

Classroom NEWSLETTER

Seneca Elementary School | Where Your Future Begins!

Mrs. Durych's | Grades K-2

Week of October 21, 2024

Classroom Highlights

This past week, our classroom was filled with giggles and excitement as we welcomed puppets into our learning. The star of the show? Chef Crème Brûlée! The children were immediately captivated by this funny, friendly chef puppet and couldn't wait to ask him questions. He made math more fun than ever, and the laughter and curiosity flowed freely as Chef Crème Brûlée helped us through our lesson.

After our math lesson, each student received their very own puppet for our phonics lesson in language arts. The room was alive with voices as the puppets "spoke" their sounds, making learning playful and engaging. Watching the students connect with their puppets to practice phonics was incredible—they didn't even realize how much they were learning while having so much fun!



During free time, the puppets took center stage again as the children created their own puppet shows. They built forts from benches and pillows, turned them into stages, and continued their imaginative play. The joy and creativity in the room were contagious! Puppets have quickly become a favorite tool in our classroom, and we can't wait to see what new adventures they bring next.



Science & Social Studies

Science and Social Studies: Experimenting with Buoyancy and Celebrating Cultural Traditions

This past week in science, we dove into an engaging Sink or Float experiment! The students gathered various objects—both from nature and our classroom—and made predictions about whether each item would sink or float. We tested everything from rocks and grass to a metal fork, plastic spoon, marker, pencil, and even a washer and bolt we found outside. The kids were fascinated as they watched each item either sink or stay afloat. Afterwards, we created drawings to record our results and had an insightful discussion about why certain items behaved the way they did in the water. It was a hands-on lesson that combined observation, prediction, and analysis in a fun and interactive way!



In social studies, we explored the Burns Paiute Powwow Festival, which I attended over the weekend. Although the students couldn't attend this year, I brought back video clips of the dancing, drumming, and singing, along with vibrant images of the stunning, colorful regalia worn by participants. The students were captivated by the lively performances and loved watching the video snippets together. I also brought back special t-shirts for each student and a carved bear art piece made from a log, which now has a place of honor in our classroom. We hope that next year, the students can join in this meaningful cultural experience!



Upcoming Dates & Events:

Mark your calendars for these important dates:

- **Thursday October 31st/ 1 – 2:30PM:** Halloween Party – Get Ready for some Spooky Fun – there will be surprises!
- **Tuesday November 26th/ 1 – 2:30PM:** We are hosting a Thanksgiving Feast – it is sure to be a memorable & tasty afternoon!
- **Wednesday December 18th/ 6PM:** Our annual Christmas Program – We can hardly wait to share the joy of the season with all of you!

We hope to see you at these wonderful events!

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

This past week, we're shining the spotlight on Hannah! As the only girl in our class, she keeps the boys on their toes with her joyful ready for

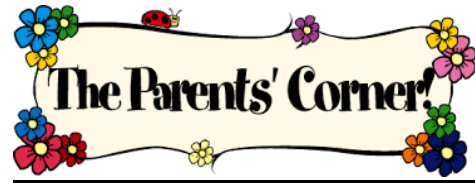
project, she and learning does.

Hannah but also every aspect of our From playing with her to completing assignments, everything with excitement and curiosity. Her creativity bounds, especially when it art, and she's always eager to try something new. We love her adventurous attitude and can't wait to see what she does next!



quick wit, bright mind, and spirit. Hannah is always a challenge—whether it's a worksheet, a hands-on or a creative art activity, dives in with enthusiasm energy. Her love for shines in everything she

is not only smart and funny a willing participant in classroom. classmates she tackles and knows no comes to



The Parents Corner: Embrace Boredom for Creativity!

Dear parents,

Give yourselves a break and know that it's actually good—and healthy—for children to experience boredom. In fact, it's often during moments of boredom that kids tap into their most creative selves. They don't always need to be entertained by movies, games, or constant activities. It's perfectly okay for them to have unstructured time with "nothing to do" because this is when their imagination kicks in and they come up with the most amazing, self-directed play.

