

LaFayette Big Picture TGIF

2019

SEPTEMBER 27

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



We had a great week at Big Picture. It was busy as usually, but the energy was positive. One of the many changes we have made for our school this year is how we lead Morning Meeting or Pick Me Up (PMU). In the past, I would lead PMU. Now each week, a two person team leads PMU. We are sharing the responsibility for planning the activities and sharing the leadership. Our students see that every adult in our school is a valued leader and contributor. Of course, we still want our students to plan and share Pick Me Ups. A student can schedule thier PMUs at any time and the adults will step away. I have enjoyed watching the staff share thier ideas for PMU.

This week we had our 401 students present their Senior Thesis Projects Proposals (STP). I was so proud of our 401s. It is no secret that this group has experienced their fair share of challenges. They are on a roll this year! From such a positive showing at the overnight to demonstrating how serious they are accepting the challenges for their final exhibitions, they are doing it! They truly have been here, been positive and been passionate! Lenny, Erin and David helped facilitate the day to make it so positive. Thank you! Thank you to Walt, whose name came up as a potential mentor in many of the project proposals. Lastly, to our panelist, Chad Jaconski and Susan Johnson from SUNY Morrisville, Asa Shenandoah and Jeff Vernoché, thank you for taking the time to spend the day with us, share your feedback and your connections. We will not waste the gifts of feedback you provided to us.

TGIF from Jessica

In the last newsletter I mentioned my aim of developing engaging lessons. I am also working towards this in my math classes as well.

In Algebra and Algebra Foundations we have gone over the real number system. We made flipable notes entailing the definition and examples for each number set. The students then worked in groups to sort a stack of numbers into a ven diagram of the number sets. Prior to starting lessons, I gave all students a pre-assessment to test their knowledge and discover what they already know. All algebra students understand the purpose of

pre-assessments, mid-point checks, and post assessments.

In Quantitative Reasoning the students have learned about the infinite possibilities of spreadsheets. We watched Matt Parker's video on spreadsheets where the students learned that every digital screen they look at is a spreadsheet! We used an online converter to change an image into a spreadsheet. The students are working to see how to use spreadsheets in a mathematical and numerical manner. With this skill, the students will be able to analyse and present data, they will be able to create and balance budgets and expense sheets, etc. We are currently working through Microsoft Excel's free online training program. The students are trying out their skills on spreadsheets as they learn them.

TGIF from Walt

Another week flew by at Big Pic. I spent most of my time this week helping seniors prepare for their STP prosals, working with students on the coffee shop and preparing the school wide argumentative essay that we are doing next Monday.

This week's highlights:

I started my safety workshop with students who are interested in working in the shop this trimester. We started off by going over how to use the table saw, chop saw and drill press safely. It was a good start, and next week I will be focusing on the router, scroll saw and finish nailer.

Our school coffee shop began selling coffee this week, and things got off to a good start. Dawsun is still helping manage this project, but she has recruited students to run the coffee shop. Kaia, JJ,

Ezra, Adam, and Sam started this week. JJ and Kaia are in charge of making espresso drinks, Adam is in charge of drink prep and drip coffee, and Sam and Ezra are responsible for taking orders, handling transactions and delivery. So far things are going smoothly, and the students are working together well.

For Exploratory Workshop, I am doing board games. This week I introduced students the King Of Tokyo. This is a fast paced, Godzilla themed game that involves a great amount of strategy. The students loved the game, and had a great time playing. I am looking forward to playing again next week.

Colby has been working with RJ (Nikki's son) after school on an RC car project. We had RC cars from a student project last year that needed some repair, so RJ and Colby have been fixing them up for me. So far they have been doing a great job, and Colby has taught RJ much about RC cars.



TGIF from Lenny

As I predicted, the past week was dominated by preparation for the STP proposals. 401s still attended internships and workshops, but advisory time was utilized for the sole purpose of being well prepared to present our STP ideas. On Friday, we did just that. Here is an overview.

First I want to thank David and Susan from CSTEP at SUNY Morrisville for providing and preparing breakfast and lunch for panelists and presenters. David was also instrumental in assembling the panel, setting up the auditorium (with help from students like Josh), and making sure things ran smoothly. Susan was also a panelist and was joined by Chad (also from SUNY Morrisville), Asa from the Jr/Sr High School and Jeff a local business owner and community member. Thank you panelists!

