

Dear Lower School Families,

Hello and welcome to an October glimpse of Lower school! We have been busy diving deeply into our curriculum and I am pleased to feature some of these curricular happenings, as well as a special Lower School highlight.

Curricular Happenings

First and 2nd graders are off and running in their Wilson Foundations program. This phonics, spelling and handwriting approach has the kids highly engaged and well-practiced with important foundational skills. The 1st graders are blending letter sounds to form decodable words, exploring “trick” words which cannot be sounded out, and stringing words together to form simple sentences. There is a strong push for all students to incorporate lower case letters in their writing, and also to use beginning capital letters and periods. Second graders are exploring glued sounds (ang, ong), r-controlled vowels and bonus letters (ss, ff, ll), while also focusing on capitalization of proper nouns and end punctuation.

Students across grade levels are enjoying our Investigations math primary resource. With the guidance and support of Jen Levy and Lisa Goodman, students are exposed to daily lessons, including necessary modifications and enrichments, daily fact practice, and frequent distributive review. Students also engage in Number Talks, which provide a platform to explain thinking and learn alternate strategies for problem solving. Third graders have been hard at work enhancing their math vocabulary by learning about factors, multiples, square numbers and prime numbers.

Fourth graders are tackling important geography learning, specifically about states, regions of our country and how Illinois fits into this puzzle. This is building on learning that came in earlier grades about family, school and neighborhood communities. They have also been exposed to their first Poetry Pals session, during which they learned about empathy toward students who engage in different religious or spiritual practices. We look forward to our upcoming Poetry Pals sessions!

“Only at Bernard Zell” Moment

Last week, our Lower School students had the good fortune to hear from Micaela Connery, (<https://bit.ly/2Ppfv6t>) on the subject of service learning. As we gear up for our Bernard Zell Day of Service, we aspired to introduce the students to service learning in an age-appropriate, yet elevated way. Micaela, as someone who has dedicated her life to service, did just this! Using visuals, she modeled how to use your own personal passions and tools to affect positive change for others. We will continue to use her language and visual cues to foster passion about service learning as students move through Lower School. Stay tuned for information about the organizations our students will support during our Day of Service on November 2!

Have a wonderful weekend and Shabbat Shalom!

Karen