

LaFayette Big Picture TGIF

2021

SEPTEMBER 24

We are PRESENT, POSITIVE and PASSIONATE!



Student and staff mental health is constantly on my mind and in my reality. Our current realities are difficult and things that were difficult in the past seem so much more difficult now. This experience seems to be everywhere, however there is the expectation that we can see it and feel it, but as a whole, we don't have many tools to address it. This is what we are focused on doing:

- Five of the Big Picture Distinguishers directly connect with a feeling of belonging, a culture of caring, supportive challenge, support network development, personalization, and being a respected member of a group. These distinguishers are played out every day in our school by students, staff and parents. These distinguishers ground our work and become the platform for us to build upon.

- Every student has access to every adult. If a student does not have the strongest connection to their advisor, they have access to any other adult in our school.

- Students learn about each other.....everyone.....not just those in their advisory or those who have similar interests. Our students practice making connections with each other, finding commonalities and learning to respect differences with understanding.

- CRYSTAL and Bethany, our Social Work team have created an open and inviting space to talk and connect. Kelly and Kyra join us for morning meeting to let us know they are nearby if we need them.

- Shawna and Meaghan, Native American Liaison and My Brothers Keeper Grant director, stop in and connect with students, opportunities, and love.

- Lunch Bunch groups create another "social experience" to build relationships, empathy, understanding and support.

- Morning check in: Each morning, students can let us know if they need a check in with an adult. These opportunities support our students, but I also know they support the staff as well.

TGIF from Lenny

Our week was full of experiences and opportunities. I have continued to hold project planning meetings with students for STPs as well as interest-based projects. And in a few cases we are already well into executing the projects. Here is a peak of the week from my perspective.

Cody, Lucas and Dayton tackled the sugar shack this week during independent work time. We laid down pavers inside the shack around the concrete pad we poured last spring. We then made two custom doors and began hanging them. So much relevant math and spatial skills involved in these tasks.

We received a delivery of brown trout eggs from BOCES and the students are excited. We counted 86 eggs and promptly put them in our chilled and filter water tank to continue their development. We will be monitoring and recording their progress until they hatch, then we will get to release them into a local river or stream.

In ER we have been looking into various environmental issues and their causes. Part of our research also included what human behaviors drive these issues. Each student chose an

issue to investigate and reported their findings to their peers. We are off to a solid start with rigor and engagement. In LE we used the microscopes to examine pond water and learned how to use various instruments to make measurements. We also revisited graphing and started our data tables for the brown trout eggs mortality data.

On Thursday we had a fun day and the rain didn't dampen our mood. I planned two design challenges and the first embraced the rainy weather. Using limited materials, each advisory constructed an umbrella. Then they made a paper hat and had to keep the hat dry using the umbrella while venturing out in the rain. Each advisory also had two kits used to build enclosures for an egg drop. We dropped each entry from about 12 feet and assessed the damage. It was a fun event and I believe everyone learned something, but the 401s were the design challenge winners in both categories.

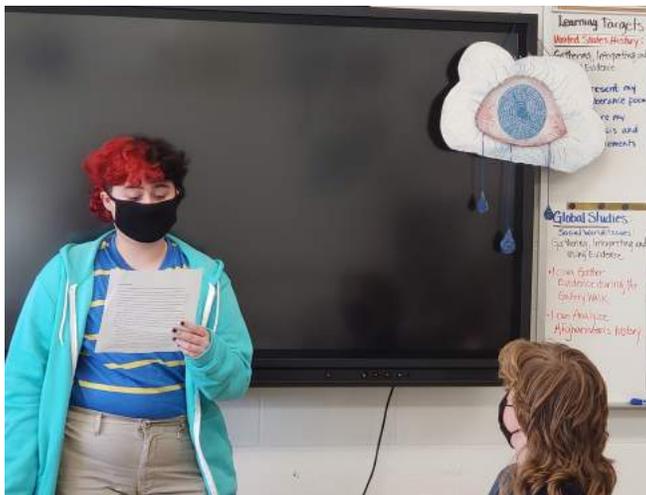
I am ready for another productive week filled with challenges and serendipitous surprises. Have a great week!