When we over-schedule or bombard children with too much entertainment—especially through screens like iPads, video games, and TV—it can actually hinder their ability to think creatively. Instead, giving them time to daydream, reflect, and invent their own fun allows them to develop problem-solving skills, independence, and imaginative play.

And don't forget the power of nature! Nature is full of better toys than any store could provide. Sticks, rocks, leaves, and even the dirt itself can fuel hours of imaginative play. Just like when children often love the box more than the toy inside, they find endless possibilities in the simplest of things. Let's nurture their creativity by allowing them to explore, daydream, and create their own adventures!



Forts, Puppets, and Pumpkin Prep!

This week, the students let their imaginations run wild as they built forts using our long wooden benches and pillows. They created cozy hideaways with doorways and had a blast using their puppets to peek out between the pillows. It was wonderful to see their creativity come alive in the experience even the more fun!



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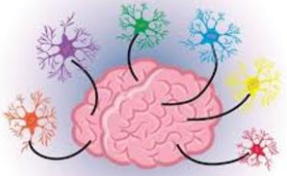
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something taller than the teacher. After lots of careful measuring and stacking, they were thrilled to exceed 5 feet 2 inches with their cubes!



We also started preparing for Halloween by coloring and cutting out pumpkin drawings. Next week, the fun continues as the students get to play with real pumpkins—perfect for our Halloween festivities!



Fun Facts & Brain Boosters

Fun Facts and Brain Boosters: The Power of Play in Learning!

Did you know that play isn't just fun and games—it's an essential part of learning, especially for young children? Play is vital to first graders' social, emotional, and academic development. Here's why:

- **Social-Emotional Learning:** Through play, children learn to interact with peers, practice empathy, and develop self-awareness. Whether it's in group games or imaginative scenarios, play teaches kids how to navigate emotions, manage frustration, and build confidence.
- **Self-Regulation:** Play helps children practice patience, take turns, and deal with disappointment. These experiences are crucial for developing self-control and perseverance, skills that support academic growth and personal relationships.
- **Collaboration and Sharing:** Games and group activities encourage collaboration, requiring children to negotiate, communicate, and share. These cooperative skills are foundational for teamwork in both school and life.
- **Creativity and Problem-Solving:** Play allows children to think creatively and approach challenges in new ways. Whether they're building with blocks or creating make-believe worlds,

they're developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills that will serve them in all areas of learning.

- **Physical and Cognitive Health:** Active play supports motor development and cognitive function. Running, jumping, and hands-on play help kids stay physically fit while sharpening their focus and ability to concentrate during learning activities.

Play is not just a break from academics; it's a key part of a well-rounded education. In our classroom, play is encouraged and valued because it promotes healthy brain development and joyful learning. Let's continue to nurture this important part of our children's day!



...IN THE CLASSROOM?

Sourdough and Snow Day Solutions!

This week, we introduced a new project in the classroom—a sourdough starter! With our sourdough starter kit and cookbook, we're embarking on a tasty science experiment. The students are excited to get the starter going and begin baking sourdough bread and pancakes. This hands-on project combines both cooking and science, as we explore how the sourdough starter works and watch it grow over time. We can't wait to taste the results!



In addition to our bread-baking plans, we also found ourselves "baking" something else—children's clothes! Seneca saw its first snowfall this week, and the kids, dressed in fleece jackets rather than waterproof gear, got soaked while playing outside. With wet hair, t-shirts, socks, and shoes, we turned our classroom's heater vents into makeshift drying racks to warm up their garments. Luckily, we had the Burns

Powwow t-shirts to help them switch into dry clothes while their outfits dried. It was quite the snowy adventure in and out of the classroom!

Let the baking continue, both with food and warm clothes!



Reminders & Friendly Notes

Just a quick reminder that students came home with their Advantage Dental results, which are in their backpacks. If you haven't seen the dental report yet, please check your child's backpack.

As the temperatures drop, please remember to send your child to school with hats, mittens, boots, waterproof jackets, and heavier coats. We want to make sure they stay warm and dry so they can enjoy playing outside during recess and PE!

Warm regards,

Mrs. Durych

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I wish everyone a safe
& fun Halloween!



More Adventures and Tidd-Bits:

