Principal's Newsletter

Wednesday, November 25th, 2026

A Message from the Principal



On behalf of the entire TCS faculty, we would like to wish our community a happy, healthy, bountiful, and most importantly, safe, Thanksgiving Break.

We hope you seize the opportunity to reconnect with your loved ones and friends, in the name of sharing some quality time and a great meal. On a personal note: my family has tagged me for Mashed Potatoes duty, and I am simply dreading the amount of peeling that is ahead of me this week.

We will see everyone back here (hopefully not stretching *too* many belt loops) on the 30th as we prepare for a busy December around these parts!

Sincerely,
Daniel Erhardt
Principal | The Center School

Important Dates & Upcoming Events

- **Wednesday, November 25th –** Early Dismissal
- **Thursday-Friday, November 26th & 27th** – School Closed – Thanksgiving Break
- **Tuesday, December 8th –** Picture Retake Day
- **Wednesday, December 9th –** Early Dismissal
- **Thursday, December 17th –** Holiday Concert – 12:45 PM – Multi-Purpose Room
- **Wednesday – December 23rd –** Early Dismissal
- **Thursday, December 24th – Sunday, January 3rd –** School Closed – Winter Recess
- **Monday, January 4th –** School Reopens
- **Monday, January 18th –** Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – School Closed
- **Tuesday, January 19th –** School Closed – Staff In-Service
- **Wednesday, January 20th –** School Reopens


First Friday!
Dec. 4, 2026
NATIONAL
COOKIE
DAY!
During lunch all students will be served a chocolate chip cookie and milk!
Nut free, gluten free and non-dairy options will be available!
Wear your favorite Cookie Monster or cookie inspired attire!
Cookie Monster is set to make a guest appearance!
THE CENTER SCHOOL

Elementary School

Sheeley

Our students took a virtual field trip to the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade! Through a read-aloud of Melissa Sweet's *Balloons Over Broadway*, we explored the history behind the parade's famous giant balloons and discovered how they were inspired by artist Tony Sarg's creative puppets.



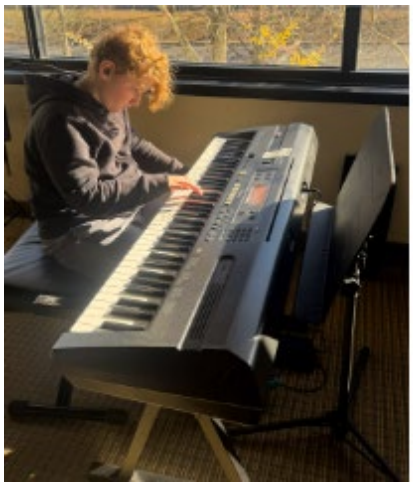
Building on what they learned about Sarg's work, our students became balloon designers—choosing their favorite characters, coloring and assembling their pieces, and bringing their creations to life. We wrapped up the lesson by hosting a mini parade right in our classroom! Fun Fact: The very first giant character balloons debuted in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in 1927! It was a wonderful way to blend history, hands-on creativity, and a little Thanksgiving magic!

Sostoreczc

Even during this short week leading into the Thanksgiving holiday, the students in Room 106 have been hard at work diving into exciting new units across all subject areas! In Language Arts, students have launched into personalized learning goals tailored to their individual growth. In Orton-Gillingham, some students have kicked off new units focusing on two-consonant beginning *W* blends or compound words. While a third student is focusing on writing mechanics and working toward building stronger sentence foundations by identifying subjects and predicates alongside dependent and independent clauses. In Mathematics, students are actively stretching their problem-solving skills across different skills—ranging from strengthening number sense with 10-frames and applying place value to three-digit addition, to using estimation strategies to tackle multi-digit multiplication problems. In Science, the class has been thrilled to launch our new *Animal & Plant Adaptations* unit! After exploring how physical traits help unusual sea creatures survive, we moved into our second lesson on Learned Behavior & Instinct (*"Why would a sea turtle eat a plastic bag?"*), investigating how an animal's memories, senses, and instincts guide how they interact with their environment. Wishing everyone in our school community a warm, restful, and happy Thanksgiving weekend!

Stadtmueller

The short week for room 104 consisted of learning piano in Music class, practicing multiplication, and reading more in the class novel, *The Wild Robot*. The boys have been counting down to Thanksgiving break since Halloween and are so excited it is finally here!



