

Blythedale Buzz



MOUNT PLEASANT BLYTHEDALE U.F.S.D.

Principal's Corner

The 2020-2021 school year started off strong. At MPB, we did not allow the pandemic to derail our teaching or learning. As a community of learners embracing our new normal (in person and online learning), we quickly learned to overcome the challenges we were confronted with.

We began the year by launching a new instructional platform, G-Suite, which encompasses Google Classroom and other cloud-based productivity and collaboration applications. With each passing week, teachers, students, and parents have become more confident in the usage of our new teaching and learning tools.

This past semester has been filled with students embarking on literary adventures, exploring new lands and cultures. Students challenged themselves in mathematics and became responsible citizens via their study and in-depth understanding of science at the secondary level, learning that human behavior leads to changes that can affect us in positive or adverse ways.

The landscape of teaching and learning looks very different this year; however, with the support of our talented staff at MPB and committed students and families, we continue to value and hold dear what is most important to us: educating and being educated as bodies heal.

Griselda Reyes

2021 Winter Edition

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ELEMENTARY

Pre-Kindergarten

Laugh, Learn and Play



Preschool students worked hard to learn about letters, numbers, colors, shapes and sight words. Students were engaged through the use of visuals, songs, manipulatives, and sensory experiences. We started the school year learning about ourselves and our community which included discussions about the people who make up our community. We learned about farmers and their role in harvesting fruits and vegetables. We also learned about the life cycle of apples and pumpkins and used our five senses to look, touch, smell, and taste. Students especially enjoyed tasting the apples and playing with the pumpkin guts and seeds! Learning in preschool is fun!

Kindergarten

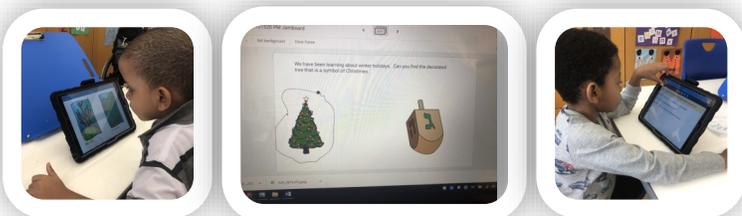
Kindergarten Counts!

Jamming with Jamboard!

Students in Mr. Stephen's kindergarten classroom haven't let the current situation get in the way of their learning and having fun. All students have been working hard both physically in school and while at home by participating in virtual classes. In reading, children learned to identify characters, settings, and major events in a story with prompting and support. During our Google Meets, children listened to stories read aloud and then incorporated the use of Jamboard, an interactive whiteboard tool, to respond to questions. Jamboard's real-time collaboration features have been extremely helpful for students participating remotely. The camaraderie between the students in the classroom and those participating virtually is wonderful to witness.



Kindergarten students have been busy exploring numbers up to ten. Our budding mathematicians have enjoyed number songs and stories that allow them to sing, dance, and act their way through number values! The use of manipulatives and real life objects such as animals, shapes, and counting cubes allowed our young counters practical application of their growing number skills. Counting frames, ten frames, and picture drawings are also becoming favorite methods for our kindergarten counters to showcase their quickly developing number sense. Just look at the confidence on our faces as we demonstrate our skills!



Blythedale Buzz

Kindergarten—First Grade



A Community of Learners

The K-1 class embraced our unique learning environment and routines. We developed an inclusive community of learners both in and out of the classroom. We created peer relationships and spent time getting to know one another and ourselves. In literacy, students enjoyed learning how to spell their names and identifying letters. The students learned about the concepts of print and enjoy reading together. In math, students learned to count to 15, as well as, identify and demonstrate the value of numbers up to 10. Our young scientists enjoyed investigating the world using their senses. Using a variety of science tools, students learned about weather, seasons, and animals in the fall. In social studies, we learned about citizenship, being a community, and various holidays and traditions. This K-1 class thrives on exciting multi-sensory learning experiences by utilizing each learning modality. Some of our favorite activities include listening to stories on headphones, creating letters and numbers in sand or Play-Doh, taking nature walks, watching videos, dancing, investigating light and sound, and exploring various scents in our environment. We are very excited to continue our learning in the new year!

