

# LaFayette Big Picture TGIF

2022

MARCH 11

We are PRESENT, POSITIVE and PASSIONATE!



For the past several weeks, Lenny, Walt, Jessica and I have been learning and working with a group of Big Picture Learning educators focused on the International Big Picture Learning Credential (IBPLC). This was created by educators from Big Picture Learning Australia. We are working with staff from Australia, Tasmania, Barbados, Bronx and Buffalo. This work is reenergizing me. It has been a fantastic experience to reflect on our evaluation practices with those that are committed to similar work as us. It is great to learn a new way of looking at evaluation frames and discussing how a piece of a students work meets or does not meet the levels in the frames. We look at the work with the question: HOW IS THIS STUDENT GOOD rather than how good is this student. Spend a moment thinking about that. You end in a completely different place!

This week, Kyler attended our meeting to share his Maple Syrup project. Kyler stayed after school to attend the meeting. He shared photo and video evidence of his work in the areas of construction and modification to the sugar shack, the evaporator and tree tapping. Kyler was so engaging and was able to describe the learning he has done, the steps he has taken, the modification and changes he needed to make as well as the adult mentors he has worked with to make this a successful project. The growth, maturity and the ownership Kyler demonstrated in this meeting was exemplary. I could not be more proud of him. We used Kyler's work to practice using the IBPLC.

There is a group of Big Picture staff on the west coast doing similar work. I am also eager to learn about their experience.

**We are still looking for mentors in a few areas: Electrical Engineering, Animal Care, Illustration, and Video Editing. Let us know if you have a contact!**

## TGIF from Lenny

With the maple syrup project in full swing, much of the week centered around sap collection and preparing for the first boil. Although Kyler is the lead student, this project has created many work and learning opportunities for students and staff. Here is a look.

Last Sunday was unseasonably warm so Kyler was in the sugar bush collecting sap. He gathered 35 gallons on that day alone. And yes, he did this on a Sunday! The sap flow slowed during the start of the week with cooler temperatures. That meant less collecting so Kyler focused on other tasks. With the help of Lucas B. we created an elevated sap holding tank rack. We then ran a line through the shack wall with a ball shut-off to later connect to the flue pan. Kyler also built a custom lid for the sap tank.

On Thursday we invited Barb from Pied Piper Maple Syrup to come look at our set-up. We have interacted with Barb at the Apple Festival over the years as she sells her syrup product and we sell our garlic in close proximity. Barb had offered to help us out when we began our syrup project and we took her up on her offer. After she helped us tweek our setup, we went to see her operation south of Otisco Lake. She was generous with her time and information and we nibbled on crystalized maple syrup as we learned about vacuum pumps, reverse osmosis and condensation collection systems. It was a real eye opener. We are very grateful to Barb at Pied Piper Maple Syrup for her continued support.

Thursday afternoon was sunny with temperatures in the high 40s so sap was flowing again. Friday morning Kyler and his crew were back in the woods where they collected another 35



gallons. We then had enough to boil so we had the green light. Meagan calibrated the thermometers, while Carson and Aiden led the firewood crew. We decided the wood needed to be slightly smaller so a number of 401s took the lead there. Kyler did a final check of the fittings and let the sap flow into the pans. We got a great fire going and soon steam was flowing out of the cupola we built. It was happening.

Over the course of the day Shawna and Meagan brought some high school students to see our set-up and I brought all 3 of my science workshops out to learn about the process. In addition, many students and staff stopped by to check things out and Kyler gave each visitor the information they needed. By the end of the day we had successfully "sweetened the pans" but didn't have quite enough sap to draw off any syrup. We certainly will have syrup on our next boil.

Another enormous highlight from the week took place on Wednesday morning. We were honored with 4 visitors from the Onondaga Nation who came to share knowledge on planting and medicines. They spoke to students and staff about the importance of planting, the relationship between humans and our food and shared specific knowledge of different varieties of corn. Samples of many of these varieties were available for us to examine after the talk. They also spoke about how sap is used as medicine and Kyler connected with them on this topic. He even took some of our guests out to the evaporator to show what he's been working on. It was an extremely informational visit and we will use much of what we learned as we begin germinating our seeds for spring planting.