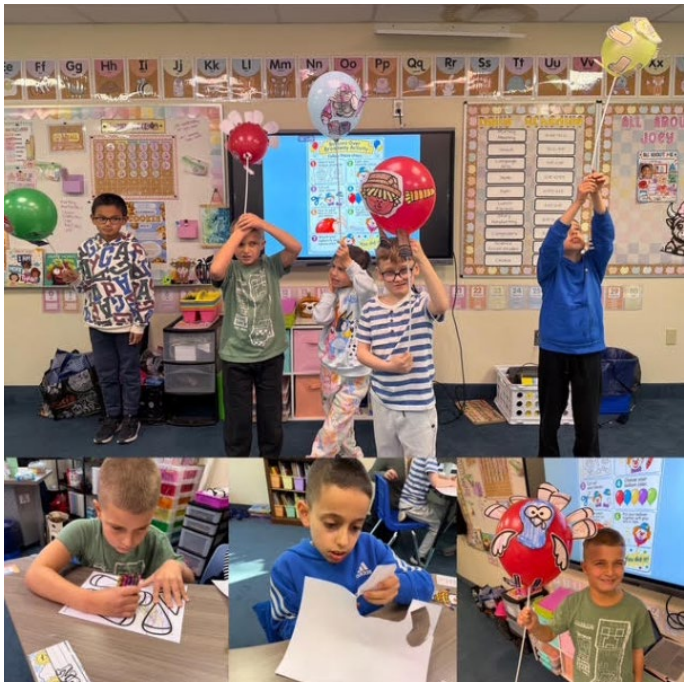


Haines

Here's to a short week filled with learning and fun! Did you know an estimated 46 million turkeys are consumed each Thanksgiving in the United States? That's roughly one turkey per seven people! About 50 million pumpkin pies are consumed as well, meaning approximately one pie per six people. Have a safe and delicious Thanksgiving Break. Once we're back, the race to winter break begins!

Krull

Our highlight of the week was learning all about the history behind the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade! We got to create our own balloons and parade around the school. Here's to a short week filled with thanks! Happy Thanksgiving to all of the TCS families!





Middle School

Duffy

This week, Mr. Duffy's LAL class began putting the final touches on their procedural writing pieces. Students completed a guided self-edit, followed by a teacher-reviewed edit, to polish their work before preparing to publish their finished pieces using Canva Docs.

In Mr. Duffy's Math class, students continued reviewing the foundational skills needed for operations with fractions. They practiced converting between improper fractions and mixed numbers, revisited helpful divisibility rules, and began exploring what makes a number prime. These skills will help strengthen their number sense and prepare them for upcoming work with fractions.

Meanwhile, Mr. Duffy's Science class began putting the scientific method into action by launching their Paper Airplane Lab. Students started exploring the process of scientific experimentation, setting the stage for hands-on investigation, data collection, and analysis. It was an exciting opportunity to put their scientific knowledge into practice!

Akushie

In Ms. Akushie's Science class, we have been learning about organisms and how their habitats help them meet their needs. This week, we took a closer look at the elephant seal! Students read a passage about elephant seals and answered comprehension questions. We also looked at pictures of their natural habitat and discussed how elephant seals use the ocean to find food and come ashore to rest.

The whole middle school also joined in for a fun science experiment called *The Great Dissolving Mystery*. Students predicted what would happen when they placed candy pumpkins in water, milk, vinegar, and vegetable oil. They checked the pumpkins every five minutes and wrote down what they noticed. At the end of the experiment, students compared their observations to see which liquid caused the biggest change.

In Language Arts, students finished their book reports for *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. They looked back at Claudia and Jamie's adventure for details to include in their written responses and completed an illustrated page to go with their reports. It was a fun way to wrap up our time with the novel!

Brown

Another successful week in Ms. Brown's classroom! In Reading class, we continued our new novel, *Freckle Juice*! The students have been taking turns reading aloud and stopping along the way to answer comprehension questions and check their understanding of the story. We are enjoying following along with the characters and seeing what happens next!

In Math, we continued working on fractions and put our learning to the test with an assessment on Tuesday! The students have been working hard developing their fraction skills, and we are excited to begin our next unit on data and graphing when we return from Thanksgiving break!

In Science, we put on our scientist hats and conducted a middle school science experiment! Our big question was: Which liquid would dissolve a candy corn pumpkin the fastest? The students made predictions, tested different liquids, and recorded their observations every five minutes. After observing the results, we discovered that vinegar dissolved the candy corn pumpkin the fastest, with water coming in a close second! It was a fun, hands-on way to practice making predictions, observing, and drawing conclusions like real scientists! Our classroom wishes you a very Happy Thanksgiving!

Brana

Ms. Brana's class participated in an exciting hands-on science experiment called *The Great Dissolving Mystery!* Students made predictions about what would happen when candy pumpkins were placed in four different liquids: water, milk, vinegar, and vegetable oil. Every five minutes, they checked their pumpkins, recorded their observations, and watched for changes. At the conclusion, students compared their findings to determine which liquid caused the greatest change. Our young scientists had fun putting their prediction and observation skills to work!

