

LaFayette Big Picture TGIF

2021

SEPTEMBER 17

We are PRESENT, POSITIVE and PASSIONATE!



We are back! Looking at the calendar on September 1st, I need to share that I did not believe I was ready for a new school year to start. It seemed like the summer was too fast and I had not really rested and recuperated from the previous school year. However, as soon as the students returned on September 8th, I was ready. The students, their energy, their curiosity, and their humor are the remedy! It has been a great start to our 14th year of LaFayette Big Picture Learning.

We welcomed our new students in our 101 Advisory with Jessica and Christine as advisors. We welcomed a handful of new students in other advisories as well. Daphne Reyburn is back at Big Picture for part of the day. Daphne was a Teaching Assistant with us years ago. She then moved to the Onondaga Nation School. She is splitting her time between ONS and BP this year. She is helping us with reading and literacy. Daphne will be working with both students and staff in supporting our literacy needs. We also welcomed Crystal Butler, social worker, in a full time position. Crystal was with us two days a week last year and she is now full time at Big Picture. We are also excited to have Bethany, a social work intern from Binghamton University, completing her internship with us this school year.

I am also excited that Lunch Bunch is back! Our lunch bunch groups are small groups of 3-4 students who meet together with one adult once a week before lunch. We chat, problem solve, play games and build another layer of relationships. This year, Kym and I will be sharing a lunch bunch group. We had a fantastic time together on Monday. It is so clear to me now. I am ready!

TGIF from Lenny

The start to our year was not what we envisioned last spring. We all hoped for a start free of masks and social distancing. That was not to be. Despite these necessary precautions, our kick off has exceeded my expectations in many ways. Most notably, the positive attitudes and effort from our amazing group of students got the year off on the right foot.

In the first days we did a number of design challenges that revealed some great qualities among our students. They were patient, creative, cooperative and kind. After the challenges, the great attitudes continued into independent work time and workshops. Here's a peak from my perspective.

Our ER workshops are exploring environmental issues. The fair weather has permitted us to go into the woods to observe our natural world up close. We have looked closely at the health of trees and how energy and materials move through the environment. In each section we also built terrariums in order to keep little ecosystems in our instructional space through the winter.

There are many projects in the planning stages and things are about to get very, very busy in the shop and outdoor space. Dayton, Lucas and Cody will be our crew to complete the last stages of the sugar shack. Julian is developing an STP around the greenhouse and garden space to go beyond growing food. He envisions a place of tranquility where a visitor can sit and reflect. I met with Ronnie to begin planning our hydroponic setup. Ronnie will be one of our point persons on this food production project. I met with Kyler to discuss the syrup sales and marketing stage of the sap project for a potential STP project.



There are a number of other projects in the works involving woodworking, preparing garlic and garlic oil for the Apple festival, and much more. We are off to a great start to get the most out of this year. Have a great week!

TCIF from April

Welcome back to school!
Another year of the pandemic, however, our students prove they are resilient.

It is hard to believe our advisory is in their 301 year already! And boy, are they ever busy! College classes, BOCES, High School courses and still all of the Big Picture learning targets and goals to complete. We are going to have a deeply engaging year of learning!

301s are participating in reading book club groups this year. I am excited about this and parents/guardians I'd love for you to ask them who is in their group and what book they are reading.

Despite the fact that I am not reading to them daily as in the past years, we will at some points be doing some group readings. Hollis started us out this year by reading a book she purchased this summer and was very excited about: *Sky Woman* by Joanne Powless. It is a beautiful book-check it out if you haven't already!

We are searching for internship sites for our students. Please reach out to me or the school if you are interested in hosting a student for real world learning. The pandemic has negatively impacted our students' ability to get out into the real world, so I am hopeful this year will be different and our students will be able to do what our school was designed to do: internships. We have some new faces in our advisory this year and we are so excited to have them. Our room is full, which is awesome. Like all



families, they often act like siblings, but when they come together for a common cause it is amazing. The 201s and 301s went to The BPAP (Big Picture Agriculture Program) and checked on the pumpkin patch. The 201s under the tutelage of Walt and

David are planning some advisory activities with the pumpkins.

ANY student interested in any form of agriculture should contact me in regards to what they can do on the farm. BPAP is available for students to use and learn from by doing.

The USH students are working on their 9/11 Remembrance Project. Global students practiced learning countries in the world with an online game that we will revisit frequently. Both classes are working on reading and analyzing text, looking for overarching themes. We are currently looking at the situation currently (and over the last 20 years) happening in Afghanistan.

Upcoming will be our PSAT, our STAR assessments and a day of fun learning activities that is in place of our overnight trip. Our learning plans should all be completed this week, we already have some completed and students are excited about their projects! Yay! Welcome back, I have a feeling this year is going to be very full and go by very quickly!

TGIF from David

The first full week of school felt like summer never happened. We were in a good place at the end of the school year and students picked up those developed habits where they left off. We finally got to Learning Plan development on Thursday. Walt and I are trying a new idea in the advisory by splitting students up into affinity groups. This means we are grouping students together based on their interests. We hope they will begin to develop project ideas together before they turn to Walt and I for input. I believe they did a good job bouncing ideas off one another. We have four main affinity groups. They are: Culinary, Art, Trades, and Humanities/Sciences. We are going to push students to continue to collaborate in their affinity groups even after they have decided their projects for their Learning Plan. We want them to turn to one another for guidance before reaching out to Walt and I, or any other staff member. They all have talents and experiences that they can assist one another.

On Tuesday, we went to go check on the pumpkins we planted in June. We have some pumpkins growing. We just don't have as many pumpkins growing as we wish. That is ok. We are still going to move ahead with building a cart display and selling the pumpkins to the general public. Jacoby and Lucas have taken over the cart building. Dayton is going to help.