I can't wait to report back on how our syrup production turns out. With warmer weather in the forecast the sap will be flowing and we will be boiling. Stay tuned. Have a wonderful week!

## TGIF from David

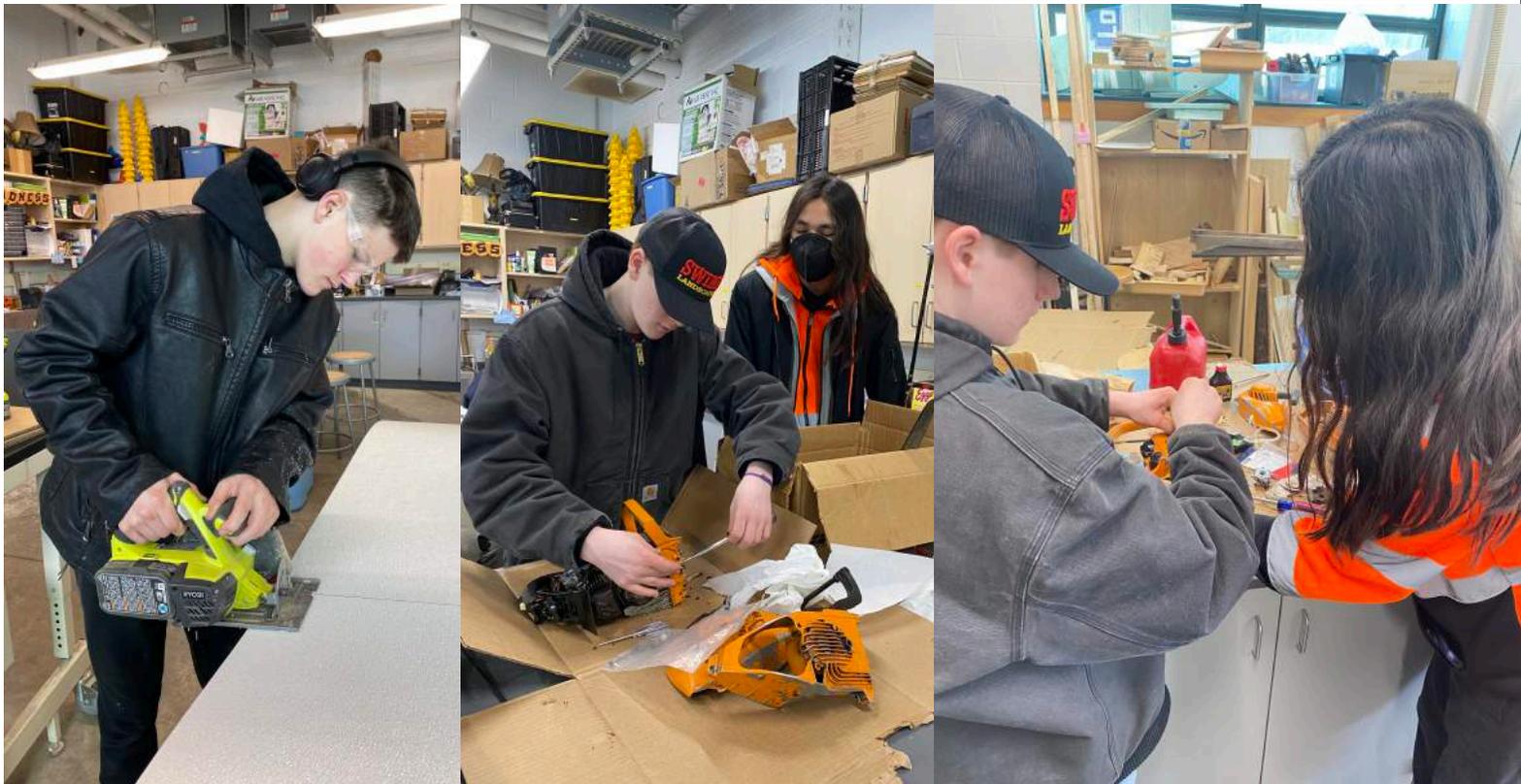
Last week, I talked about the success students had with their exhibitions. As I was writing that TGIF, I kept my fingers crossed that the same energy would transfer into the new week. There is always the chance that the world would choose to spite you. Students did a great job of transitioning from exhibition week into a week spent on finishing Post-Exhibition Narratives, and brainstorming new learning plans. Students were actively engaged in developing new ideas for projects. Some are choosing to expand on knowledge they gained last trimester, while some are choosing to go in a whole new direction. All of the new learning is welcome. The goal is to now formulate these new ideas into solid projects that will push our students to refine skills and learn new content. Some of that new content includes reptile care, African political history, history of film editing, Cambodian history, and ornithology. Now, we just have to keep this energy going. Students will also have to satisfy their Gateway requirements this trimester on top of their new learning plan.

