



Principal's Newsletter

Friday, October 9th, 2026

A Message from the Principal

One Last Call! Parent Teacher Conferences are quickly approaching, next Tuesday and Wednesday, October 13th and 14th. Parents and Guardians, if you have not already done so, please log into the [Genesis Parent Portal](#) to secure your timeslots. The registration window is closing this **Sunday, October 11th at 12:00PM**. As a reminder, TCS is unable to provide childcare **and all conferences are being conducted in-person**.



In other news, the first days of October have been moving right along, with students entering into their familiar routines. Seemingly by the day, more and more dates are being penciled into the school's events calendar by our inventive staff. To that end, we have recently finalized this winter's Basketball schedule, the Cheerleading team is soon holding their first meeting of the year, Auditions for the Spring Musical *Shrek* are all of next week, and many of our after-school clubs are well underway, and **The Annual Scholastic Book Fair kicks off on Monday!** With everything that's going on, it's pretty clear that everyone around these parts are glad to be in the middle of it all.

Thank you to all the families who could make it out to Thursday evening's virtual PTO Meeting to kick off the school year. In case you couldn't be there, a Recap Email with the details of what you need to know will be shared early next week! The next PTO Meeting will take place in December.

Finally, we're just one week away from October 17th's FALL FEST! We are looking forward to a tremendous community event. Help Wanted! We are looking for a few more volunteers to run some different activities and keep the proceedings running smoothly. You may reach out to Mr. Miller jmiller2@center.school to learn more. Any amount of time you may be able to lend to this event is welcome and appreciated.

Sincerely,
Daniel Erhardt
Principal | The Center School

Important Dates & Upcoming Events

- **Tues-Weds, October 13-14th** – Parent-Teacher Conferences – Early Dismissal
- **Saturday, October 17th** – TCS Fall Fest – 11AM-3PM
- **Week of October 19th** – Character Counts 2026 – Spirit Week
- **Monday, October 26th** – Picture Day
- **Tuesday, October 27th** – *The Weather Pros* – *Planet Earth Challenge Assembly*
- **Wednesday, October 28th** – Early Dismissal – Staff Professional Development
- **Friday, October 30th** – Trunk or Treat – TCS Parking Lot Opens at 12PM

Scholastic Book Fair

Visit <https://bookfairs.scholastic.com/bf/centerschool1> click the image, or scan the QR code below to see our Online Scholastic Book Fair! The Book Fair will be running in the Multi-Purpose Room all next week! Email Mrs. Melchione for more information. kmelchione@center.school



The poster features a blue background with a string of colorful triangular bunting flags at the top. In the center, the text "BOOK FAIR" is written in large, bold, yellow letters. Below it, in white text, is "Please check out our Scholastic website and sign-up for e-wallet!". A QR code with a red Scholastic logo in the center is positioned below the text. At the bottom, there is a row of colorful book spines. The text "DATE OF FAIR:" is in white, followed by "October 12 - 16, 2026 during school hours" in yellow. Below that, "OPEN TO PARENTS" is in white, followed by "Tues., 10/13 - 1:30-7:00" and "Wed., 10/14 - 1:30-4:00" in yellow. At the bottom, "EVENT PLACE :" is in white, followed by "2 Riverview Dr.Somerset, NJ" and "email kmelchione@center.school" in yellow.

BOOK FAIR

Please check out our
Scholastic website and
sign-up for e-wallet!



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during school hours

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2 Riverview Dr.Somerset, NJ
email **kmelchione@center.school**

THE CENTER SCHOOL PRESENTS

FALL SPIRIT WEEK 2026: CHARACTER COUNTS WEEK TAKES THE SPOTLIGHT!

Monday 10/19 - Behind the Scenes

Wear your favorite pajamas or comfy clothes because even the biggest stars need a day to recharge!



Tuesday 10/20 - Be The Star!

Wear your favorite color or an outfit that makes you confident! Let your character shine bright!



Wednesday 10/21 - RESPECT!

Wear attire with a celebrity, entertainer, athlete, character or public figure you respect.



Thursday 10/22 - Team Players

Wear your favorite sports jersey, gear or school team colors because there's no "I" in team!



Friday 10/23 - Oscar Night: Center School Style!

Wear Center School colors, apparel or anything that shows school spirit!



* TRUSTWORTHINESS * RESPECT * RESPONSIBILITY *
* FAIRNESS * CARING * CITIZENSHIP *



TRUNK OR TREAT

Join Us! Decorate a trunk or watch the parade. Nut-free candy donations can be sent in to school.

