

# LaFayette Big Picture TGIF

2021

FEBRUARY 26

## We are PRESENT, POSITIVE and PASSIONATE!



It is the end of February! The end of February! Kym and I chuckled a few times this week thinking about our conversations with each other this past summer. We knew that our kids were coming back to school, but we had no idea how long it would last. We doubted we would make it in person to November. Never in our wildest dreams did we think we would make it to March! I am very proud of our students and staff for being diligent and working to make sure everyone is safe. The work is paying off. We also owe a huge thank you to Mr. Belfield for his leadership and guidance. We are so appreciative to have the ability to be in school 5-days each week. Now our next dream can be of having everyone back to school together and having all of our classes meet in our wing. I so miss our in-person morning meetings with our whole school. We have continued the practice of morning Pick Me Ups and we do have a good start to our day, but I miss being able to see everyone in person, clapping for our goals met and singing our mail time song!

We also welcomed all of our interns this week. We have two students from OCC and three students from SU who are interning a few days each week. The interns have been observing and are beginning to plan an interest based project for their internship work. Just like our students, we want our interns to develop a project that they are interested in and passionate about. I am excited to see what they develop.

## TGIF from Greg

This week the 301s had a very productive week. Gabe is connecting with his banking internship virtually, and working on developing a website for the Lafayette branch of SECNY. Claire is working persistently on her robotics, while she balances sports with the girls basketball team. Morgan, Claire, Caitlyn and Adam are taking college classes at OCC, they are learning to do their classes both virtually and in-person. Evan is still immersed in the welding program at BOCES, studying for and passing one of his certification tests this week - with FLYING COLORS! On Tuesdays and Thursdays he has been teaching Jacoby, (101), Colby, (201), and Hayden, (301) the basic welding techniques and terminology to get them ready for welding classes next year. He is proving to be a patient and kind teacher, helping them through. Kyler is making plans with Aiden and Gabe to get into the construction of their skateboard ramp, finally coming up with the materials to complete it. Caitlyn, Josh, and Garrett worked on their photography display located in the hallway. Hayden completed his exhibition on poker

games. He discussed the history of the game and gambling in the United States. Austin is making plans to fill out job applications and practice interviews, using the real-world financial skills he's learned in Jessica's class to further his knowledge of the workplace. Griffin is doing a tremendous job with the coffee shop, helping Dawsun and Olivia keep it all organized. As a class they began their health projects, ELA Regents short story readings, and have been working diligently on their autobiographies that will need to be completed by the end of next year. In QR the students are finishing up on EVERFI, a program to teach them finance skills. They spent time this week reviewing those skills and applying for scholarships that are offered through this program upon completion. In IXL math they are continuing to make progress earning certificates and furthering their skill levels. They have had fun writing fictional stories for their journal entries, incorporating each other into each of their stories and adding a little hilarity to each morning. The 301s are beginning their T3 learning plans for this trimester and getting to wrap up their junior year.

## TGIF from David

The past week was mostly focused on developing learning plans. These kinds of weeks are very exciting because students begin to develop new questions, new projects, and new ideas. Some students decide to explore new interests, and some build upon last trimester's interests. Beginning our last trimester, the 101s have a better understanding of how to craft a learning plan. This entire first year is about developing a new way to learn.

Friday morning, students presented learning plan drafts. As an advisory, we provided feedback to everyone on how to improve product development and expectations for learning. We have learning plans focused around puppetry, agriculture, welding, the military, the mafia, education, and Yugoslavia. Students are going to show their learning through products such as a Darwin puppet, website, grill smoker, paintings, and more. We are going to display our learning plans alongside the 201s in the main hallway. We want everyone to see the learning being done by each individual 101. It also helps to physically see the learning plan to be reminded of goals and expectations.

Our students always need guidance from professionals. So, if you, or you know someone that could serve as a mentor please let us know. If you want to know more particulars about what a student is learning, please give us a call. Our students succeed even more with your professional tutelage.





## TGIF from Jessica

Certificates of Achievement in Math have been awarded to several students at Big Picture! As of January, we have decided to use IXL Math as a way to develop all students' math abilities and reach our school wide math goals. The students have taken this opportunity and are making the most with it. They are excited to reach their goals, be confident of their learning, and see their success. Over the past month, students have answered 8,380 questions in IXL! Every two weeks, we celebrate their achievements. The top 5 students who have answered the most questions are recognized with a Certificate of Achievement. Ronnie and Jacob have been awarded first place in most questions answered during the last month's two reports. Since September, students have answered 24,876 questions!! This is amazing work and dedication!

