

LaFayette Big Picture TGIF

2021

APRIL 9

We are PRESENT, POSITIVE and PASSIONATE!



I usually write my TGIF on Friday during the day. This is well before I receive the weekly reflections from my staff. However, this week, I am writing after reading my staff's reflections. You can feel the energy of the past week in their writing. It was a really good week. I know the weather contributed to our good vibes....the sun was shining and we were able to be outside. But there were other conditions that made the week wonderful: we are all back in our wing. With 3 feet distancing, all advisories are back in the Big Picture area. We held Morning Meeting/PMU in person! It feels amazing! I absolutely love being able to see everyone and have everyone see each other as a way to start our day. Lastly, students were engaged in their projects. It was a wonderful week. I hope you enjoy reading and feeling the energy!



TGIF from Walt

Most of this week was spent working with the 101s on reading comprehension skills. I have been developing lessons based around my favorite short stories and we have been doing them during advisory time. I have been using IXL regularly with my 101 students for both ELA and Math to help improve STAR testing scores, but the 101s have hit a wall with it and needed a break from the repetition. Doing themed reading lessons has definitely been working, and I am starting to see progress again.

This week's highlights:

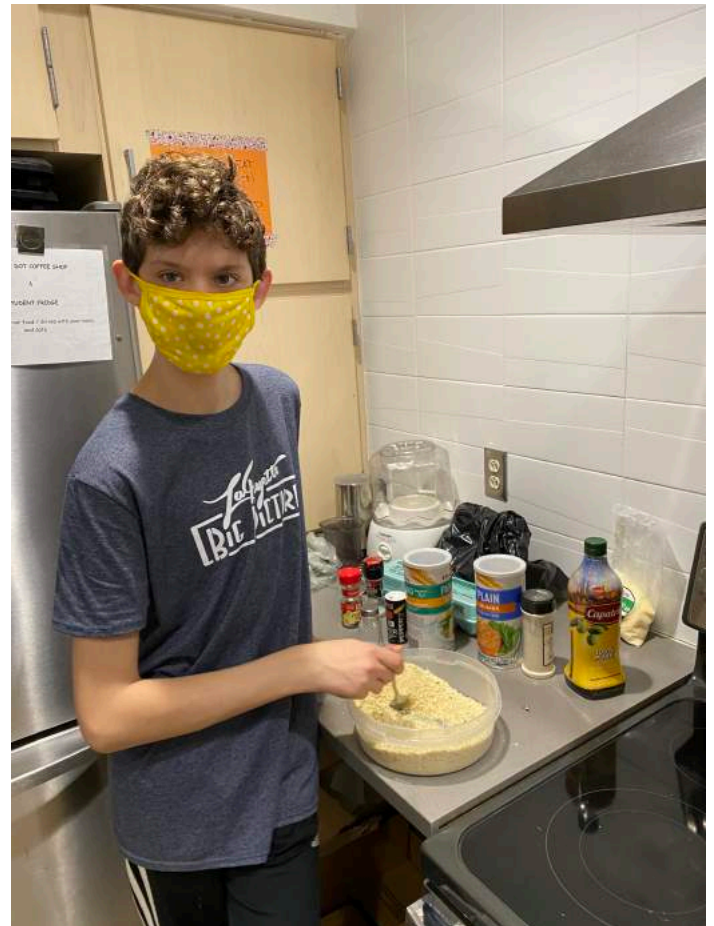
I have been teaching the seniors how to cook basic dishes, and this week we made stovetop mac and cheese from scratch. This is a classic comfort food which is very easy to make, and it is far superior to it's instant boxed counterparts. After trying it for themselves, the seniors all agreed. Next Friday we are going to be making pancakes.

Cody has been learning how to sew as part of his learning plan, and he has been hard at work making plushies. Christine has been helping him with the

process and has been teaching him how to use the sewing machine. He is currently working on making bird plushies that Lenny is going to use to teach evolution. Each bird plushie is based around real birds that have developed unique features. This is a great project, and Cody has been doing an impressive job so far.