First Grade—Second Grade

Purple People

Started the Year off Right



First and second graders developed a daily routine through the use of songs that includes the days of the week, months of the year, and seasons. Students also focused on learning sight words to help them read and write, which are reviewed daily. Emergent readers and nightly homework assignments have fostered student growth in literacy.

Students practiced sequencing a variety of stories and understood that things happen in a certain order of events. In math, students practiced adding and subtracting and learned that numbers get bigger with addition and smaller with subtraction. This year, students also learned about the life cycles of apples and pumpkins, the states of matter including solids, liquids, and gases, and different communities.

Are you curious about what it means to be a *Purple Person*? First and second graders learned all about the wonderful world of Purple People while engaging with the text *The World Needs More Purple People*. Students learned that Purple People are everyday superheroes who embody kindness and bring everyone in their community closer together. While reading the story, students developed their own text-to-self connections about how they exhibit kindness towards others to create an environment that is inclusive to all. Students designed their own Purple People declarations to illustrate how they can demonstrate positivity in their everyday lives, such as “I am a Purple Person because I help my friends.” Additionally, students made a promise to maintain a Purple Person attitude as they continue to navigate their journey through first and second grade. Students often reflect on their actions and continue to make text-to-self connections while interacting with others. Our first and second grade community is filled with Purple People eager to spread their positive message to all!



Blythedale Buzz

Second Grade—Third Grade

Main Idea Moose



Second and third graders transformed into “Main Idea Moose” during the first semester of the year. Using their hands as antlers, students rose to the challenge of identifying the main idea and supporting details within a text. Utilizing their hand as representation, students were able to visualize how the main idea is the most important part of the text, just like our palm is the main idea and most important part of our hand. In addition, the fingers on a hand represent the supporting details, just like our fingers support our palm when picking up an object. Students worked hard using these physical and visual aids to reinforce their learning, which allowed them to become main idea moose masters. As this school year progresses, second and third graders will continue to grow and expand their reading strategies.

Third Grade—Fourth Grade

Holidays Around the World

The third and fourth graders traveled near and far to learn all about different holidays celebrated around the world. By taking this pretend trip, students were able to engage with nonfiction texts to discover various traditions, languages, and cultural celebrations. The unit included lessons about geography, as the class traveled around the world mapping our adventures. Students were able to compare and contrast the holidays using the information gathered from the readings.



Fifth Grade

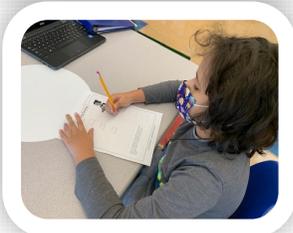
Fabulous in Fifth

Students started the year off strong. The first quarter focused heavily on mathematical concepts with brief introductions to geography in social studies and properties of matter in science. English Language Arts focused primarily on finding the main idea and supporting details in a text as well as vocabulary in context. Students quickly developed classroom routines, shared their individual strengths, and prided themselves on working independently. Through hard work and perseverance, students honed their foundational skills through classroom participation and an online instructional platform. Without exception, students remained on task, engaged, and ready to tackle each day's work. With little downtime, lighter activities included decorating the room first for Halloween and later for Thanksgiving. The quarter was neatly wrapped up with a list of all the things for which students and staff are grateful.



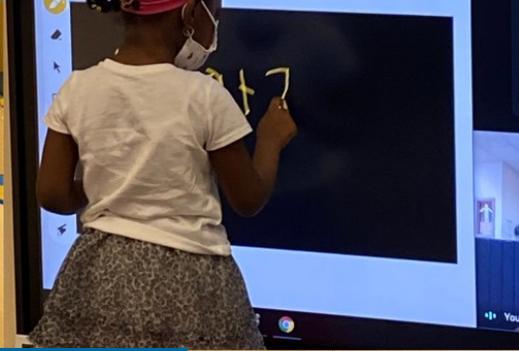
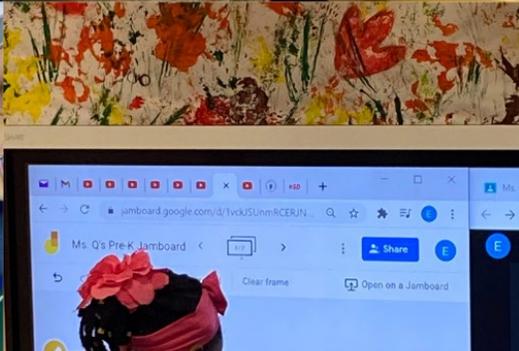
Sixth Grade

Sixth Grade Superstars!