October 30th

Starts at 1:00PM
Parking lot opens at 12

2 Riverview Dr., Somerset, NJ



Email
Kmelchione@center.school
to sign-up

Fall Fest Information

If you would like to participate in one of the Fall Fest Competitions-Chili Cook-Off, Apple Pie Baking, or the Scarecrow Building Contest- please reach out to Mr. James Miller at.



The poster is a vibrant autumn-themed illustration. At the top, a string of colorful triangular bunting flags hangs across the frame. Below the flags, the text "THE CENTER SCHOOL PRESENTS" is written in a black, serif font. The main title "FALL FEST" is in large, bold, orange and red letters with a distressed texture. A black banner with white text reads "SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17", and a yellow banner below it says "... 11:00-3:00 ...". The text "Bring the whole family, friends, and neighbors to enjoy this festive day!" is written in a cursive font. Below this, a circular icon of a schoolhouse is next to the address "2 RIVERVIEW DR SOMERSET, NJ". A red banner with white text says "EVENT HIGHLIGHTS". Below this banner are five icons with labels: a ring toss game for "Family-friendly games", a paint palette for "Arts & crafts", a castle for "Activities for kids", a food truck for "Food trucks", and a shopping bag for "Vendors". At the bottom, a cursive phrase says "Don't miss out on this perfect fall day!". The background features pumpkins, autumn leaves, a striped tent, and American flags.

THE CENTER SCHOOL PRESENTS

FALL FEST

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17

... 11:00-3:00 ...

*Bring the whole family, friends,
and neighbors to enjoy this festive day!*

 **2 RIVERVIEW DR
SOMERSET, NJ**

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

-  Family-friendly games
-  Arts & crafts
-  Activities for kids
-  Food trucks
-  Vendors

*Don't miss out on
this perfect fall day!*

For more information, contact James Miller at
jmiller2@center.school



TCS PTO News

Dues - \$20

2026-27 PTO Membership



Parents and Staff can be a part of the PTO. Dues and donations help us to fund events and supplies our regular budget does not cover. Open the QR code to join and make a donation or pay by cash or check (made out to The Center School PTO).

Monthly Meetings

First Meeting - Thurs., Oct. 8th @ 7:00 PM
We meet via Google Meet in the evening to discuss ideas and needs for events and fundraising. Volunteer opportunities and news are communicated in bulletins and the Principal's weekly newsletter.



Trunk or Treat

The Center School will host a Trunk or Treat on Fri., Oct 30th from 12:45 - 2:00 PM. Decorate your trunk or come watch the costume parade! More info to follow.

**We can't wait to see you
at all our events!**

2 Riverview Dr. Somerset, NJ 08873
908-253-3870 ext 302 kmelchione@center.school



Halloween Fundraiser

Parent Order Form

Please complete this form and return it by **October 19th.**

Payment is due when you submit your order.

Parent Name: _____

Item	Price	Quantity	Color Choice
 Regular	\$18	_____	☐ Wine Red ☐ Rustic Orange ☐ Ivory Silk
 Tall	\$20	_____	☐ Wine Red ☐ Rustic Orange ☐ Ivory Silk
 Wide	\$22	_____	☐ Wine Red ☐ Rustic Orange ☐ Ivory Silk
 Set of All 3	\$50	_____	☐ Wine Red ☐ Rustic Orange ☐ Ivory Silk

Total Due: _____

All order forms must be submitted by October 19th.
All checks should be payable to The Center School.

Elementary School

Sheeley

In Social Studies, students used Scholastic News to learn about community helpers and the important roles they play. Students learned the history behind the fire pole, invented in 1878 by David Kenyon to help firefighters respond more quickly to emergencies. At that time, the horses that pulled the fire trucks lived downstairs in the firehouses, so firefighters needed a faster way to get from the living quarters upstairs to the horses below. The fire pole soon became an important feature in firehouses across the country! After learning about a variety of community helpers, students selected a job they might want when they grow up. Students also enjoyed a class visit to the library, where they could browse and select new books for leisure reading. It was exciting to see students explore different books and find something they wanted to read! In Math, lessons continued to focus on building number sense, practicing subtraction strategies, and using models to understand regrouping when subtracting. Students continued to build their confidence as they worked through hands-on examples and practiced new strategies.