Bruce has an interest in working with cars and possibly going into the repair industry, so this week I taught him some body work basics. I put him to work removing rust from the rear quarter panels on my truck. We are going to be filling in the smaller rust spots with Bondo, and we will be collaborating with Evan to weld new pieces onto the areas too large for filler. This is a fun project, and it is a great skill for Bruce to learn.

As part of his learning plan, Ronnie is learning how to make grilled cheese in large batches to serve to students during lunch time. He is interested in culinary skills, and Hollis and I have been working with him to teach him basic skills and protocols to use when cooking. This week we made our first batch of grilled cheese sandwiches, and it went very well. Now that we have our system down, next week Ronnie is going to doing things all on his own.



TGIF from Jessica

This week the seniors focused on career readiness. We used Everfi's Financial Literacy program to learn about Income and Employment along with Financing Higher Education. The 401s learned what the average salary would be for their career field of interest and how to calculate their monthly and hourly pay rates. They research what level of education would be required for their career choice and what the average cost of that would be. We discussed how our actions reflect on our hireability, especially when it comes to letters of recommendations and references. We looked at interview skills and common interview questions. The students worked as partners and interviewed each other. Then we reflected on job skills. A few seniors took the opportunity to attend our human resources guest speaker meeting on what makes a good employee. In conjunction with this work, the students worked on updating their resumes they made from 201 year and completing their 401 career plans. Next week we are discussing consumer skills.

TGIF from David

Students reminded me of what it meant to be a teenager this week. Following the week off, students were slow to get back into their regular sleep mode. That is, they spent Spring Break staying up late, and sleeping in late. They then had to make a quick shift to school hours and their bodies were not ready to make that change. So, maybe by Thursday they were back on some form of their regular schedule. Although this schedule is never the best for school, teenagers rarely do what is best for their bodies. I remember staying up late and sleeping in late in high school during breaks and the summer. That was mostly my freshman and sophomore year. By the time I was a junior, I had a job, so getting more sleep was prudent to not falling asleep on the job.

When students were showing signs of slowing down, it was my job to jolt them awake. This meant keeping the class interested and filling the gaps in energy. Energy can be infectious and there were signs it began to work at times. Energy did not mean I was solely exerting a lot of physical energy,

but asking a lot of questions and being inquisitive. I showed my interest in what students were doing. Cody is actively learning the skills to make his own puppet and build a lesson on the theory of evolution. Steve keeps building more web pages on the history of Yugoslavia. Kat is completing more sketches of mob bosses. Dayton is sketching out his logos and learning Photoshop. Ronnie is

improving his journaling and organizational skills. Stone finished reading another book and started a new one while adding more pages to his own novel. The list goes on.

Trying to keep up with all the students' individual learning is probably the best part of working at Big Picture. It challenges me to keep up with their learning so I can ask the right

questions and provide

quality feedback. Plus, learning about new topics is always beneficial to improving oneself. We are all on a journey to improve ourselves. I just get the luxury of improving myself in a community of learners.



TGIF from April

WOW! What a fantastic week of learning! SO much was happening, I could write pages, however, I will try to be brief.

US history students are working on reading content specific literacy and analyzing what they are reading. It is challenging, but they are rising to the challenge and I am proud of their efforts.

This week we began exploratory groups to allow students to earn internship hours they have been missing due to COVID. Students signed up to attend a workshop with staff for various learning skills and techniques that interest them. I offered charcoal drawing and the group of students attending exploratory with me, began a charcoal drawing project. I was impressed with the work they did as we had students who never used charcoal to just a couple who have. We worked on tone, shading and 3 dimensional drawing using the charcoal to draw spheres and shapes and then fruit. Next week the group will tackle the human form using charcoal. It is really nice to work with mixed grade levels on a project!

