



READSBORO
SOUTHERN VALLEY UNIFIED UNION

WINTER NEWSLETTER

Readsboro Central School
Winter 2020-2021





Message from the Principal

Dear Readsboro School community,

As our winter comes to an end (hopefully) our Winter Newsletter gives you a brief glimpse of what we have been up to in the past few months and gives you an idea of where we are heading.

From playing in the snow to carrying out a full SBAC interim assessment, our winter has been filled with fun and rigorous academic activities. In the next few pages, you will read classroom updates, office announcements, student writing, and more. I know that it has been difficult not to join us for the usual events that we would have had otherwise, but we are hopeful that you can feel connected by reading through these pages and looking at some of the pictures.

As always, please know that we are here for any educational needs you may have for your child. We want to work with you as a team to provide the best education possible to all our children, and to ensure that things continue to go smoothly despite the obstacles of this year. Please give your teacher or our office a call or send us an email if you have any questions.

Enjoy the end of winter and the start of Spring!

Wilmer Chavarria
Principal



Middle School

Independent thinking and work has been a large focus in STEM these past few months. The 6th and 7th graders have taken over the math classroom! Designing and implementing lessons based on a specific math standard. Starting from the beginning of what makes a good lesson, creating a rubric as a class for grading, and then finding the appropriate resources to share with their fellow students. With gentle guidance, and a helpful hint here and there the groups have been instrumental in furthering their understanding of math and taking ownership of their own learning. In 4th and 5th grade students have really improved not only in their basic math facts, but all things fractions. By building a strong foundation we've been able to add more and more difficult concepts with a can do attitude. All grades have been reading articles on a variety of science topics, creating research questions, and finding out more. Even pushing each other to answer difficult questions and using credible sources to expand their understanding of a topic.



2nd and 3rd Grade

I am very proud of the progress each 2nd and 3rd grade student has made so far this year. Fastbridge and SBAC assessment results reflect this progress. In math, grade 2 is continuing to work on subtraction with “borrowing.” This concept is important and tricky, so it will continue to be a focus. Other concepts coming up in math include solving problems including time and money. 3rd graders have moved on from multiplication and division to working with fractions. Fluency with multiplication and division facts will continue to be a focus. Other concepts we will soon be covering include graphing, money, and solving problems involving elapsed time.

In ELA, 2nd grade continues to show progress with word work. An area of focus has been taking the time to find the proper vowel sound when spelling. 3rd graders have continued to focus on reading passages and finding the main idea or comparing ideas within stories. 3rd graders will continue to work on analyzing passages and will soon have a short poetry unit! Both grades have shown increased independence as writers and truly enjoy creative writing. We will continue to work on narrative and opinion pieces. Both grades will soon finish a short research project on a historical African American Figure. For Women’s History Month, we will study important figures and the Women’s Suffrage Movement.



Kinder and 1st Grade

Winter has been a busy time for kindergarten and first grade. In social studies the class learned about many holidays celebrated around the world. They have also learned about the elections and inauguration, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, and several famous African Americans.

In math, the kindergarteners learned to read, write, count, and compare numbers to 10. They also learned how to add and subtract numbers. They are now working on learning numbers 11 to 20. The first graders continued to work on addition and subtraction. The first graders are working hard to memorize their addition facts. Soon the first graders will be learning place value and how to compare numbers.

In reading, the kindergarteners have learned the name and sound of all the letters. They have learned 14 sight words and are beginning to tap out and blend sounds. The kindergarteners are all in reading groups now. The first graders have learned the sounds of digraphs (th, ch, sh, wh, ck), how to read bonus letters, glued sounds (all, an, am), and adding s to make plurals. The first graders continue to work hard in their reading groups.

In writing, students are learning to stretch out words to write the sounds they hear. They have learned to plan their writing before they begin writing. The class has done informational writing to teach people about a topic and they are currently working on writing narratives.

In science, the class completed a unit on plant and animal superpowers. They learned about the superpowers plants and animals use to help them survive, such as camouflage, having body shapes and parts that are designed to help them get the foods they eat, and plants growing toward the sun.