On Friday, all 14 of our 401s presented their ideas for a large scale, overarching project that will span much of their senior year. They presented to the panel while on stage using a slideshow to provide visuals and details. Following the presentations, the presenters received feedback, suggestions, resource ideas and encouragements from the panelists. This feedback will help strengthen and drive their projects.

Here is an overview of the projects at this stage.

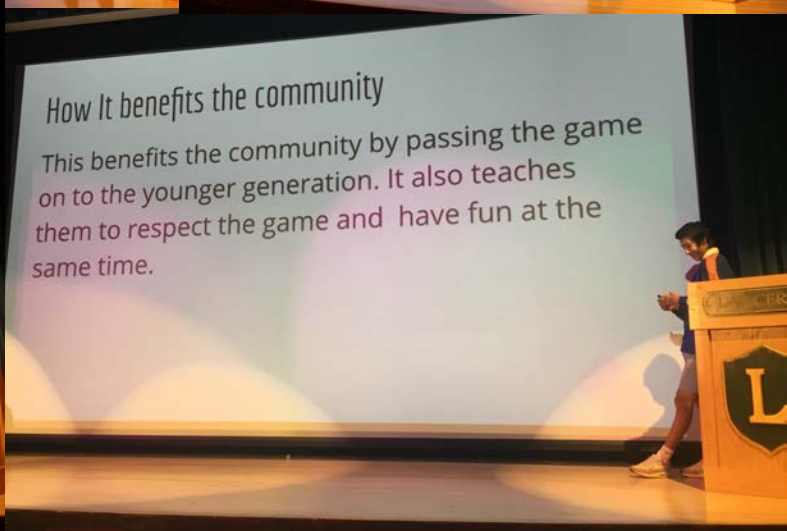
Sha'Nylah will be running a fashion show for residents at Loretto, Kaia will work with the McManhon Ryan Child Advocacy Center to educate and raise awareness in our community, Brianna hopes to create a dog park in Syracuse, Ezra will assist in set and costume design for both the elementary and Jr/Sr High

School plays, RJ will coordinate CPR training for our entire school and deliver basic first aid training as well, Josh will be building baseball dugout benches and equipment for LaFayette, Alyssa will work with special education students at Ed Smith with a focus on music therapy, Jamus will participate in and document ocean plastic clean ups, Audrey will create and organize a clothes closet at ONS, Thomas plans to build one or more Gaga Ball pits for schools in our district, Melissa will raise awareness for Indigenous cultures through art locally and through the BP network, Nikki will organize an event to honor her mother and support pit bull rescue efforts, Kyle will host an event that offers free oil changes for veterans and Kaleb will organize and run a lacrosse tournament for grades 2-3 in our community.

Although most of these projects will require considerable adjustments and fine-tuning, they each meet the basic requirements. Each project is in some way public, linked to student interest, benefits the community and has the potential for rigor.

We have an enormous amount of work ahead of us, but its good work. And we certainly started out on the right foot as each student has an idea, has a plan and presented with confidence. There was tons of positive energy and we ended the week Friday and I hope to pick up right where we left off. Have a great week!





TGIF from Greg

The 201s had a great start to their third full week of school! They have adjusted to their regular schedules and are delving into their New York State Regents classes, as well as starting their internships and first 201 Learning Plans. They are becoming acquainted with the expectations of Gateway, and are looking to find meaningful internships to base their first 201 exhibitions around. Kyler is starting this trimester with Tama Lacrosse again, gearing up to learn new ways to string lacrosse sticks and gain valuable customer service skills, Evan has started an internship working at a Giarrosso Sheet Metals, while Aiden has gone on a shadow day at our own Lafayette Grimshaw Elementary in the Physical Education Program. Aiden was later offered an internship, based off of his shadow day with Mr. LaRose,

and was praised on his positive interaction with the younger Lancer students! Claire has decided to branch out this trimester, broadening her views into the arts. While Claire will never give up on engineering and furthering her scientific education, she has taken an internship with our favorite photographer and mentor, Carol DiSalvo, learning new skills in photography. We've also found a great resource in our unofficial super-experienced 201 class photographer, Julien Goddard for extra guidance. Julien is also taking an internship at LightWork, as well as with Carol. Our two new students, Gabe and Devyn are jumping right into the Big Picture program, starting their "Who Am I" projects with Joy, who is owed a great deal of THANKS for helping everyone both catch up and keep up with all the rigorous requirements at our school! We can't wait to see what all of our students accomplish and how they grow!

