

LaFayette Big Picture TGIF

2019

SEPTEMBER 20

We are **PRESENT, POSITIVE** and **PASSIONATE!**



We had glorious weather and wonderful students on our 12th annual Overnight Camping Trip. Although the camping trip was only two days (Thursday and Friday), it filled our week. We spent time understanding the behavioral expectations as well as planning for the Lip Sync Battle and talent competition. Advisories designed their advisory t-shirts that are worn during the relay portion of Thursday. This TGIF is full of pictures of smiling students who worked hard, collaborated, formed new friendships, and reflected on 28 hours of togetherness! Thank you to Morrisville STEP for helping us with our trip and to the amazing Big Picture staff who spend hours planning and facilitating this experience for our students.



TGIF from Jessica

This year I am developing my instruction to be more engaging. As I venture down this path, I have shared with all of my students my golden rule: "The more you participate, the more you learn." Thus far, the students have been on board with this and I have experienced great participation across my classes.

In 301 advisory we are reading *There There* by Tommy Orange. Tommy Orange is visiting our area in November and we have the opportunity to see him talk about his book! Before we began the book, I provided the students with background information on Alcatraz and the year 1969. Only 50 years ago did we land on the moon for the first time! I had the students work in small groups and read to each other, *Taking Back the Rock* by David Stack. Through these activities, the students have begun to see historical events through a Native perspective. They have started to understand how Native American lives were impacted by the adversities they faced. As we dived into the book this week, the students



were reading aloud in class, interpreting quotes from the author, and building vocabulary. As we continue through the book this week, we will work on characterization. My aim for the students, is to build upon our work on social norms from last year, to understand how society impacts a culture, and to show empathy for all perspectives.

We ended the week with our overnight camping trip. This is the third camping trip I've been on, but it was by far the best! The competition was on! Students brought their best to the relays and competitions, we had many students do talents during the talent show, and the lip sync battles reached another level! In the 301s, Hayden rocked out on the mic, Randy jammed out on the guitar, and Riley, Tete, Kylee, Kyle, Sam, Randy, and Elizabeth danced to a tiktok. For our advisory lip sync, we chose the Friends Theme Song! I am so proud of how the 301s worked together in the relays, maintained a positive attitude, handled their nerves before the performances, and kept a smile on despite not coming in first. All advisories did a great job and we all had an enjoyable time.



TGIF from Walt

This was a very busy week at Big Pic. Most of my time this week was spent teaching ELA, cleaning the workshop and getting ready for our annual overnight. I am hoping to start my workshop safety training sessions next week, so I was getting all the equipment ready. I am hoping to make wooden cell phone speakers to teach students how to safely use the table saw, mitre saw, drill press, router and nail gun. This will be a fun project and I am looking forward to it.

This week's highlights:

This week we had our annual overnight trip, and it was a very positive experience. I really enjoy getting a chance to interact with all the students, and it is a great team building experience. I was able to run the fishing exploratory workshop again this year with 12 students, and I had a great time. We caught a few sunfish, but

unfortunately nothing very impressive this year. I also was able to teach the 101s how to play tail tag, and had a chance to learn more about our new students. There were many positive things that happened, and it was a great experience for everyone.

I continued to work with Randy and Daryl on our computer project. We replaced the motherboard on Darryl's computer, and it is now fully functional. This project definitely involved a great deal of problem solving, and Darryl learned much about computers. Next week we are going to continue working on Randy's computer, and hopefully he will get it working.

Stuart wants to make a ferret sculpture, so this week I helped him make an armature for it. We made a wire frame, built up the bulk with foil and added the first layer of clay. Next week, we will be experimenting with different ways to sculpt fur, and hopefully we will have the whole sculpture textured.



TGIF from Lenny

It's hard to reflect on last week and not have my thoughts dominated by memories of our annual overnight.

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday were also packed with great things so let's have a look at that first.

On Monday and Wednesday 401 advisory focused on numerous clerical items like screeners, important deadlines, STP requirements and next steps for internships. We also tried to work in some preparation for our upcoming lip sync battle but with limited success.

In both sections of Living Environment we learned about various cell characteristics and focused on plants by collecting leaves and flowers to do plant pressings. In ER we dug into the conflict between science and politics in regards to climate change.

Tuesday was a successful internship day with nine 401s out at internships, classes, shadow days or working with a mentor.

On Thursday morning, we embarked on what would be my 12th overnight with Big Picture. As usual, I had mixed emotions of excitement and nerves. The nerves were minimal though because the forecast was for beautiful weather. And great weather is a priceless gift for an overnight.

There were many great things about the overnight that I could mention. We had great



attendance, participation, events, food, sportsmanship and attitudes. But I'd like to focus on the growth of the 401s as an advisory over the two days. To be blunt, the personalities in our advisory have not led to many instances of consensus or harmony. So you can imagine that choosing a song that everyone agrees on, assigning roles, making props, creating costumes, learning lines and choreographing moves was far from easy. In fact, it was very difficult and resulted in yelling and hard feelings quite often. I could have intervened in a heavy-handed manner, but it was really important that in their senior year, they made the decision and took the actions to work together. I (along with Erin and Sue) kept encouraging them to listen, compromise, cooperate and have fun.

At our last (and only real) rehearsal on Thursday afternoon something clicked and they worked it all out. It was loud, crazy and hilarious, but it was theirs. We performed the number that evening and it was a hit. We pulled it off and had a blast doing it. It was one of my happiest moments with this advisory not only because we successfully accomplished something together, but also because we had fun doing it.