Haines

In Language Arts, students in 107 continued reading Chasing Vermeer, exploring the mystery through close reading, making predictions, drawing inferences, and identifying important clues. In Math, students worked on individualized learning goals, strengthening foundational skills and building confidence as they practiced concepts at their own levels and progressed at their own pace.

In Social Studies, the class has been exploring the founding of the United States, beginning with the events and ideas that led to the American Revolution. Students learned about Thomas Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence, examined important events of the Revolutionary War, and discussed how the U.S. Constitution established the framework for our government. Throughout the unit, students have been developing an understanding of how our nation was formed and the principles upon which it was founded. We look forward to continuing to build on these skills as we encourage curiosity, independence, and a love of learning!

Stadtmueller

Room 104 had another productive week filled with reading, math practice, and hands-on science! In Language Arts, students read Chapters 12–15 of *Because of Winn-Dixie*, continuing to explore the growing friendships in Opal's life. Students also practiced identifying cause and effect and writing summaries of important events. Through Gloria Dump's advice about not judging people by their past mistakes, students discussed the importance of looking beyond a person's actions and getting to know their true character. They also explored how ignorance and a lack of understanding can lead to unfair assumptions about others.

In Math, students continued practicing multiplication facts while strengthening their addition and subtraction fluency to help make multiplication quicker and more efficient. In Science, students wrapped up their Energy and Energy Transfer unit by designing and building a four-step chain reaction machine, applying their understanding of energy transfer through a fun, hands-on challenge!

Sostorecz

It was a quiet highlight of our week as the students in Room 106 visited the school library! The class enjoyed returning their previous books, perusing the stacks, and selecting fresh titles to bring back to our classroom. Beyond the excitement of discovering a new story, regular library visits offer our students valuable opportunities to build essential academic and life skills. Browsing the collection helps students practice decision-making and autonomy as they identify their personal reading interests. Navigating the shelves reinforces categorization and organizational skills, while returning books on time builds personal responsibility for shared community resources. Alongside our library visit, our work on the 13 Colonies unit continued this week. The students explored the distinct colonial regions—New England, the Middle Colonies, and the Southern Colonies—to understand how geography and climate shaped local natural resources. We discussed how these regional differences directly influenced how colonists lived, traded, and built their daily routines. It is wonderful to see their curiosity grow as they engage with new books and dive into American history!

Krull

October is off to a great start, and we've had such a fun and exciting week in our classroom! In Science, we've been loving all things fall as we learn about pumpkins, bats, and scarecrows. It's been so much fun exploring these seasonal topics and discovering new things along the way! In Math, we've been working hard and doing an amazing job practicing our numbers and learning how to tell time. We are so proud of the progress everyone is making! During Reading, we've continued our *Lily to the Rescue* book, and we are loving every second of the adventure. We can't wait to keep reading and find out what happens next! We're looking forward to another wonderful week of learning, growing, and having fun together. We are especially excited to visit the book fair next week and discover some new books to enjoy!



Middle School

Duffy

This week, Mr. Duffy's Math class wrapped up their unit on ratios and began exploring the concept of rates. The week started with students completing an assessment on ratios, where they did a tremendous job demonstrating their ability to write ratios, create equivalent ratios, and complete ratio tables. Following the assessment, the class was introduced to rates and learned about unit rates, which compare two quantities with different units by determining the amount for a single unit. Students explored real-world examples, such as miles per hour, cost per item, and points per game, to better understand how unit rates are used in everyday situations. The class quickly picked up on using division to calculate unit rates and then took their understanding a step further by applying what they had learned about equivalent ratios to solve unit rate problems. This connection allowed students to build on previously learned skills while applying their mathematical knowledge to practical, real-world scenarios. Overall, it was a successful week as students demonstrated a strong understanding of ratios and began developing the skills needed to work confidently with rates and unit rates.

Brana

In Math, Ms. Brana's students continued to strengthen their understanding of two-dimensional shapes through hands-on learning! They enjoyed becoming little mathematicians as they used magnetic tiles, toothpicks, and marshmallows to build and explore a variety of shapes. This engaging activity brought geometry to life while encouraging creativity, problem-solving, and teamwork.

In LAL, students continued to build their writing skills, one sentence at a time! Using a picture prompt and guidance from their teachers, students developed a six-sentence paragraph describing what they saw. They practiced turning their observations and ideas into complete sentences while adding details to bring their writing to life. Each new paragraph is another step toward becoming a confident young writer!