Sixth grade has been hard at work this school year! In math, factors and decimals have been the name of the game. Students used their prior knowledge of multiplication to find the least common multiple and greatest common factor of two or more numbers. Having mastered those concepts, they progressed to multiplying and dividing with decimals. Students continue to practice and perform multi-digit multiplication and division with decimals and grow in their fluency every day. Finally, using these newly acquired skills, students have been making sense of multi-step word problems that require close reading and abstract reasoning to complete. These sixth grade students continue to use their perseverance and curiosity about the world around them to enthusiastically tackle any new concept that comes their way.

Blythedale Buzz

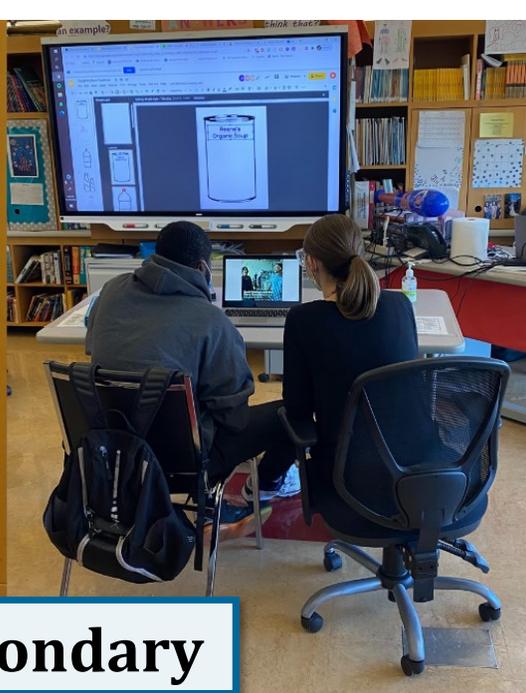


Elementary





Secondary



Art

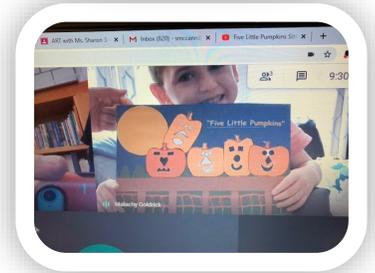
Our PreK through 6th grade students participated in art from their home studios! It has been a challenge, yet, inspiring to see students and their families creating art together! PreK to 4th-grade groups completed various seasonal and holiday projects that included witches, pumpkins, leaves, and all things fall. However, many of the class activities were paired with children's literature including a kindness drawing based on the book *I'm Not A Scribble* and a story sequence necklace for the book *When the Leaf Blew In*. Students also enjoyed creating a "Turkey in Disguise," as well as gingerbread stick style and reindeer hand puppets.

The 5th and 6th grade students (and sometimes 4th) spent a great deal of time on intricate projects and activities including making their own sketchbooks and sharing helpful drawing sites. Students also created Halloween Knock, Knock joke pieces with character elements on opposite sides of a door to tell the selected joke. The Southwest Native American culture was explored as well and students created Kiva Story Ladders using the legend "Arrow to the Sun," as our artistic style inspiration. These pieces took a great deal of planning, reflection, and research.

I am very proud of all the effort and finished products created this semester! 2020 wrapped itself up with a Holiday Burst project. This drawing has a single holiday object as the focal point and then 4-6 wedges radiating from that piece. Those sections are filled with repeating patterns of additional holiday designs.

It has been a very busy and enjoyable fall!

Art to Go 2020!



