders are working on the book, Holes by Louis Sachar in hopes of seeing the movie after the book is completed. The third graders have been learning about author's purpose from Patricia Polacco's autobiographical picture book, Thank You, Mr. Falker. The author did not learn to read until she received help in the fifth grade. Second graders have listened to Nim's Island. They've written summaries of the book. First graders have read about Owen and Mzee, the hippo and turtle, who became friends in a wildlife refuge in Kenya. They wrote about the nonfiction book and drew pictures. Kindergartners have been listening to Patricia Polacco's For Love of Autumn. It's about a cat that gets lost in a storm and draws two people together. The four-year-olds have been reading books about spring and drawing pictures of rainbows and flowers. We've had some 'wild' assemblies with an alligator, macaw, coatimundi, Madagascar hissing cockroaches, tarantula, and iguana. We've also planted some of our gardens and had a half hour of Drop Everything And Read time. READ time was great!! The building was so quiet! Everyone was reading!

Mr. Hopkins and Ms. Bailey

Students continue to work hard towards achievement of their individual educational goals. Each of our students continue to improve in reading, writing complete sentences and paragraphs, telling time as well as learning basic Fry site words. Additionally, our students are working hard on reading fluently as well as reading for comprehension. Additionally, each of our students continue to strive to follow the classroom procedures and expectations throughout the school day.

Physical Education/Kathy Slye

This school year is really moving on and so are the students. In P.E. students continue to work on skills and staying active.

K-2 students just started a new program called "The Organwise Guys". In this program students are learning about their organs and how to take care of them so they can live a long, healthy life. This program is very fun and the students can't wait to meet a new "Organwise Guy" character.

Music/Theresa Weakley

Our after school groups have been doing a wonderful job. Choir had a breakthrough in singing acapella harmony this week and they are very excited about their trip to Busch Gardens to compete next month. Pasty's Pans have been entered as a percussion ensemble in the instrumental competition. I've never attempted this with a group of students before, (percussion ensemble competition) but like I told them, you never know until you try.

Second, third, and fourth grade students have been working hard on their "Recorder Karate" program. Ms. Bauserman's 2nd graders seem to be natural musicians.....they are doing a great job.

Kindergarten and first grade have been working on their program for May. I can see how their reading skills from their regular classrooms have really started to blossom. They are reading lyrics now instead of just trying to learn everything by listening and repeating. Reading skills are such a wonderful thing. Hats off to regular classroom teachers for what they do to guide students in their reading abilities!!!!