In Social Studies, students enjoyed exploring Native American culture and symbolism through creative, hands-on projects. They created their own pictographs using Native American symbols and designed dream catchers, combining creativity with opportunities to learn about cultural traditions and forms of expression. These activities made learning both meaningful and memorable!

Fine

This week Ms. Fine's Math class wrapped up decimals and fractions with a quiz and we will be moving on to a new topic next week. In Language Arts, the class took a break from *Mr. Popper's Penguins* to *watch Penguins* by Disney Nature. Using what we know about Captain Cook, in the book we were able to compare and contrast the behavior to Steve, the penguin followed in the documentary. We also played some vocabulary games to prepare for a quiz coming up next week.

In Social Studies this week, we began learning about the founders of the 13 colonies. While taking notes we discussed a number of common themes that followed the reasons the colonists came to the New World.

Burak

Mrs. Burak's Language Arts class continued reading *The Sign of the Beaver* and explored important events, choices, and character relationships. The class read about Matt getting stung by bees while trying to collect honey. Students discussed whether Matt's decision to get the honey was worth the pain and difficulty he experienced. They considered whether they would have made the same choice if they were in Matt's situation. Students shared their opinions and supported their answers with reasons from the story. The class then read about Saknis asking Matt to teach Attean how to read in exchange for food and other useful items. This led to an interesting discussion about whether the agreement was a fair deal for both Matt and Attean. Students considered what each character gained from the arrangement and why learning to read could be valuable to Attean. The class then imagined becoming Matt and discussed how they would teach Attean the alphabet. Students suggested different ways to introduce letters, sounds, words, and reading skills. Their ideas led to thoughtful conversations about patience, communication, teaching styles, and learning from one another. Everyone did an excellent job participating, sharing ideas, and connecting the events in the novel to their own experiences and opinions.

Camins

Language Arts writing skills focused on subjects and predicates this week. It has been tricky for the students to distinguish between simple and complete subjects and predicates. Through the use of Brainpop, worksheets and competitive *Kahoot!* games, the children have gotten much better at figuring it out. In OG the students learned how to divide syllables when a word has a VCV (vowel, consonant, vowel) pattern. This entailed them learning about different syllable types. They worked hard at it and everyone is getting the hang of it. This week on Friday the class watched a Steve Hartman Kindness 101 video on justice. They got a chance to see that even kids can make a difference in the world if they just speak up.

Akushie

In Ms. Akushie's Social Studies class, students continued learning about Ancient Greece, focusing on the different forms of government. Students participated in a government scavenger hunt where they used what they learned to answer questions about the different types of government. They practiced identifying each form of government by its characteristics and reviewed important vocabulary from the lesson. The scavenger hunt was a fun way for students to review the material while putting their knowledge to the test. Students did a great job completing the activity and discussing their answers. In Language Arts, students continued reading *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. Students focused on Chapter 3 and completed comprehension questions about important events in the story. They also participated in class discussions and shared their thoughts about Claudia and Jamie's adventures. One of the highlights of the week was a comic strip activity where students illustrated scenes from the chapter. They had fun using their creativity to bring parts of the story to life through their drawings.

Brown

We had a wonderful week in Ms. Brown's class filled with hands-on learning, creativity, and exploration! This week in math, we studied geometry and reviewed what makes a shape a polygon. Students learned about the different parts of shapes, including vertices, sides, and angles. We explored many different ways to create shapes using a variety of materials, including toothpicks and marshmallows! These hands-on activities allowed students to explore shapes in a fun and engaging way. We ended the week with an exciting assignment in which students built one shape using several smaller shapes, putting their understanding of geometry to the test.

In Language Arts, we continued reading our class novel, *The 100th Day of School at the Black Lagoon*. As we read, students practiced identifying important story elements, including characters, setting, problem, and solution. We discussed how these elements help us understand what happens throughout a story. To wrap up the week, students completed a story element sorting assessment to demonstrate their understanding of these important concepts.

In Social Studies, we learned about Native American symbols, also known as pictographs, which Indigenous peoples used to communicate and share stories. Students explored how pictures and symbols can represent ideas, experiences, and events. To bring their learning to life, students created their own short stories about a day in the life of an Indigenous person using pictographs on paper designed to look like bison hide. It was wonderful to see their creativity as they used symbols to tell their stories!