TGIF from April

One of my social media accounts has been showing me past memories this week. I have enjoyed the memories shared of the now 301s when they were 101s. The physical change is noticeable, Hollis and I are noticing social emotional and academic changes as well. Time sure flies by! This week 301 students began their STAR assessments and continue to finalize their learning goals for this semester. Some are also learning to manage their time between OCC, BOCES, High School courses and BP studies. Next week internships begin, and we are really excited for new learning adventures.

Because COVID has hindered our BP overnight school trip we created a Big Picture Fun Day for students to learn teambuilding and compete as advisories. We held our fun day on Thursday. Unfortunately, it rained- but Lenny came to the rescue...! He created a challenge that involved the rain, it was such fun to witness. Christine challenged the advisories to a fashion design: young, hip Olympic outfits one for summer and one for winter. The 301 students created two olympic style outfits that were very realistic with the limited supplies given. Phoenix and Olivia were the models. The 401 advisory was not to be outdone however! In actuality, the 401 students swept the day -winning every activity! It was wonderful to see the



seniors be so active and demonstrate their leadership and willingness to be involved as a whole group! Yay 401s!!

In both history workshops students were engaged in discovering, interpreting and using information they gathered for learning. USH students worked on and then presented their 9/11 remembrance projects. I must give a shout out to Lucian who did a phenomenal job

with the entire project! Lucian created such a thoughtful, emotion provoking poem and the visual was like none I have ever seen! It was a unique representation from the perspective of a cloud and it was very moving. This year being the 20 year marker of 9/11 this project was especially moving. Global students participated in a gallery walk on Friday as we continue our studies regarding Afghanistan. I am enjoying working with this group of students again this year!

In the exploratory art workshop we have been working with Pen and Ink and watercolor. On Friday the sun was shining so we mixed it up a bit and went outside to sketch. The students decided to sketch each other- sketching. It was fun and they did an amazing job drawing each other. We have also been identifying various projects the students would like to do in the future. The possibilities are endless and I am excited to make these project ideas come to fruition for the students.



TGIF from Walt

After a couple weeks of being back at school, things are starting to stabilize and we are all getting back into our normal routine. In advisory we are developing learning plans. This year David and I are trying to really focus on students incorporating ELA anchor standards and STAR data into learning plans as much as possible. It is a very time consuming task, but we are hoping that it will get students into the habit of being self aware of what specific skills they need to develop. Hopefully this will become second nature by the end of the year, and we are hoping to get all of the plans done by this week.

This week's highlights:

This year we started a small pumpkin patch, and my advisory is hoping to turn it into a thriving business as part of our economic coursework. I contacted the Small Business Development Center at OCC, and they will be doing a series of presentations tailored specifically to our students to teach them about all the aspects of business. It is a great opportunity, and we are very excited about this collaboration.

Bruce, Kat and Jace are going to be catering the STP proposal luncheon next Friday as part of their learning plan project work. Bruce and Kat found an interest in culinary last year when we catered the Gateway celebration, and this year they are hoping to pursue it more. They decided on an Italian theme, and each student picked a specific dish. Bruce will be making chicken riggies, Kat will be making chicken parmesan with homemade garlic bread, and Jace will be making a baked ziti with meat sauce. They spent a large portion of this week researching recipes, and next week we will be planning out the remaining details. This is a fun project, and I can't wait to see how it goes.

For exploratory time, I have been offering a board game workshop. We have been playing King of Tokyo, and Ascension, two popular fast paced games. In addition to being a great way to improve social skills, I believe that board games promote literacy and improve problem solving skills. It is a great tool to engage struggling readers, and benefits vocabulary development.