Coleby Felber is fortunate, as a BP student who was able to start his full time off campus internship this week at K & H Motorsports. He is loving it and is already learning so much! K & H even gave him some K & H printed apparel to wear while there! We are SO appreciative of those businesses that are now able, and beginning to open back up to our students.

Speaking of businesses... 201 Jordyn S. is tackling creating a business to help our advisory raise money to go to Washington DC next year. She is

learning how to take research she is doing and put it into actual, real world applications. Our advisory is beginning an agricultural program that we hope to benefit our Big Picture High School and the LaFayette School District in general for years to come!

Jordyn is spearheading a goat farm portion of the Big Picture Ag Program (BPAP), and Bug Rice is tackling the vegetable portion of the farm. In the very near future, Leighann will be the foreperson in charge of the floral portion of the farm. Each of these 201's are the leaders in their specific area of interest and will be the driving force behind our fundraising efforts for our class trip to DC; by growing and then marketing the goods from the Big Picture Ag Program. Our entire advisory is part of the overall project- creating and maintaining the farm for profit. However, Jordyn is thinking more LONG term and is creating a farm that future Big Picture students will be able to work and learn on. Bug and Jordyn have been meeting regularly with their mentor- agriculture specialist, Melanie Palmer.

This week however, all members of the advisory were able to finally participate in the farm in some fashion. Mainly the advisory was physical labor to allow for the farm success; in the hopes that the farm can financially support our desire to have the ultimate learning experience in Washington DC. The advisory students were able to meet and appreciate Mr. Bill Storrier who graciously has allowed the BPAP to organize and operate on his retired farm. Bill and his sons Tim and Rick, want students to be able to experience firsthand the ability to be self-sufficient in the area of agriculture. Agriculture and understanding the life sustaining food supply that people need is important for

students. The Storriers want students to understand what it takes to produce the food they eat and enjoy; that it doesn't just come from the grocery store. The Big Picture Ag Program may open the minds of students to find that they may now, and in the future, enjoy a life of working in agriculture. This farm experience is so important in a world where so many teens think they are going to become 'rich' by making internet videos



or playing video games. Humanity can not survive without agriculture. Rick, Bill, Tim and I are so excited to give students the opportunity to explore various agricultural experiences. Once our advisory gets the project 'built' we will be inviting other students to join in! On Friday afternoon in USH with me, almost all of the 101 students told me they wanted to be able to work on the farm. It is really exciting!

Students getting outside, working collaboratively, getting off of technology, putting down their phones and working with their hands- these things all happened on Friday!

Bug has been germinating seeds for the vegetable garden and the seedlings are sprouting! Jordyn has had some help from Ricky, Bug, and Elijah the last two weeks preparing the retired farm for goats. By this Thursday, with help from Rick S. Jordyn, Elijah, Bug and I fence posts started to go in for the goat farm. The weather in CNY is unpredictable, so we have to jump when the opportunity arises, and thanks to after school and into the evening/dark work on Thursday by Jordyn and Faith with the help and supervision of me and Rick, on Friday the entire 201 advisory was able to go to the BPAP and not only did they get ALL the remaining wooden fence posts in the ground but they were able to meet Bill, they moved brush, pulled up old Ag Silage bag plastic, learned how the Ag bags could be disposed of. (Originally farmers were told to bury it- we don't want to do that and we pulled what seemed to be miles and miles of it out of the ground [HARD work], so I challenged the advisory to research how we could remove the plastic from the farm in an environmentally friendly way. The challenge was accepted! :))



OH MY I have never been so proud of this group! I have NEVER seen a group of students work so collaboratively. Everyone worked, hard physical labor and without a word of complaint. They got dirty, they had no phones all day- so they had to look at each other and communicate. They were amazing! At one point I heard: "1,2,3 PULL!" I stopped what I was doing and looked to see what was happening. I witnessed at least 8 of them working together on a common cause. They were not in their usual little groups, they all laughed and talked and worked (hard!) ! If someone saw a need in a group that was working, they simply lent a hand. This group is

typically pretty angsty in school, they do not work well together and their words typically are not always nice toward each other. What I have witnessed when we are outside, away from our cell phones, with no internet accessibility (farm location does not have internet access), is simply amazing.