I imagine Lenny will speak about this in his TGIF, but a highlight from this week is that the

sugar shack is in operation. Tyler has taken the lead on this project and you can see his confidence radiate on his face. He is contributing a lot to our school culture and the entire school community. He may not realize it now, but he is leaving a legacy behind. We want all of our students to discover what their legacy will be. They all have the opportunity to leave their imprint on the school.

### Left to Right

- 1: On a regular basis you can find Lucas B busy in the shop with a tool in his hands.
  - 2 and 3: Lucas A and Stone collaborating on a project. On this day, Lucas A was mentoring Stone on fixing Stone's chainsaw.
- Great work!

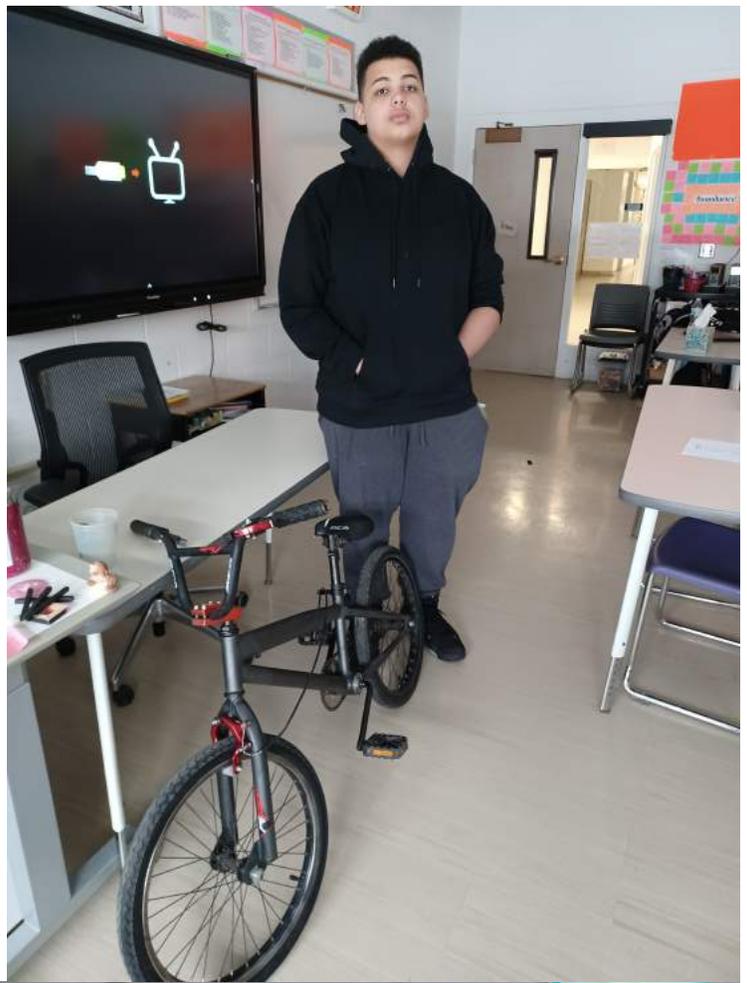


## TGIF from Jessica

One thing I love about the 101s is their motivation and initiative. Over the last two weeks we wrapped up our trimester 2 exhibitions. For the 101s, the trimester 2 exhibitions mark an exciting transition into full on Big Picture. This is the trimester where they complete their first interest based project which is completely designed and carried out by themselves. It's a sink or swim moment. I'm glad to say, they all swam. They all had products to show; they all did their best to complete the goals they set for themselves. On Monday this week, we had a class reflection on our exhibitions. With little prompting they were all able to identify things the class, as a whole, did well and things we want to improve upon. Moving into the next trimester they all identified that they want to do better research.

One thing I helped them realize they did well was fill out their own learning plans! Our learning plans are designed to be individualized and student driven which means they are not in the simplest format. However, the 101s dove right into completing them on their own and they are already diving into trimester 3's learning plan! This group continues to show initiative and excitement for their projects. Having the skill to create their learning plans right after their exhibitions allows them to be set up for success with intentional goals for their projects. I'm looking forward to seeing their growth.

Photographed are Jadyn and Wes. Jadyn, on her own behalf, brought in a book from home that she wanted to read to her students at her internship. This was welcomed by her mentor, Mrs. Oliver, and the students were happy to have her read them a story. Fantastic initiative Jadyn. This trimester Wes was completing his Who Am I project, participating in a welding internship, and completing a small interest based project. Wes decided he wanted to bring in his bike and learn how to disassemble it, clean it up, remove rust, and put it all back together. Completing one project within the trimester is challenging enough, but Wes was able to complete his bike with the exception of the breaks. Who needs breaks? Wes has plans to complete them this coming week, and then his bike will look brand new.