Remote

Over here in Vermont Virtual Kindergarten world, we have been quite busy. In Math, students have been working on sorting by more than one attribute, numbers to 20, and counting by 10's and 1's. We have also been practicing our skip counting by 2's, 5's, and 10's. A fun game we do at our Google Virtual Class Meeting is naming numbers that are 1 more or 1 less than a given number, or counting on or back from a given number. We recently celebrated our 100th day of school, with students counting 100 objects during their 1:1 virtual meetings with me! In Social Studies, students are in a unit about directions and locations on a map or globe, and learning their home addresses and phone numbers. In Science, our current unit is about day and night, how the sun changes its position during the day, and how the moon can look different in the nighttime sky. In Language Arts, I have been reading the story "Bunnicula" to the class and the students have been working on writing and illustrating their own vampire bunny stories! When these stories are complete, students will take turns reading them at our Google Meet "author's tea" (I know many of you will remember when your own children completed this assignment and read their stories at our author's teas!) Students also completed a writing assignment for the 100th day of school titled: "When I am 100 years old I will....." and read those to the class. In Language Arts students are also working hard on memorizing sight words and practicing their reading, in addition to Foundations work. Looking ahead, students will: continue to work on counting to 100 by 1's and by 10's, complete writing and reading assignments, listen to Dr. Seuss stories for the month of March to celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday, and learn more about weather and the Seasons.

Wishing you all the best,
Miss Richardson



Music

Primary Grades have enjoyed studying about Camille Saint Saens and his Carnival of Animals composition. Students have listened to the sounds of an orchestra to create and imagine different animals and species.

The Upper Grades have enjoyed studying composers, and most recently, during Black History Month we have looked at great artists like Scott Joplin. We have also taken the pianos and guitars off the stage and have started piano lessons, with guitar lessons to follow shortly. (With the help of Henry Irace.) We hope to put on a performance at the end of the year with all of our success.

Enjoy the rest of your winter.

Very Sincerely,

Mrs. Hart

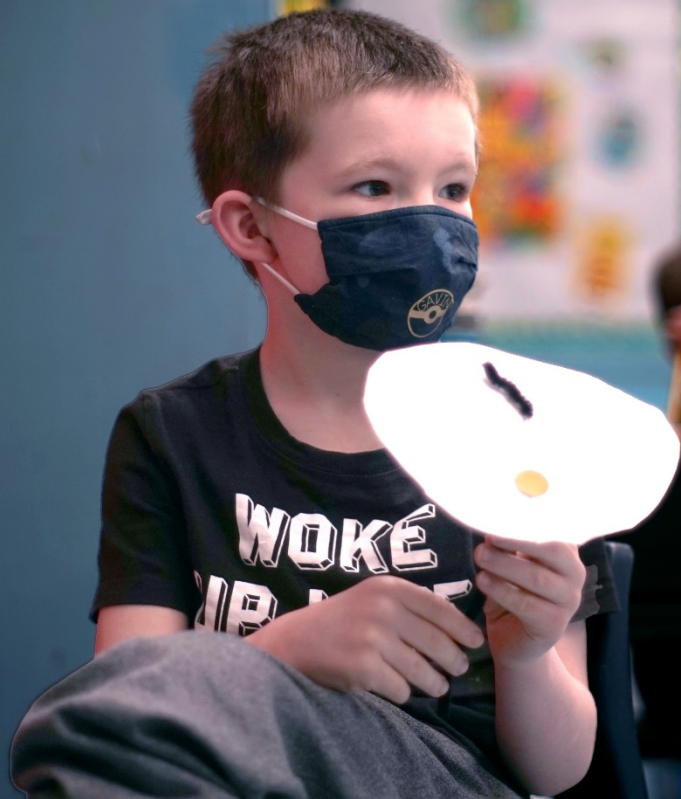
Important Dates

- Parent-teacher conferences: March 29 – April 9
- Regular school Day: March 26
- Nature's Classroom: April 15, 16
- April Break: April 19-April 23
- Memorial Day: May 31
- Last Day of School: June 18



Improvement and Instruction

- FAST bridge results have been driving many of the conversations and planning at the school level. A lot of encouraging data came out of that, but we are also cautious about different challenges evidenced by the trendlines. You will receive these reports and have a chance to discuss them during our parent teacher conferences.
- ESSER 1: Esser Funds have been used for Readsboro in different ways, including supporting the purchase of additional cleaning supplies, additional technology, and additional staff hours. We are in the process of requesting additional chromebooks and monitors for new students and to replace some damaged or lost devices. We are purchasing 10 larger chrome books for 6th and 7th graders so that we can assign their old ones to our new incoming students. We are also purchasing 8 touch monitors to pilot a better test-taking experience for the older students. We are hoping to use ESSER 1 money for these two purchases, totaling about \$5,000.
- Interactive Panels for Classrooms: The amendment for our SI investment was preliminarily approved and we are moving 20K from consulting services to purchasing one interactive panel for every classroom. A requisition was already approved by the SU finance office, but we will wait to submit a procurement form until final state GMS approval is granted.