When students are working on skills in IXL, their aim is to achieve a smart score of 80 or above. When they reach this skill in any lesson, it is an indication that they have become proficient in that skill. Meaning they understand the concept and how to use the skill. Achieving proficiency in a lesson is what it takes to improve math levels and reach school wide goals. Every two weeks we recognize students who have, not one proficient skill, but 10 proficient skills with a Certificate of Completion! Bruce, Adam, Claire, Emily, Stone, Aiden, Secorrah, Lucas, Carson, Elijah, Dayton, Gabe, and Jacob have all achieved proficiency in 10 skills!! Faith, Cody, and Ronnie have

achieved proficiency in 20 skills!! Jacoby is leading the pack with 30 proficient skills!! In one month, the students have achieved proficiency in 153 more skills to bring this year's total to 469 proficient skills school wide!

After reaching proficiency, students can challenge themselves to become masters! IXL is designed to provide continuous practice in a skill which means their smart score is not an average, rather its variable and tracks their success in the skill as they answer

questions correctly and incorrectly. This feature allows students to attain a smart score of 100 in any skill and achieve mastery. In order to do this, students must go through a 10 question challenge round where the program asks them high level application questions for the skill. If they are able to succeed through the challenge level they have shown that they understand the skill and can apply it to advance level questions, thus they achieve mastery in that skill. Students who complete 10 skills to mastery are awarded a Certificate of Excellence. In the past month, students have mastered 69 skills bringing us to a year's total of 196 skills mastered! Faith and Ronnie have diligently worked to achieve 10 mastered skills! Leading the pack, again, is Jacoby who has 20 mastered skills!

I am so proud of every students' work in IXL across Big Picture! This Friday alone in Algebra Foundations with the 101s was spectacular. We have 4 teachers in the class and this Friday we welcomed 3 college student interns to join and assist students. Everyone was emerged in mathematics, learning, figuring out problems, working through misconceptions for the entire period! The beauty of it all was that it is completely student focused learning and teacher facilitated. Every single student was at different levels, working on different skills, and different questions at their own pace. On Friday alone, 2 students completed one skill to proficiency, 4 students completed two skills, and Lucas completed 3 skills to proficiency! We were so engaged in learning that we almost missed the end of class and I had to kick students out to get to the next class.

IXL has become a program where the staff and students feel like they have the ability to do the math and can figure it out. I have used our positive behavior points system as a way to award students with points for their achievements and engagement along with the certificates. I believe that the work we are putting into IXL is providing the growth stepping stones for our students to reach their individual growth goals and for our school to reach it's school wide mathematics goal.



## TGIF from Lenny

Our last communication was prior to winter break so I am reflecting on the week before break as well as the week after break.

In Living Environment our 101s wrapped up a lab and engaged in some skill building activities. One such activity I call the Lego Challenge. In this challenge two students sit across from one another with a divider between them blocking the view of each other's hands. Each student is given a small bag of Legos with the same number and type of Legos in each bag. One student builds something with their Legos then describes to their partner how to build it. No peeking, verbal communication only. When the second structure is built the partners compare. Then they disassemble the structures and switch roles. I love to hear the creative ways in which they communicate and work through the challenges. And it is always entertaining to see the results when communications break down.

I also did the Lego Challenge with my ER sections and it was equally successful. After the break my ER groups shifted from the chemistry of plastics to environmental impacts. We learned about plastic production, recycling, landfill, incineration and ocean plastic pollution. At the end of the week students were tasked with creating solutions to the plastic problem. Next week we will share our ideas and see which ones we can put into place.

The interest-based projects have been ramping up as we move into the next learning cycle. Ronnie and I have made a plan to begin germinating seeds next week and

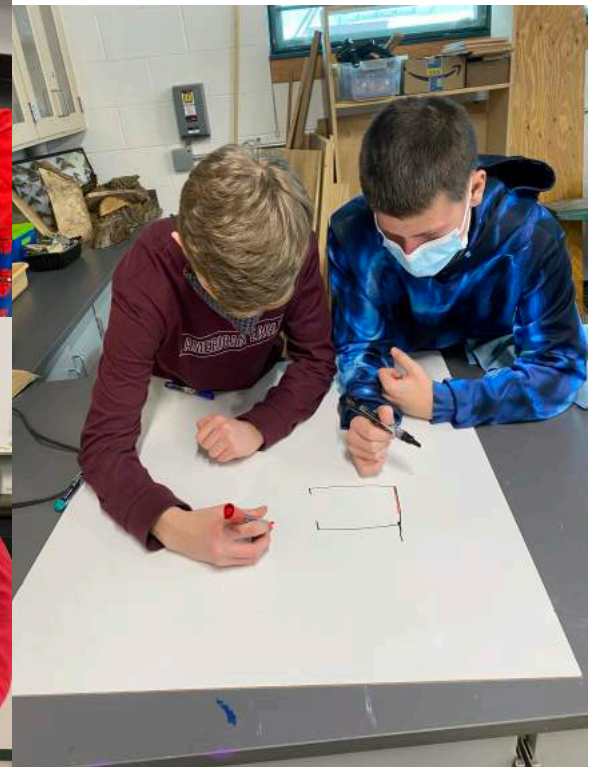


the timing is perfect. Not only is this the best time to germinate in our zone, his project will coincide with Lizzy's greenhouse project and the 201 agriculture project. I love when projects dovetail into others. Lucas and Steven have been wood burning and brainstorming projects daily. We have plans to turn a bowl on the lathe with Lucas. Cody is also going to employ some wood

working skills to build a puppet. And plans are in place for that puppet to play a role in our Living Environment workshop. More to come on that one for sure.