TGIF from David

I believe we should have presentations every Friday. Every student should have to publicly give a presentation on their project work every Friday. I am sure this is a terrifying proposition for students and their advisors, but the Seniors proved on Friday that the pressure of a deadline can bring out the best in every one of them. On Friday, our Seniors took the first step in their final year at Big Picture. Students presented their Senior Thesis Projects to a panel of mentors who provided feedback on how to strengthen each project. The seniors did exceptionally well at explaining their projects. Not only were they effective at conveying their vision, their vision had depth.

I am sure Lenny will go into more detail on his students' projects, so I will spare you a second recount of every project. These projects were not thrown together just this week, but were evaluated over the past few weeks. So, maybe a

presentation every Friday would not be realistic, or share the same depth as the STP presentations. But, weekly presentations may be a good measure on the path to exhibitions.

Other than the STP Presentations and making five lasagnas (2 vegetarian with a bechamel sauce and 3 with a red sauce and meat) for everyone to enjoy at lunch on Friday, I was busy working on other areas that took me away from Big Picture for a bit this week. There is actually a whole world operating and moving beyond the school walls. It was rather strange to witness the moving world, especially since July 1st my excursions outside my own house was walking my son and dog around the block and now back at Big Picture. Although, it also served as a refresher that the world outside the building continues on whether we are a part of it or not. Our students' STPs inject them into the moving world, often moving the world in the direction they want. Our seniors will not just be passengers in the moving world, but drivers deciding how fast it moves.

TGIF from April

101s began their Who Am I projects in earnest this week. Some are still struggling with the concept of project based learning, as well as doing an entire project based on them! Others are taking right off with their ideas and it is exciting!

I keep referring them back to our sewing project and the examples they produced to understand how to tie various learning products to one main learning point. We actually began sewing our pillows this week, and they are eager to finish them! Now that some 101s are beginning to grasp that they can be CREATIVE in their learning, I am beginning to see some headway 😊 and I think they are getting excited!

We have really done SO much already this school year, I feel like our days are a full out sprint. Reading and writing everyday, STAR math and reading assessments, learning about internships and ImBlaze, going on the overnighter, four 101s are members of The JNHS and went on a college visit this week. They are learning in their math and living environment workshops, enjoying choice in exploratory, meeting with their lunch bunch, and few games of advisory basketball knock out...it is CRAZY how busy we have been! I will tell you....MOST of the 101s have NO IDEA what an indoor voice is! Holy cow! Lol

Even though some of the 101s have been together for many school years we are just now learning how to get along in our advisory room, where they will spend so much of their upcoming high school years.

On Friday we were able to watch the 401s present their Senior Thesis Project Proposals. It was AMAZING to have the 101s sit quietly through 4 presentations; that was a feat in itself! My learning target was achieved however not in their quiet, respectful demeanor as we



sat in the auditorium, but rather in the discussion we had back in our room regarding what they learned by attending the proposals. I was very pleased with the reflections they were sharing and what they said they learned by watching the upper classmen present. They were quite impressed and now have a better understanding of what will be expected of them not only in the presentation of their exhibitions, but the preparation the real, rigorous and what should be passionate work that goes into a good learning plan and exhibition.

Next week we will be completing our first argumentative essay, have our school photos taken on Thursday and attend Fitness Friday at Morrisville. It will be another busy week as we enter into October. I would like to mention, a few 101s are already getting behind in PE due to lack of clothing or footwear. I have told them I will wash their PE clothes here at school when needed, (so they will not have to take them home and forget to bring them back) please make sure they come to school on Monday with proper PE clothes- T shirt and shorts and sneakers that tie up. Thank you!