Improvement and Instruction

- SBAC update from the state: The AOE has notified all schools that summative assessment (SBAC) will be expected for all students, including those online. All of our students will be taking their tests as usual during May (the window ends the second week June). Our students already practiced taking this test on January.
- Grades 3rd-7th participated in SBAC practice tests and the full interim assessment on January 25th-January 29th. Not only did this provide more data to showcase student performance, but it also offered more opportunity to resolve any glitches prior to the official SBAC testing at the end of the year.
- We learned several lessons from this first administration, including the importance of encouraging students to take their time on the test, and to not be intimidated by the tasks. We invite you to do more reading and math practice at home!
- 6th and 7th graders are now experts at Socratic seminars. To push for reading last semester, we planned on using the Socratic Method with older students so that they could model it for younger students and so on. It was a long ride to get here, but now students can read a rigorous text and sustain independent discussion without teacher intervention. On January 6th and 7th grades modeled it for the first time to 4th and 5th graders.
- Our Remote Wednesdays are continuing to be used for remote readiness and professional development for teachers. The younger grades use this time for a lot of direct instruction, while the older grades work on applied projects and assignments that require individual and independent attention.
- The Wings Super Reader Challenge and related initiatives continue to take place. Keep an eye out for attachments and information with our weekly family updates!



Student Experience

- Nature Learning: Nature on Wheels will be visiting our school April 15th and 16th. They will provide our students, grades 4th-7th, with similar experiences as Natures Classroom, except in the comfort of our own location. The students voted on 7 activities: Endangered Species, Egg Launch, Wilderness Survival, Dissections, Float Your Boat, Aquatic Biology, and Camouflage. We are very excited to have them visit our school since we are not able to travel for now.
- We have slowly begun to create more spaces around the building for students to access learning. The most important incorporation was the gym but we are also allowing the rest of the building as long as cohorts don't mix and as long as distance can be maintained. This has been helpful so far, especially when the weather outside is still prohibitive. We hope to start going out in the upcoming weeks!



Student Experience

- For Black History Month all grades engaged in tasks, readings, and special activities related to celebrating and learning about the African American community. It is always nice to have a theme as a starting point for more engaging classes, and February is normally a perfect one for creativity and relevance. March is Women's History month!
- Although we have had a couple of specials teachers out lately for different reasons, we have continued to provide students with quality alternative experiences. Mrs. Linda, Ms. Ashley, and Mrs. Alex have been instrumental in this, but our other teachers have stepped it up, too. For example, students have activated their creativity in fun art projects with Mrs. Childs, engaged in real-world problem-solving with Ms. Leff, and even in mixing full chords and played full songs in the piano with Mrs. Peaches.
- The student activities account has been growing steadily from bottle donations from the town. We are excited to have a healthy fund so far so that we can take students on fieldtrips as soon as we are allowed to.
- The Student Council and middle schoolers are working on planning exciting fundraisers for the Spring. Stay tuned!



COVID-19 Readiness

- Vaccinations: most staff members are now vaccinated. After several of them reporting a hard time the day after, they came back with a lot of energy.
- COVID-19 testing took place on Tuesday 1/19 and 3/9 on campus. Most staff members took advantage of this . We are grateful to be able to continue to work in person with another layer of safety.

Important Reminders

- Extended Vacation and changes in calendar: The holiday vacation was extended to include Monday, January 4th, and Tuesday, January 5th. Due to the extended vacation, the school, as others, is making up for the extra days by adding them to the schedule in March. Previously, March 2nd was off for town voting, and March 26th was off for teacher in-service. Now they are being used as official school days. (However, March 2nd was a remote day while the school was used for town voting.)
- In addition, to prevent the school year from extending too far into June/early July, the SU will no longer have regular snow days. Instead, we will revert to remote weather days, following a remote Wednesday model.



Happenings

Voting took place on the 2nd, and the day was carried out virtually. Everything went smoothly, but those two weeks felt very irregular. We are happy to be back to the usual swing of things!