The collaboration, the physicality of work, the good communication, those who normally sit back -stepping up to physically demonstrate leadership and work ethic, the kind way they helped each other - I am simply overwhelmed!

After Friday, I feel the need to get the 201's out on the farm, without their phones every week! My heart is so full from working beside them, and watching them work together so beautifully. Stay tuned...as I am sure there is more to come with the BPAP - knowing spring is a very busy season for farms; and considering Lizzy (401) has been working on the Big Pic greenhouse as her STP, and the 101's are interested in the farm... We have only just begun!!



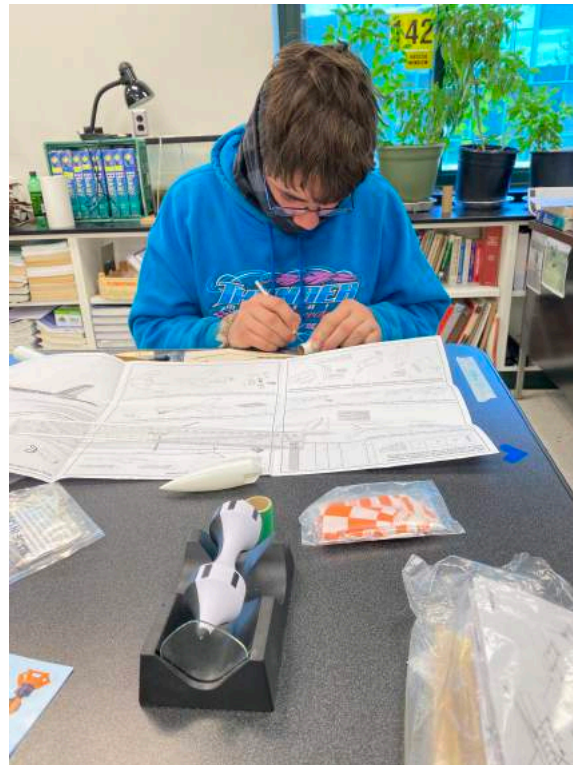
TGIF from Lenny

This past week at BP could be best characterized by three words: positivity, energy and personalization. There was so much happening at any given moment. The week felt like a whirlwind. We wouldn't have it any other way. Here is a look.

In both sections of ER we worked on building our model rockets. Many skills were needed to correctly assemble the rockets. I am looking forward to the launch next week. In LE we continued to learn about plants by looking closely at prepared and wet mount slides. We capped off the week by juicing fruits and vegetables as we learned about their nutritional value. I was happy to see students trying something new. For some, even celery juice.

We had exploratory on Tuesday and I ran a cooking session where we made chicken cutlets. Kat, Lucas and Ronnie did the prep work, cooking, clean up and only some of the eating. They were so proud, and generous, that they shared more than they ate. I'm proud of that group as well. They did a super job, learned a bunch and enjoyed the experience.

There were many projects happening in and around the shop as well. Claire has been working on building an electrolysis apparatus to create hydrogen gas. We have tried a couple different setups and are getting closer to the desired results. We didn't over research the topic so as to leave space for some trial and error. Those are often



the best learning experiences. The plants that Ronnie is growing are doing well along with plants that the other LE students started before break. Lucas helped with new planting and watering this week. Next week we will need to move some of the seedling to larger pots. We also cleaned and organized the large shed and Lucas was the lead student worker. His seemingly endless energy and helpful nature make him a huge asset to our school.

Of course there were also students painting, wood burning, welding, sewing, cooking etc. all week so as I said, it was busy. I'll take busy any day. Have a positive and productive week!