Some people may think that performing a group song at a lip sync battle is just a silly thing that you do for fun. That may often be the case. But in this situation, it was an opportunity for our advisory to use some important skills and see the power of positivity.

I will draw on the experiences from this overnight throughout the year to remind my 401s of how positive behaviors yield positive results. I hope you have a positively awesome week!



TGIF from Greg

The 201s went on their second overnight. This year they once again amazed us with their creativity and ability to work and problem solve as a team. They had great participation in all of the activities, with all of them doing their part and helping each other along, showing that they still can act as a family even after being apart all summer. They performed a fantastic skit in the talent show, with multiple songs and dances, organizing everything themselves exhibiting excellent leadership and organizational skills. They had a role for everyone and cheered each other on as well complimenting the other advisories with their good sportsmanship. They showed a level of maturity beyond their years, not caring who wins or loses, just that everybody was included and had a good time. Morgan and Claire acted like a well oiled machine in the peanut butter jelly competition, appearing that they had been tied together for years. Julien had a blast taking photos of all the advisories and being our resident journalist. We have a special Thank You to send out to Erin Oristian, Caitlyn's mom for coming out to Camp Hoover, bringing props for our lip-sync skit and helping Scotty with his make-up and outfit; it helped make the show!



TGIF from David

Geography is usually one of those Jeopardy questions that befalls us all. I scantily remember the Geography I learned in my US History and Geography class in high school. This was in Pennsylvania, but no matter where you went to school I doubt Geography was at the core of your learning. For Austin, he has a working knowledge of Scandinavian countries, Russia, and other land masses that are closer to the Arctic. He knows this mostly for his preparation for a zombie apocalypse. I disagree with him that a zombie apocalypse is imminent, but he has a complete plan for survival that includes retreat to one of these colder regions. I learned as much during our Overnight trip to Camp Hoover this past week. Typically, our overnight is an opportunity to learn more about students and further build strong personal relationships. I learned all about Austin's plan while watching a group of students hit a ball at one another's feet during rousing games of Gaga Ball. I am slightly surprised that Austin did not have a plan in case zombies attacked during our overnight, especially with the open fields and woods encircling us. I will have to propose he develop a plan that includes protection, or escape using the geography of Camp Hoover.

Another year, another overnight, and the first year I had an excuse not to spend the night. My six month old son required my assistance that night and the following morning, so Everett's needs won out.

Although, I did not miss the such as our relay races, advisory talks, and advisory lip scorekeeper once again loss of points, or earning points power my scorekeeper hat finest pleasures I experience sheer power to keep students what you want does often the edge of abusing that only in the fun abuse of power the spirit of competition.

is a competition between advisories. This competition was set forth thousands of years ago. We are just carrying on a competition that began before any of us existed.

The winning advisory of the overnight came down to five points. There were five points that separated the 401s from the 201s. The 401s ultimately won, giving Lenny his first advisory win for the overnight. The 201s came so close, and even though they gave me a ten second stare down during their lip sync performance (of which I returned with my own steely glare)

they managed to put pressure on the 401s the entire time through their teamwork and determination. The 201s have the ability to become the advisory leaders in all aspects of Big Picture, not just the overnight competition. We will have to make sure that we keep the pressure on them to carry this momentum the entire school year.

All the elements that needed to come together to make this a successful overnight came to pass. I hope this means the powers that be that have observed this event for thousands of years do not decide to throw a wrench in the cog of our good fortune. Or, zombies attack. But, at least we have Austin to take care of that event.



most important events science event, sync. I was dangling the threat of over the students. The wilds is one of the all year long. The away, or have them do leave me teetering on power. Of course, ways that encourages Because, the overnight



TGIF from April

This week was FULL! The 101s completed AND presented their collaborative projects where they learned how to incorporate Big Picture Learning components of ER, SR, QR and CO into any topic they might wish to learn about. It was slow going at first, but in the completion of the project/s and presentations, I was QUITE impressed. My goal is that through these collaborative projects they would learn how being at Big Picture they can follow their learning passion while incorporating the math, science, history and ELA into each project, and to create a product that indicates that learning. It really is not easy for new 101s to change their thought process of learning mostly through worksheets and tests to creating a project-based product through which they will demonstrate their learning. It will continue to be a work in progress, but I am very pleased with their first go at project based learning, and the perseverance they had to demonstrate through the different, therefore often challenging process! We also spent some time decorating the walkway to the school one morning, their designs were



very welcoming and it lasted all week (thanks to no rain). 101s also created poetry in the woods- without phones or talking! ;)

My USH students presented their 9/11 poetry projects this week. I was particularly impressed with 3 students work, Lizzy, Olivia and Caitlyn. I don't typically single student work out, however, these students were not yet born on 9/11/2001 and

yet they captured the essence of what an impact that day has had on society. Please stop by the school sometime and see the poetry projects and the visuals that will be on display.

We ended the week at our yearly overnight camping trip. I'm sure everyone has mentioned the trip. It was a great time and the 101s had 100% attendance! They each enjoyed the experience despite the pre-camp nerves. They won a few challenges, and learned how much they need to work together to accomplish what they desire...to win the next overnighter! 😊 Shout out to the 101s who continually asked what they could do to help during the trip. It was a FANTASTIC trip. Every advisory group had a great time. The 401s went all out in their last overnight and it was great to see them work together! With 100% 101 attendance they all stepped outside of their comfort zone and participated in the lip sync battle, which shows me, they are ready to be moved outside of their comfort zone and learn! Whoot whoot! I love my 101s!