In Math, students wrapped up their unit in fractions! After working on understanding and comparing fractions, they are ready to tackle a new mathematical adventure. When they return from break, we will be exploring area and perimeter, putting our problem-solving skills to work as we discover how to measure shapes and calculate their dimensions!

Even though it was a short week, the learning certainly skyrocketed! Our students kept busy with creative activities and meaningful learning experiences. In Language Arts, students celebrated the Thanksgiving season by creating Thanksgiving Acrostic Poems! Using the letters in THANKSGIVING as their guide, they brainstormed seasonal words and phrases to express what the holiday means to them. It was a wonderful opportunity to combine creativity, vocabulary, and writing skills while adding a little holiday spirit to the classroom!

Wishing all of our families a wonderful, relaxing, and joy-filled Thanksgiving! We hope everyone enjoys time with family and friends. We look forward to seeing everyone after the break!

Fine

This week in Ms. Fine's class we had lots of pre-Thanksgiving fun! In Language Arts we watched the Mr. Popper's Penguins movie to compare it to the book. In Math we made our own Thanksgiving dinners and practiced conversions with the recipes we found. In Science, we had our first lab of the marking period! The whole middle school worked on discovering which four liquids would dissolve candy pumpkins the best. As a group we discussed how this experiment relates to the earlier discussions of the scientific method. It was a lot of fun! I hope you all have a Happy Thanksgiving and I'll see you after the break.





High School

Grace

With Thanksgiving approaching, students took a little break from our novels to explore the history of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade! Students learned how the parade began, how it has evolved over the years, and how it has grown into one of the most recognizable Thanksgiving traditions in the country. We discussed the history of the iconic balloons, floats, performances, and the many changes that have made the parade what it is today.

To bring a little creativity into the lesson, students had the opportunity to design their own parade balloons! They imagined what characters, animals, or larger-than-life creations they would love to see floating through the streets of New York City.

This lesson was especially meaningful to me because I had the incredible opportunity to participate in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in 2021 (See below)! It was so much fun sharing a little piece of that personal experience with students while learning about a tradition that brings so many people together each year. Wishing everyone a wonderful Thanksgiving!



Dymond

It was a grateful week in Mrs. Dymond's classes this week. Our students had a wonderful week of thoughtful writing, gratitude, and careful editing. Our students worked hard to turn their ideas into meaningful pieces they can proudly share with loved ones. In Language Arts, students brainstormed the people, places, and things they are thankful for. Each student selected their top three choices and used a graphic organizer to list three reasons for each one. Students then added details, constructed complete sentences, and used their organizers to create a five-paragraph essay. With teacher support, they proofread and edited their work before bringing it home to share with family during Thanksgiving. We are so proud of their thoughtful reflections and growing writing skills! We hope that you all enjoy a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends.

Josbeno

Look at that, we made it to Thanksgiving! As we head into the holiday, let's see what everyone's been up to! First up, Geometry students worked on applying the properties of equality and construct two-column proofs. Over in Consumer Math, students continued exploring salaries and putting their knowledge to work by completing timecards. Meanwhile, Algebra II started a new unit exploring the relationships between functions, including domain and range. And finally, Algebra I continued building on their understanding of the distributive property and combining like terms. That's a wrap for this week! Until next time, have a happy Thanksgiving!

Reagan

Although it was a short week, we managed to squeeze in plenty of learning before the Thanksgiving break!

Environmental Science students continued exploring ecosystems, focusing on the flow of energy, food chains, food webs, and the important roles of producers, consumers, and decomposers.

Biology continued our study of cellular transport, examining how substances move into and out of cells through diffusion, osmosis, and active transport.

Chemistry students explored atomic structure, learning about protons, neutrons, electrons, and energy levels. We also practiced constructing atomic diagrams of various elements using the periodic table.

US History II: Students continued their study of the Progressive Era, focusing on Theodore Roosevelt, the Election of 1912, and the political and social reforms that helped shape modern America.

Wishing everyone a very Happy Thanksgiving! Enjoy the extended weekend, and I'll see you on the other side! -Mr. Reagan

Dornick

We had a thoughtful and productive week filled with learning, reflection, and skill-building. From exploring Earth's biomes to practicing workplace habits and measurement skills, students worked hard across every subject. Let's take a look at what we've been up to!

Environmental Science students learned to differentiate between freshwater and saltwater biomes. They also began reviewing the biomes we have studied so far, and we will continue strengthening those comparison skills next week.

Language Arts: In the spirit of Thanksgiving, students participated in meaningful discussions about what they are thankful for. They completed writing prompts and read a short story centered on Thanksgiving.

Consumer Math: Students received their first job review! We discussed why job reviews are important and identified skills they can continue developing to improve their workplace performance.