New Students: We welcomed two new students this this month, one first grader and one third grader, who just moved to the area from a different state. They have adapted to their new school pretty quickly and seem happy to be part of our community. We are also in talks with a family that is moving into town this month and who have inquired about possibly registering three more students. This will bring our total current in-person enrollment to 40.

Photocopier Challenge: We went without a printer for a week in February because of an unusually bad jam. Fortunately, it was serviced quickly and the parts arrived in record time!

The PTG has continued to offer their assistance in purchasing supplies and materials for teachers and staff. Additionally, the winner of the door decorating contest has been notified, and they will soon receive their well-deserved pizza party!

The temperature dropping substantially earlier this quarter, so our staff kept students inside for recess a couple of times. We "compensated" students with alternative options, such as gym space or movie time.



Happenings

Report cards were successfully generated by our dedicated teachers, printed, and sent home to families on Friday, January 22nd. More data has been gathered by now in addition to SBAC. All of these materials will be discussed with families during our parent-teacher conferences coming up later this month.

The weekend of the 16th/17th of January was longer than most due to a teacher in-service on Friday, January 15th, and Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Monday, January 18th. Additionally, Tuesday, January 19th, was a full remote day due to voting in Readsboro. This was followed by a regular, half-day, remote Wednesday. Despite not being in school for the extended period, breakfasts and lunches were still offered to any family that wished to receive them.

Snow day and early dismissal: The school practiced an early dismissal, 11:30 am, on Monday, February 1st. This was to prepare for the anticipated snowstorm that was expected to arrive that afternoon. The following day, Tuesday, February 2nd, resulted in a regular snow day.

We have completed two safety drills so far since the start of 2021. We also carried out a lockdown drill in early this month March. Students did a great job.

Our School Community Reflections meeting took place on Thursday 18. It was great to hear from parents and students about their year so far. Stay tuned for our end of the year gathering!

Spirit Week took place Dec. 14th- Dec. 18th! Monday (Pajama Day), Tuesday (Movie Day- dress up as a movie character), Wednesday (Bring your pet to virtual school day), Thursday (Twin Day), Friday (Crazy Hair Day)



Happenings

The Readsboro PTG has received generous donations this year from Adams Community Bank and a very thoughtful couple from here in Readsboro. Therefore, the group reached out to teachers and staff members offering to purchase any equipment or materials they may want or need. Already, the PTG has purchased a new snow blower and Mrs. Hart purchased new adapters for the pianos. Alex has a growing list of other items she plans on purchasing for the teachers and staff to be later reimbursed by the PTG. These items (some already purchased) include markers, manila folders, flash drives, PowerPoint remotes, binder rings, stream cams, a keyboard w/touchpad, and outdoor snow toys.

Gas Incident: There was a gas smell around the kitchen on February 19, and the fire department was immediately contacted. The propane company arrived too. We were asked to evacuate the building. Luckily the fire department found it safe for students to return afterwards, and the issues were addressed.

All of the work for the vent system has been completed. Special thanks to James Walker, the SU Maintenance Coordinator, for leading this multi-month project, and to Mr. Kerry for always being there to solve anything and everything. Our students now have fresh air in the building.



Happenings

Powers Generators visited the school on Wednesday, January 27th, for a routine maintenance check. The only items that required replacing were the oil, oil filter, and fuel filter.

Swan Electric visited the school Wednesday, February 17th, to address the violations noted from our annual fire alarm inspection and to also replace valances that are no longer working in one of the classrooms and in the hallway.

Our old snowblower was not functional at the time of the last inspection. It was sent for repair, but the price was too high to make it worth it. Instead, the PTG donated a new one. Kerry has been enjoying his time this winter ever since.

A small new shed was just installed by the gym entrance for town storage. The process went smoothly, and the space was not affected.

The 100th day of school is February 18th. We made it without major issues and with small victories under our belt.



Fun Classes

Written by middle school students and the Student Council (Olivia, Kayla, Avery & Abby)

(P.E.) The P.E teacher, Mr. Jake is a lovely teacher, and he creates fun games for students to play. A big hit is anarchy monarchy, it is a fun last man standing game. The rules of the game are that you have to use the dodgeballs to get people out; if you get out and the person who got you out gets out then you are back in. Essentially, one person has to get everybody out to win.

(Art) Mrs.Childs, the art teacher, has been teaching the fourth through seventh grade students how to draw superheroes/real life characters. They are learning how to draw these characters in various poses like flying, standing, and jumping. Most students are combining their favorite heroes to create one awesome figure of their own.