High School

Perschy

This week in World History, students began learning about the Abrahamic religions, starting with Judaism. Students learned about Judaism's origins, beliefs, practices, holidays, holy texts, and cultural influence. Toward the end of the week, students began learning about Christianity and explored its origins, beliefs, practices, holidays, holy texts, and influence on world history. Next week, students will continue learning about the Abrahamic religions by studying Islam, the third and final Abrahamic religion, as well as beginning to learn about Buddhism.

This week in US History I, students continued their study of the Constitution. Students learned about the Constitutional Convention and the different ideas and compromises that shaped the Constitution. This included looking at the Virginia Plan, the New Jersey Plan, and the Connecticut Plan, also known as the Great Compromise, which helped determine how states would be represented in Congress. Students also went through the Bill of Rights and discussed the first ten amendments and why they are important.

US History II students learned about immigration and urbanization during the Gilded Age. Students worked through a series of informational stations and took notes on the experiences of immigrants, the reasons people came to the United States, and the rapid growth of American cities. Students also looked at some of the challenges that came with this growth, including overcrowding, poor living conditions, and the difficulties faced by many immigrant families. This helped students better understand how immigration and urbanization changed American cities and society during the Gilded Age.

Reagan

This week in Environmental Science students worked in the lab on various experiments. Students used graham crackers and shaving cream to simulate Plate Tectonics. Each movement demonstrated transformation boundaries, divergent, or convergent boundaries. We also learned about Earth's Systems such as the tectonic plates and natural disasters.

In Biology students learned about Cells and a little about cell functions. We also did a lab using red cabbage and simulated diffusion in cells. We worked on cell diagrams and ended the week with a *Kahoot!* on Plant and Animal Cells.

In Chemistry we began a unit on the Properties of Matter and also examined various items under the compound microscope. We tested the density of multiple objects and did a lab using household objects such as sprite, raisins, shaving cream, a penny, and also a balloon. Students proved that gas is matter because it has mass and takes up space by weighing the mass of an empty balloon and then shaking sprite up while a balloon is placed over the open top, capturing the release of gas filling the balloon. We tied the balloon off and students weighed the same balloon with gas in it and discovered it was 2grams more than the empty balloon. Therefore- gas takes up space and has mass!

In US History II students started a unit on the Rise of Big Business and Industrialization. We did research on various Industrialists during the Gilded Age. We learned about the importance of the Transcontinental Railroad and made connections in how it helped the rise of Big Business and also made some people very wealthy during this time period in history. We will continue this unit next week and will be doing some group work with Mr. Perschy's class in the coming weeks.

Dornick

Our Consumer Math students have been hard at work gaining essential career readiness skills! To prepare for upcoming roles within the classroom, students engaged in a complete, hands-on hiring process:

Online Applications: Students submitted formal job applications online to "Dornick Industries."

Classroom Preparation: Students practiced their interviewing techniques, honing their communication and professional etiquette.

The Final Interview: Putting their skills to the test, students participated in official, one-on-one job interviews conducted by our Principal and Board Member, Mr. Erhardt.



From professional handshakes to confident answers, our students demonstrated remarkable poise and readiness. We are incredibly proud of their dedication to building real-world life skills!

Dymond

This week in World History students did an excellent job on their Hinduism tests and began studying the fourth major world religion, Islam. We are continuing to examine its creator, place of origin, major beliefs, and other important characteristics. In Algebra students continued practicing integer operations, including applying these skills to word problems. Students are remembering the helpful rule: "Same sign, keep and add." During Language Arts students put on their detective hats as they used inference skills to investigate the gunshot Tom and Ricky heard. They also showed wonderful growth by using vocabulary words in creative sentences and writing declarative, exclamatory, and interrogative sentences with added detail. U.S. History I students created their own Quizlets and used them to complete a study guide on the Boston Tea Party. With continued review, they will be well prepared for next week's test. Students in Biology began labeling and coloring the organelles found in animal cells, strengthening their understanding of cell structure and function.

Next week will bring some exciting opportunities beyond the classroom. Auditions for the play will take place, and the Book Fair will be open as well. Students are encouraged to participate, explore, and enjoy these special school events

Josbeno

Spooky season is officially in full swing! This week, Geometry began to learn about angles, from common terms to adding and measuring them. Consumer Math spent the week reviewing everything they have learned in preparation for their first quiz, which wrapped up their week. Next was Algebra 2, who finished learning about absolute value equations before taking their first quiz. Finally, Algebra 1 began their journey into understanding absolute values, while also brushing up on order of operations and algebraic expressions. They covered so much this week, but the next week will pack in even more knowledge! Till next time!