Music

Exploring the Instruments



In secondary music, students learned about the families of the instruments in an orchestra. Students watched videos of musicians performing both familiar and unfamiliar music. These experiences were followed by a hands-on opportunity that included holding and playing some of the instruments themselves. It was exciting for students to engage with the various instruments from different musical families. Students were shocked to learn that the strings on both a violin and cello bow are made from horsehair. The semester wrapped up nicely with students learning how to read and write musical notes used in sheet music.

SCHOOL WIDE

Thank you for all collaborative efforts between Special Education Itinerant Services (SEIS), Long Term Care (LTC), Mount Pleasant Blythedale Schools (MPBS), and Blythedale Children's Hospital (BCH).



LTC Unit & SEIS

Meeting with Google Meets

Our SEIS students launched their learning about letters, numbers, colors, and shapes. Each lesson was jam-packed with songs, videos, visuals, hands-on materials, and books. Our learning units focused on, "All About Me," the life cycle and parts of apples and pumpkins, and the season of fall. Students used their five senses to engage with various materials related to our units of study. We can't wait for the new experiences during the remainder of the school year!

Our LTC and Unit students have been working closely with MPB school staff and BCH staff to join their Google Meets daily with their teachers and classmates. All members of the MPB and BCH community have collaborated to create a meaningful and engaging school experience for our students in LTC and the Acute Care units. Additionally, students are being provided extra support by MPB staff to work on classroom assignments in addition to live daily Google Meets. Some of our students had the opportunity to participate in daily study groups to increase participation and socialization with peers. We look forward to maximizing meaningful engagement for all of our students.

Social Emotional Development & Learning

Our SEDL team has been supporting students and teachers with communication and connectivity through Google classrooms. We kicked off the new year planning a fun-filled Winter and Spring for our students. We will have monthly spirit days and content connected activities like our annual Butterfly release. Look for announcements and emails regarding upcoming events!

Guidance Department

"This much-anticipated, feel-good annual event helps our current students/patients see life after hospitalization and feel motivated that they too will one day move on and reach their full potential."

11th Annual Alumni Day



MPB Secondary Students participated in our 11th Annual Alumni Day on December 18th, 2020. This year we held our event virtually through Zoom and it proved to be special despite not being together in person. We had 18 alumni join us to recall their emotional stories of overcoming traumatic brain injuries, strokes, gunshot wounds, brain aneurysms, and other medical complexities. This much-anticipated, feel-good annual event helps our current students/patients see life after hospitalization and feel motivated that they too will one day move on and reach their full potential.

Mathematics

Careful Manipulation and Discovery

First and foremost, the students at Mt. Pleasant Blythedale have done a great job in adapting to our online instructional model. Students have devoted so much time to their work over the past few months and are seeing results from the time they have invested.

7th-grade students focused on proportions and seeing how equivalent fractions can lead to the discovery of unknown amounts through careful manipulation of ratios. 8th-grade students learned about exponents and rigid motions on the coordinate plane. They are currently applying knowledge of these topics to their lessons on the Pythagorean Theorem. Algebra students are discovering that functions can be applied to situations with inputs and outputs and observing how the components of the equation can influence the behavior of graphs of functions. Geometry students have been working with properties of quadrilaterals, observing the common traits and differences between shapes such as squares, rectangles, parallelograms, and trapezoids. Algebra II students studied the domain and range of various functions to see how the nature of each function impacts when and where solutions exist.

The students have put in a great deal of hard work this semester. I am very proud of their devotion given the current situation in the world.

English Language Arts

Storytelling, Shakespeare, Mythology, and More!

This year started with students exploring the art of storytelling. In the high school classes, students read excerpts from the novel, *The Things They Carried*, while students in middle school focused on a short story unit. Students discovered crucial elements of stories including the plot diagram, the importance of symbolism and examined how setting, conflict, and characterization affect a storyline.

Our second quarter for middle school students focused on a person's identity. With a mix of media, including non-fiction and fictional stories, poetry, and videos, students discussed what makes a person who they are. Students learned the importance of being able to share their own personalities and recognize that there is no need to pretend or hide their "true self."