(Guidance) Our guidance teacher, Mrs. Left, is starting a project for homeless people and the topic is about sharing kindness and helping the homeless out. There are different groups of people for different places that we could help out: Bennington County Coalition For Homeless, Deerfield Valley Food Pantry, Brattleboro GroundWorks Collaborative and more!

(Music) With the music teacher Mrs. Hart, the fourth to seventh graders have been learning to play piano. Before piano they were practicing how to stay in rhythm and on beat.

(Library) Our library teacher, Mrs. Parker has been teaching us about computer science and protecting our personal information.



Recess Games: Winter Edition

Written by middle school students and the Student Council (Olivia, Kayla, Avery & Abby)

Game Wardens: Maddy, Derek, Henry, Erin, Kayla

These three games are the games that we play in the winter, or we are playing currently. The other games can only be played in the summer due to snow and weather conditions. Here are the explanations.

Game 1: Swings

SWING RULES: If you are one swing apart you may take your mask off. (look in both directions before you take off your mask.) You are allowed to jump off (please try not to get hurt or people won't be allowed to jump off).

Game 2: Sledding

Take sleds days make a schedule. (if you grab a sled it's yours for the recess.) Wait for everyone to be out of the path before you go down. If you had a sled the first day then let someone who didn't get to sled the day before get to use it.

Game 3: Wall Ball

Masks on at all times unless you're out and on the snowbank. Toss the ball at the wall and throw it back if the ball touches you and you don't catch it in your hands then you need to run to the wall. If they throw at the wall and it touches before you do then you lose a life. Number of lives will be said at the start of the game.



Career Projects

Written by middle school students and the Student Council (Olivia, Kayla, Avery & Abby)

The middle school is doing a project where we make a slide based on what jobs we want when we're older and how we could help accomplish them now. Everyone has different jobs depending on what they like. We ask questions based on the career and tell people a little about them. For example:

- What are the main duties and responsibilities of this job?
- What does the typical day of work look like at this job? (like, lunch breaks, typing for hours on the computer, cutting down trees...)
- Does this seem like something you would enjoy? Why or why not? What level of education do you need to enter this profession? (high school, associate's degree, bachelors...)
- What skills and abilities will you need to be good at this job?
- What other training or tests would you need to take to begin this career? What is the average salary for this occupation?
- Is the demand for this job growing or shrinking? (Will it be easy or difficult to enter this career in the future?)
- Would you likely need to move somewhere else to do this job, if so where?
- How do you feel about the salary and location of this career?
- Are there specific skills you will need to get better at to do this job?

We do online research for each question. We will present our career project to the class. Mr. Fahey and Ms. Gallagher will grade them based on presentation and grammar. Today they told us that when we present the slides to people, they would want to catch the reader's attention. So Mr. Fahey had all of us to add some pictures to our presentation to make people more interested to read. But the problem is that you must base the pictures off what your job is, like if you were a doctor then you would show pictures of doctors, nurses, etc.



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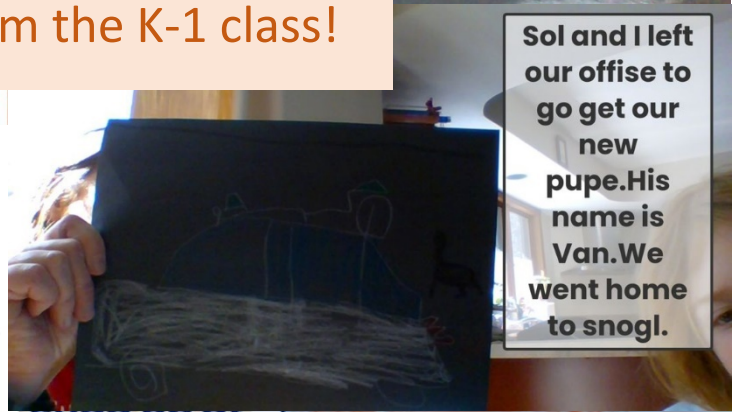
Sol and I are
jriiving a
Ecto 1 down
Mad Adams.
We are
having fun.

Written by Laird Budrow


Some work from the K-1 class!



i kouldnt
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mario legos
so i hed to
watch
videos.




Sol and I left
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i finally figered out how
to build the mario lego
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Written by Gavin Oparowski



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