Peterson

This week in Ms. Peterson's ELA classes, students began their Poet Study research projects by selecting a poet from a wide range of writers spanning the 1500s through contemporary times, often choosing based on personal interests, personal connections, or the curiosity to learn more. To kick off their research, students first learned how to distinguish credible sources from unreliable websites. As part of their research, students will look beyond the poetry itself to investigate who or what inspired their poet, major life or historical events they lived through, and the key people in their lives. By exploring how personal experiences influenced each poet's writing and style, students are fostering critical research skills while gaining a deeper understanding of how our own lived experiences shape our creative expression.

In the Folklore and Fairy Tales elective, we finished reading and analyzing the Brothers Grimm version of Cinderella, called *Aschenputtel*, exploring how 19th-century German culture and societal values shaped the text. We also read Charles Perrault's 17th-century French version, *Cendrillon*, and watched a movie adaptation of *Yeh-Shen*, one of the original Cinderella stories originating from Tang Dynasty China. Throughout the week, we compared all three versions—noticing key similarities and differences while examining how different historical and cultural backgrounds influenced each classic tale. The students made note of how each story originates from a distinct country and vastly different century, showcasing how stories are passed down from generation to generation and across entire continents.

Gonzalez

This week, Ms. Gonzalez's Career Exploration students completed Lesson 4: Embracing Your Learning Style, exploring how people learn in different ways, including visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and reading/writing preferences. Students completed a 39-question Learning Style Test, reviewed career options that align with their preferred learning styles, and participated in discussions about how their strengths can connect to future careers. To conclude the lesson, students reflected on their results in writing, identifying their learning styles and potential career paths while considering how this information can help guide their future decisions.

Ms. Gonzalez's 12th grade English/Language Arts students began their Poet Biography Poster Project by selecting an author or poet for teacher approval before starting their research. Students are learning to use at least two reliable sources to gather important biographical information and organize their findings using the Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How questions. Through this project, students are developing research, reading comprehension, and information-gathering skills while exploring the lives and accomplishments of writers and poets.

Grace

This week, we officially began our Poetry Biography Projects! Students had the opportunity to choose a poet from a wide range of time periods, from the 1500s through contemporary poetry, and begin researching the poet's life, experiences, and impact on the world of literature.\

As part of their research, students are looking beyond simply reading their poet's work. They will explore important questions such as Who inspired this poet? What historical events did they experience? Who were the important people in their life? Students will also investigate how their poet's personal experiences, relationships, and the time period in which they lived may have influenced their writing and perspective. Through this project, students are developing their research skills while gaining a deeper understanding of the people behind the poems we read. I am excited to see what students discover about their chosen poets and how their findings will help them make meaningful connections between a poet's life and their work!

Harrison

In **LAL 11**, students explored the power of positive words and encouragement by writing pep talks designed to motivate their peers. Drawing connections between *The Unteachables* and the movie *The Mighty Ducks*, students compared and contrasted how characters use words, teamwork, and encouragement to overcome challenges. Through class discussions, students explored the meaning of “pep,” shared examples of effective pep talks, and reflected on how tone and word choice can influence others’ attitudes, confidence, and willingness to persevere. This engaging activity reinforced an important life lesson: the words we choose matter, and a few words of encouragement can make a meaningful difference when things get tough.

This week **LAL 12**, students explored the concept of alter egos while comparing and contrasting Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Through class discussions, students examined how different sides of a person can reveal contrasting strengths, weaknesses, and personality traits. Students then put their creativity to work by inventing their own alter egos, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, explaining how this other side developed, and imagining where their alter ego would hide out. To bring their characters to life, students also designed unique outfits, describing the colors, styles, and details that reflected each character’s personality. This engaging, hands-on writing activity combined literary analysis, self-reflection, and imagination while encouraging students to develop descriptive writing skills and create original characters of their own.

Cosenza

Welcome to a new month! We are excited to continue our learning journey together and look forward to a positive, productive, and growth-filled month ahead. Here is an update on what our students have been working on across our classes:

Financial Literacy Students have been developing practical money management skills by practicing coin addition and calculating change. To reinforce these concepts through hands-on learning, students participated in classroom store role-play scenarios as both customers and cashiers using manipulative currency. Next, we will transition into budgeting basics, where students will practice making purchasing decisions within set budgets using store circulars.