On Thursday, we took the advisory outside to start marking Sugar Maple Trees that we can tap in the winter for sap. Lenny came into the advisory on Wednesday to give a little lesson on how to identify Sugar Maple. We still used an app that helped us identify the Sugar Maples based on bark and leaf. It was a great lesson on how to utilize your phone as a tool and not just for social media engagement.



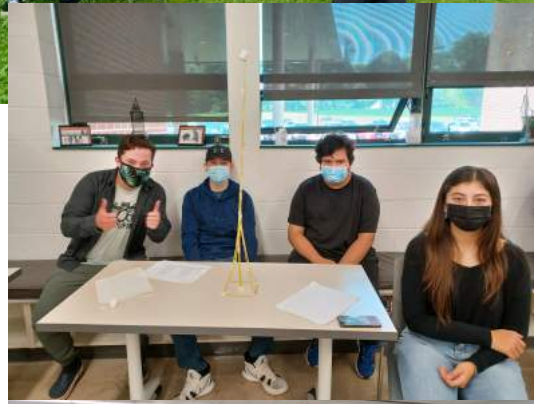
It feels good to be back. Students are engaged with their interests and we are going to push them harder this year.

TGIF from Jessica

Transitioning to a new advisory is a little nerve racking after 4 years of working with and building relationships with my last group of students. It is sad to say goodbye to the group you know so well and start over with students you don't know. The first few days of school are always awkward as we all are getting reacquainted and back into routines. This is especially true for the 101s because they are new to it all. This is one reason why we always spend the first few days going over routines and doing ice breaker activities and challenges. This year was no different, except I noticed the first day nerves and awkwardness dissipate fast. The 101s have quickly adjusted and became comfortable in our advisory and in Big Picture. We have a small advisory this year and I have really enjoyed getting to know each one of them. We spent some time this week making homemade pizza sauce from tomatoes in my garden. They all engaged, worked well together, and enjoyed making the sauce. After the sauce boiled down, we made pizza. The pizza and sauce came out well and the 101s received several compliments for their cooking!

I am particularly proud of the 101s for their efforts in the Who am I Project. The Who am I Project is designed for students to get to know themselves, each other, as well as a role model in their life. The 101s have dove in and started brainstorming several ideas for their work. One task we focused on this week was the autobiographical sketch; this assignment is a writing piece that reflects on an impactful memory. Each of the students developed an outline and completed a draft by the end of this week among several other tasks. Writing is a challenging task and I am really impressed with how they managed their time and met their deadline a day in advance!

This year we are bringing back lunch bunch. Lunch bunch is a group of about 4 students from different advisories that meet together with one staff member before lunch on Mondays. We use this time to make



connections outside of advisory and meet the needs of the group. We use these groups during the first few days of school when we complete design challenges. One of this year's design challenges was to construct a spaghetti tower with tape that will support a marshmallow.

The group with the tallest tower to hold the marshmallow for 10 seconds wins the challenge. Garrett, Julien, Kat, and Lucas A are in my lunch bunch. They completed the challenge with more time to spare! After observing their competition they noticed a group with a sturdy tower that was 3 inches taller than theirs. Instead of giving up, they used their extra time to make improvements and adjustments to their tower to increase its height, they were

able to meet the other group's height and challenge them with an extra 4 inches! This challenged the other group to improve and adjust their tower; both groups had great sturdy towers, but unfortunately 4 inches was too much for the other group to surpass and our lunch bunch was able to close the challenge with the win.

Workshops are in full motion as well. This year I am teaching an applied mathematics workshop that will focus on real world applications of mathematics through projects. Our first project revolves around the coordinate plane. To warm up our graphing skills we completed a puzzle and graphing activity. First the students learned about numeric sequences and found missing numbers in sequences. They then used these numbers for a key to fill in and get their coordinate points. After making a 4 quadrant plane, they began plotting their points and connecting them according to the pattern and design they were given. This led the students to discover they were graphing birds! Graphing requires a lot of attention to detail and precision. The students did very well self correcting and persisting.

TGIF from Greg

WOW, the kids are SENIORS! I guess they had to be at some point. As their advisor and a parent I know how fast this year can go for them. We are starting the year completing their health requirements, PSA, Gradpoint, and research for their Senior Thesis Projects. We have 4 students taking college classes, 2 kids taking welding at BOCES, and the rest of the kids incorporating work study and college preparation. The students working on college prep and work study will be focused on getting new internships by the end of the month to gain more work experience before they are done at Big Picture Learning. This is my 25th year of teaching and I have not seen a group of kids come into school in September more ready to go and get after it, so to say. This should be the best year ever. I am very excited to see what they will do over the next couple of weeks in preparation for the Senior Thesis Projects. They will be proposing their ideas to the panel on Friday, October 1. They seem to have some great ideas and have started working on their presentations. Carson is going to work on starting a cafe in conjunction with the coffee shop, acquiring the proper permits for Big Picture food sales and constructing a food cart. Gabe is going to create a display of the Three Sisters with the historical explanation to exhibit at the box lacrosse arena on the



Onondaga Nation. Claire will be working on a new robotics program with Grimshaw Elementary School, leaving a legacy of learning for future generations. Austin is creating a cinematography display for the televisions in the high school and Big Picture that will have inspirational messages. Griffin is developing his own business plan based off of the On The Dot Coffee Shop that he interned at last year. Aiden is going to create a golf bag holder and bench for Orchard Valley Golf Course.

Next week we will be focused on completing the last of our health projects, finding internships, finalizing our STP presentations, and continue working on our autobiographies. As the football coach I am happy with Jacoby (201) and Elijah (301) for playing this year. They are both doing really well, and I'm thrilled that they are showing the initiative with the varsity team.