There were many other students also rolling with projects. Evan, Jacoby and Coleby collaborated on welding ideas, Adam has plans to make a stool, the 301 half-pipe project is moving forward, Garrett tweaked plans for his guitar, and Tete is ready to engrave her medallions. Although project work can present constant challenges, they also provide a purpose and positive momentum for our students. That is just what we need to push us through this last leg of winter and into spring.

Have a purposeful week!





## TGIF from April

Welcome back from what I hope was a restful winter break! Before the break we had some fun on Friday. Christine and Erin had planned spirit week activities and on Friday it was PJ/Freaky Friday- which meant student and teacher swapped roles. It was FUN! Lexi and I were the Freaky Friday Twins all day. Steven and I swapped roles in USH and he shared a kahoot he made. We also roasted smores thanks to Susan. The 201s had done such a fantastic job academically, we decided to have a "Just Dance" party. Needless to say, it was a fun way to kick off the winter break! The 201s are completing their new learning plans and continue working through the book *Brainstorm*. They do not care for the word 'adolescent' anymore LOL, however, I do believe they are gaining valuable insights to the functions of their brain during this crucial and creative time in their lives. I am beginning a new unit on tolerance and understanding this semester. It fits handily with what they are learning in *Brainstorm*. I started off the unit this week by reading a book by Charles Mackesy called: *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse*. It is an absolutely BEAUTIFUL read. If you have not read it, I suggest you check it out. If I can get 15 teenagers to fall in love with the book then I bet you will too! I can confidently say they fell in love with it after reading their subsequent journal entries.

Teaching tolerance however is not all warm and fuzzy topics like *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse*. It requires a great deal of emotional lifting. We rolled into the difficult topic of bullying and the case of Jamie Nabozny. We will continue to learn and grow through these and other challenging topics this semester, please feel free to discuss the learning with your 201 and let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Just to lighten the days a bit, we continue coloring, yoga



and other mindfulness activities. However, on Friday the 201s asked if we could play mosquito...a favorite game of theirs that involves teamwork and pool noodles...you can't beat that combination! So after learning about our brain functions we went outside and enjoyed the sun and pretended mosquitos are out in the snow. :) It was a good way to end the week. We also will continue to work on annotating and proper research as well as citing that research as we prepare for Gateway (Successful completion of 2 years of high school.). We, as an advisory, have talked about what we would like to have our Gateway celebration look like, however, COVID has possibly changed those ideas. We will be making and firming our plans for the Gateway celebration soon - as this IS our final semester for this school year!

(WOW!)

Another topic students have discussed and taken action is they formed a 201 'committee' for fundraising for our trip to Washington DC in our 301 year. Many of the 201s are eagerly anticipating the trip and are taking action steps to begin serious fundraising campaigns. Please support them in their endeavors. They have brainstormed many great ideas to implement. More will be shared as they prep and run the fundraising activities. One thing you could help us with right now is a can drive. 201s decided to do ONGOING BOTTLE/CAN DRIVE to help raise money for the trip. If you have any cans you would like to donate please drop them off to the 201 advisory at school. Thank you in advance!

Hollis continues to work hard in the kitchen and this week they made pretzels that Phoenix shared. I

thought they tasted just like Annies from the mall! Ronnie is also working with Hollis and made little cherry tarts which he shared with staff. Beautiful looking food that tastes great and involves a great deal of learning! Congratulations, Ronnie, Phoenix, Leighann, Carson and Hollis for having such a successful internship during this crazy period of COVID!

# *YOU ARE VIRTUALLY IRREPLACEABLE*

## **MENTOR A STUDENT**

### **VIRTUAL MENTORING**

In normal times, students at LaFayette Big Picture are out of school at internship sites for two days each week.

Because of COVID-19 restrictions, our students have less of an opportunity to be in the community learning from professionals.

### **HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

#### **1. MENTOR PRESENTATIONS**

A mentor presents their work and career, the skills and dispositions that help them in their job, their journey, and advice to the students who share similar interest.

#### **2. INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW**

Professionals meet with a student or students seeking information on their career, the industry, and the corporate culture of a potential future workplace.

#### **3. DISTANCE INTERNSHIP**

Mentors meet with students on set dates and times to complete work and develop a project that is beneficial to the site.

#### **4. MENTOR SUPPORTED PROJECT**

Mentor provides industry expertise and guidance for students to develop a project with real work learning connection.



**USE YOUR POWER.....BE A MENTOR**  
**CALL THE LAFAYETTE BIG PICTURE SCHOOL: 315-504-1000**