Career Explorations Students explored vocational preferences through Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences and the Holland Code assessment, evaluating how theoretical optimal career matches align with their personal interests. This week, we introduced learning-style assessments to help students identify their individual learning strengths—a crucial step for future academic pursuits, on-the-job training, and skill development. Moving forward, we will study Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and examine how foundational human needs impact academic and workplace performance.

Life Skills Level 1: Students explored foundational etiquette and appropriate social behaviors. Through a shared reading of *My Mouth Is a Volcano*, students analyzed unexpected behaviors—specifically interrupting—and discussed actionable strategies for practicing self-regulation and polite communication.

Level 2: Students investigated expected versus unexpected behaviors across different social contexts (family, friends, and community members) and organized their ideas into interactive foldables. Lessons emphasized social filtering, distinguishing between private and public thoughts, and practicing positive behavioral choices through role-play to understand how actions influence emotional outcomes and social interactions.

Vasquez

This week was packed with creativity, collaboration, and cultural discovery across all of our Spanish classes! In Exploratory Spanish, Spanish 1, and Spanish 2, students participated in a high-energy, interactive storytelling activity where I drew a unique character or animal on the board, and the class worked together to invent a silly backstory. The students did a wonderful job using their Spanish skills to decide the character's name, where they live, who their friends are, and what they do for work. Our Spanish 1 and 2 students used this fun exercise to practice essential vocabulary and review present-tense verb conjugations, while Exploratory Spanish used it to master the verb *ser* (to be) and build sentences with descriptive adjectives. In addition to language building, the Exploratory Spanish classes expanded their cultural horizons by watching the short documentary *Burros*, which sparked thoughtful class discussions about the real-world social dynamics and community life of people living around the southern U.S. border.

Transition

Budzinski, Gonzalez, McCall

This week, Transition Program students participated in a workplace tour of Stop & Shop in Somerset, where they explored the grocery store environment and learned about the different jobs involved in daily store operations. Students had the opportunity to learn about career opportunities in grocery retail, including stocking shelves, organizing merchandise, customer service, and other store responsibilities.



Meanwhile, Transition Program students continued developing their workplace skills through their Work-Based Learning (WBL) experience at Feeding Hands Food Pantry in Hillsborough. Students assisted with tasks such as filling packages with coffee pods, stocking soap and other products, and organizing donated clothing, while practicing organization, teamwork, and responsibility in a community-based work setting.



As part of their ongoing career exploration, Transition Program students visited Duke Farms in Hillsborough to learn about the organization and explore potential career opportunities connected to the environment and nature. The tour provided students with an opportunity to discover how different jobs contribute to maintaining the property and supporting its educational and environmental mission.



To further support community participation and social development, Transition Program students attended Social Hour at the North Plainfield Public Library. Students had the opportunity to engage with others, practice communication skills, and participate in a welcoming community activity while building confidence in social settings.



Related Arts

Merckx – Art

Mrs. Sostorecz's class has been working on creating pinch pot monsters! These ghoulish little critters begin with a ball of clay, which students carefully press their thumbs into and pinch around the edges to form a hollow shape. Students then bring their monsters to life by adding eyes, teeth, horns, tails, and unique textures to their skin, giving each creature its own personality while exploring basic clay hand-building techniques. These works will be painted and fired in the next weeks.

Our middle school art students have been exploring symmetry, repetition, and pattern through their Kaleidoscope Name Design project! Students folded their paper into sections and used a pencil-transfer technique to repeat their names, creating intricate, symmetrical designs. They finished their artwork by adding colorful patterns with colored pencils and markers, transforming their names into unique kaleidoscope-inspired creations!

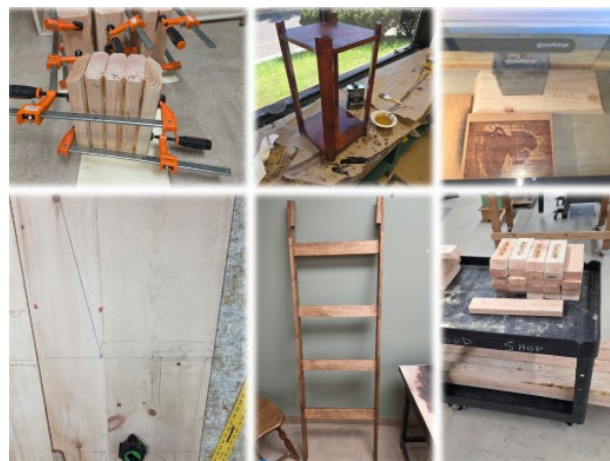
Our high school ceramics students have been exploring slab-building techniques while creating functional and decorative pieces from clay! Students were given the choice of designing either a slab-built mug or a decorative lantern. Through this project, students practiced rolling even slabs, cutting and joining clay pieces, and adding personalized details to their designs while developing their creativity and craftsmanship. Transition students have been keeping busy in the art room by completing art sample tasks, helping with cleaning and organization, and working on ceramic projects.