High school students were given an opportunity to finish a long-awaited unit of Shakespeare through our partnership with Hudson Valley Shakespeare. Students wrote their own play reviews after watching a full performance of *Much Ado About Nothing* and some had an opportunity to speak with one of the actors as well. The second quarter is wrapped up with another unit on mythology focused on creation stories and the hero's journey! It sure has been an adventure!



Science

Homeostasis, Macromolecules, Aquaponics, and More!



Students in 7th and 8th grades delved into the world of elements. They first identified the elements that make up everyday items found in the classroom and at home. After identifying these elements, students studied properties such as magnetism, conductivity, and state of matter. Students then created their own periodic table to learn the patterns and trends of researched elements, made a baby book for a specific element and a 3D atomic model for their adopted element. In class, students designed an experiment to split water into hydrogen and oxygen gas.

“Why does fresh pineapple burn my mouth?”

Living Environment students studied the pineapple phenomenon. They started the unit by asking “Why does fresh pineapple burn my mouth?” They designed experiments, performed simulations, and researched the role of enzymes in maintaining homeostasis. They debated the pros and cons of investing federal funds for researching edible insects as a source of energy and nutrients for human consumption. Additionally, students learned how macromolecules were used to develop COVID-19 vaccines.

Tenth-grade students collected and analyzed data to solve a crime. They became experts in the analysis of hair, blood typing, fingerprints, shoe prints, and DNA. Furthermore, they wrote a conclusion about the case and compared their findings to what happened in real-life.



11th and 12th grade students studied our food system in depth. They explored how crops are grown both at the industrial level and at a more local and sustainable level. They identified the impacts, both negative and positive, of each type of agricultural practice in human health and ecosystems. As a culminating project, students researched a sustainable agricultural method to implement in our classroom. They identified an expert in the field of Aquaponics and invited the expert to further their knowledge of sustainable agriculture.

Traditional Content and Current Events

During the first half of the year, the social studies curriculum continued to evolve by including our current world events in addition to traditional content. The 7th graders have been learning about the 13 Original Colonies and how this ultimately led to the formation of our great nation. The 8th grade spent a great deal of time learning about World War I and the horrors of trench warfare. Students were shocked to see images of this type of warfare. Students discussed how the Treaty of Versailles ultimately led to World War II. Students in 9th grade focused on a unit about Ancient Greece. They learned of the impact Greece had on western civilization and how the concept of democracy shaped America's Government. MPB's 10th graders covered a unit on revolutions and how the American Revolution led other nations to revolt. The 11/12th graders immersed themselves in the U.S. Constitution and the rights of the citizens. Our current state of affairs truly has enhanced this curriculum and afforded students a great deal of discussion on current events and human rights.

Social Studies

“Our current state of affairs truly has enhanced this curriculum and afforded students a great deal of discussion on current events and human rights.”



The Mount Pleasant Blythedale UFSD staff continues to ensure our families and students remain connected to us and to each other. Since the start of the school year, MPB has provided 45 devices including iPads and Chromebooks to students at home! We continue to thank our families, teachers and staff, students, delivery men and women, healthcare providers, essential workers, and all others who are a beacon of positivity and purpose during this extraordinary time.



Important Dates:

February 1st—Start of Quarter Three

April 16th—End of Quarter Three

Save the Date:

September 24th—We will commemorate 50 years of educating students while their bodies heal. On July 1, 1971, the Mt. Pleasant Blythedale School was constituted and designated a separate Union Free PUBLIC School District responsible for educating the patients of Blythedale Children’s Hospital. Be on the lookout for monthly mini-events that will help us celebrate this incredible milestone as the Mt. Pleasant Blythedale School District continues to provide a public school education, within a typical public school setting, to patients of Blythedale Children’s Hospital.

Mount Pleasant Blythedale UFSD

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Mount Pleasant Blythedale UFSD (MPB) is a district responsible for educating patients of Blythedale Children’s Hospital. MPB was chartered by the New York State legislature as a Special Act Program in 1971. In 2004, the Special Education Department approved a 4410 Preschool Program to provide educational services to medically fragile children. We are the only public school district in New York created to educate a hospital population. Our students are inpatient and day hospital children and adolescents receiving rehabilitation and medical services through Blythedale Children’s Hospital.

A community where students can learn while their bodies heal.