## TGIF from April

This week all junior students in the district went to a workshop for OCC Advantage. It was a great trip to the Onondaga Community College campus and the students in the group I was with did a great job engaging with each of the workshop speakers.

Students learned a great deal about the ins and outs of college, including the various paths you can take to get to college or different paths you might take while enrolled in college. The juniors also took a job interest survey to help them think about what major they may want to look at taking if they attend college. At the end of the program the college shared pizza, salad and cookies with the students for lunch, so I know they all left the campus happy. :)

301s also continued our world current events learning in advisory. I asked Walt to come in on Friday and he spoke briefly of his Ukrainian heritage. By the 301s reactions I believe that was powerful and gave students a more direct path to engagement with the material. They are currently writing articles pertaining to any aspect of the Russia/Ukraine conflict. I will then compile them together as a newspaper, which will then allow us to think-pair-share together in a conversational way. (Like people did back in ANCIENT times when people read paper newsprints and then discussed them at the kitchen table, on the porch, in diners, at the corner store or anywhere they ran into people. You know- ancient times hahaha!)

In USH David brings various teaching techniques to help engage students of all learning styles. He has brought music, film and writing pieces to bring the culture of specific eras to the classroom. I LOVE the aspect of playing the music! Not just sharing lyrics - I wish I had thought of it LOL. I believe hearing the music allows students to learn through feeling/emotion. The soulfulness of the music and lyrics (which the students do have in front of them) puts a deeper meaning to the learning about topics they already know some pieces of -right now it is the Civil Rights Era.



Our internships are going well, we are still desperately seeking more placements, but the ones we have are going awesome. Elaina loves the Print Hub and Jacob, although he continues with Carol in photography, has also branched out on his own and went to Morrisville on Monday with the international culinary class. He is going to photograph their work-meaning: food. He is very determined to do this style of photography to perfection. (If you know Jacob, you know he only wants perfection in his work, so I am sure these photos will look like professional advertisements!) Elijah began a new internship this week to help him explore his interest in shoe art. He is working with a professional artist and learning various techniques and all about the different mediums used in making art. I am thrilled he is finally able to get out of the building for an internship since United Radio had to end the internship he had there due to COVID. I can't lie though, I am also thrilled because in his learning and practice this week he made a *beautiful* painting- one that he presented to me as a gift. <3