Industrial Arts – Dulak

Mr. Dulak's Industrial Arts classes are hustling and bustling towards the halfway point in the marking period!!! Our Transition Program students have been busy making blanket ladders for the school store and pumpkins for our school fundraiser. They have been working nonstop to create professional grade items! Our High School students have been busy with their projects, and everyone is at different stages of the creative process. One thing we are excited about is the incorporation of Epoxy Resin in the project of one of our more creative artists - we look forward to sharing those pictures with you in the coming weeks!

Meanwhile, our Middle School students have created the bases for their Halloween themed stands and are working on creating support braces for some *spooooooky* looking decor!!! They are working collaboratively in a group to mass produce 35 pickets for their backboards. Our Elementary Students have also been hard at work, creating large blanks of wood with designed gaps and seams for their hanging pumpkin signs. Something frightful this way comes!!!



Marozine – Music

This week in Middle and High School Music, students are officially diving into our new Classical Music unit! We are beginning to explore what makes classical music unique while discovering famous composers, important instruments, and some of the musical styles that have shaped music for hundreds of years. Students will be listening, discussing, and making connections between classical music and the music they hear today.

In Elementary Music, spooky season continues! Students are learning a fun new collection of seasonal songs while practicing singing, movement, rhythm, dynamics, and musical expression. We are also continuing to build confidence performing and participating together as a class.

Our first Glee Club rehearsal this past Thursday during Choice Period! It was exciting to finally get everyone together and start making music as a group. Students began working on songs for upcoming performances, and we are looking forward to watching the group grow throughout the year!



Related Services

Literacy Support

It has been another fabulous week for all of the students receiving Reading/Literacy Support. For example, all tasks are aligned with IEP goals and objectives to improve functional and academic reading, writing and spelling. One student is learning Visualizing/Verbalizing strategies to build comprehension of the written word. Others are building their inference skills using pictures to note how characters think and feel. Along with prediction skills, they are able to recognize from provided choices or independently “read between the lines” to infer what’s next. Explicit figurative language instruction is provided also to several students. They are enjoying using the context to define meaning within a specific passage but then love using it in their conversation! Using the Writing Process (Columbia University), is a guide for planning, revising, and editing for another student’s essay. Biography research techniques have yielded another student’s ability to learn details about his favorite comic book authors. At this time, I am looking forward to meeting parents at the scheduled conferences for next week. See you soon!

Speech

Next week auditions will begin for The Center School production of *Shrek the Musical*! We utilized upcoming auditions as a functional, real-life opportunity to practice communication and social skills. SLPs used role-playing and discussion to explore expected behaviors, managing expectations, and perspective taking during the audition process. Students practiced thinking about how others may feel, how to be a supportive peer, and how to handle situations when we may not receive the role we had envisioned for ourselves. These activities provided a great opportunity to connect speech and language skills to a meaningful school experience!

We are slowly beginning to decorate and officially welcome “Spooky Season” to the speech room! Our SLPs have begun preparing some fun Halloween-themed activities that will soon make their way into speech sessions. We are looking forward to incorporating seasonal activities while continuing to target communication, language, and social skills in fun and functional ways.

Occupational Therapy

This week, students participated in fall-themed activities that combined movement, problem-solving, and creativity. While seated on the bolster swing, they “fished” for scenario cards and decided the size of each problem, practicing balance and coordination while discussing everyday situations. Fall coding, coloring, and maze worksheets encouraged students to follow directions, scan for visual details, plan their paths, and practice pencil/crayon control.

Students also created fall-themed rubber-band geoboard designs while positioned on hands and knees on our mushroom-top. This activity challenged their balance and postural control while supporting hand strength, bilateral coordination, and visual-motor skills. To finish, students built trees using pipe cleaners, beads, and Play-Doh, following a visual model to organize and assemble the pieces. This hands-on project provided opportunities to practice sequencing, fine motor precision, and using both hands together—all while enjoying some seasonal creativity

Extracurricular Activities

Musical Auditions NEXT WEEK!