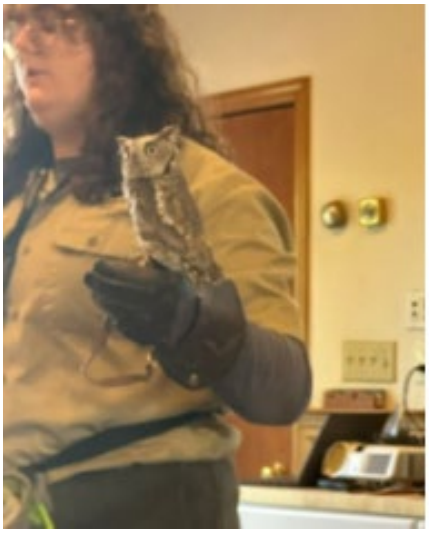
Geometry: Students reviewed the vocabulary and skills we have learned so far. They also practiced measuring and drawing specific lengths using both inches and centimeters.

Next week, we will continue building on our current learning. In Environmental Science, students will keep reviewing and differentiating the biomes we have studied. Across classes, we will continue practicing important academic and real-world skills!

Transition

Gonzalez, McCall, Budzinski

This week the Transition Program students participated in a workplace tour at The Raptor Trust in Millington, NJ, where they had the opportunity to learn about the organization's mission of rescuing, rehabilitating, and caring for injured and orphaned wild birds. Students explored the facility and learned about the different jobs and responsibilities involved in wildlife rehabilitation, animal care, and conservation. This experience provided a valuable opportunity to explore career options while learning about the importance of caring for animals and protecting wildlife.





Related Arts

Industrial Arts – Dulak

Over the past two weeks, creativity and hands-on learning have been in full swing throughout the Industrial Arts Labs!

Our interns in the Industrial Arts Collaborative have been developing their skills in Adobe Illustrator, learning to create artistic compositions and gaining hands-on experience with the scroll saw. These valuable vocational skills will play an important role in preparing students for several exciting fundraising projects planned for after winter break.

Our Elementary students have begun constructing wooden snowflakes to celebrate the winter season. Throughout this project, students will strengthen their measuring and layout skills as they learn to mark precise distances and angles in preparation for cutting their materials.

Meanwhile, our Middle School students have started creating wooden winter landscapes. Their first challenge involved constructing a moon, which required students to practice using T-squares, tape measures, compasses, and the miter saw. This project provides an excellent opportunity to reinforce measurement, tool identification, and safe woodworking practices.

Finally, our High School students in *Intro to Blueprint Making in SketchUp* have been exploring the fundamentals of digital design and construction. After learning essential best practices for creating organized and accurate digital models, students have begun working with SketchUp's foundational two-dimensional drawing tools, including the Line, Rectangle, Circle, and Arc tools. These skills will serve as the building blocks for more advanced three-dimensional modeling and future furniture design projects.

It has been an exciting and productive start to the marking period, with students across all grade levels building the technical skills, creativity, and confidence needed to bring their ideas to life!



Marozine – Music



Although we have a short week ahead of Thanksgiving break, we will still have plenty of exciting things happening in music class! Our middle and high school students will continue their exploration of jazz music as we turn our attention to one of the most influential musicians in jazz history, Louis Armstrong. Students will learn about his life, his incredible trumpet playing, his distinctive singing voice, and the lasting impact he had on the development of jazz. We will listen to some of his most famous recordings and discuss how his creativity, improvisation, and musical talent helped shape the music we know today.

Meanwhile, our Elementary students will be wrapping up their Thanksgiving songs and activities. Throughout the past few weeks, students have been celebrating the season through singing, movement, and musical activities centered around thankfulness and gratitude. This week, we will revisit some of our favorite Thanksgiving songs while continuing to practice rhythm, listening skills, and musical expression.

Even with a shorter week, we are looking forward to making the most of our time together through music! Wishing all of our students, families, and staff a very happy, healthy, and relaxing Thanksgiving break!

Related Services

Speech – Fibraio, Kuehl, & Sorensen,

As we head into the Thanksgiving break, we hope all of our students, families, and staff enjoy a restful, joyful, and safe holiday.

This season offers a wonderful, natural opportunity for students to practice their communication skills outside of the classroom. We encourage students to embrace the chance to engage in fun, meaningful conversations with family members and friends while enjoying a special meal and special company. Feel free to utilize some of these fun conversation starters at the table:

- **Gratitude & Highlights:** What is one thing that made you laugh really hard this year?
- **Storytelling & Sequencing:** If you had to explain how to bake cookies to someone who has never baked, what would the steps be?
- **Perspective-Taking:** If you could invite any historical figure or book character to Thanksgiving dinner, who would it be and what would you ask them?

From all of us on the Speech Team, we wish you and your loved ones a very **Happy and Healthy Thanksgiving!**

Occupational Therapy – Belt, Kelly, Circello, & Rodriguez

Extracurricular Activities