TGIF from Jessica

This week seemed really intense with many ups and a few downs. We packed in so many activities that it felt like two weeks. I'm glad I started Monday morning out with an activity to identify feelings as our pick me up.

Everyone used markers to identify, acknowledge, and write their most recent feelings from the past few days. They could creatively show each feeling by using different font, size, and color when they wrote it down. I was impressed by everyone's honesty and humbled by how many different feelings can be in one place at the same time. This activity truly showed that we are never alone in our feelings and it stresses the importance of being understanding of everyone around you.

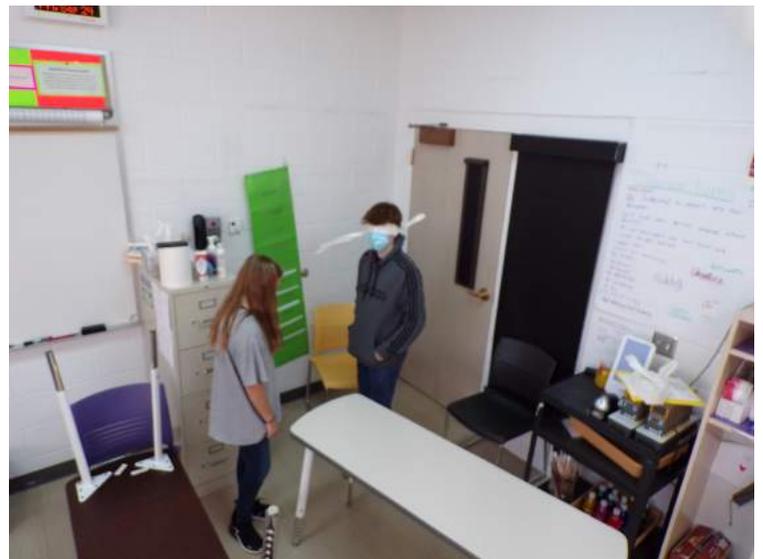
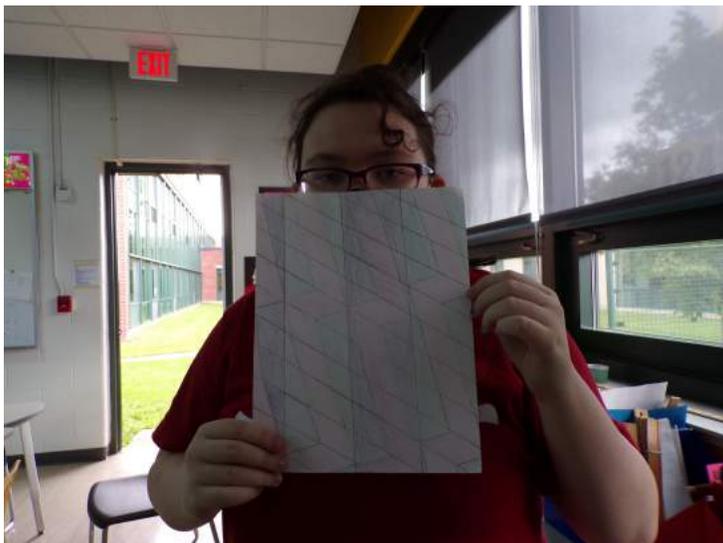
Throughout this week the 201s have been working on geometric tessellations in quantitative reasoning workshop. Last week we learned what a tessellation is and what restraints it must follow. We learned how to identify natural and man made tessellations. We practiced recreating them and we learned about the features of tiles. With this knowledge, we started the week looking at examples of geometric tessellations and began designing our own. Each student had to use two different geometric shapes and piece them together to create a tessellation. Their work had to be uniform and neat so they were encouraged to measure for accuracy. They soon found that it wasn't as easy as it looked and they had to edit and modify their work. As we move forward we will be learning



about abstract tessellations, symmetry and units of tiles.

We ended this week in the 101 advisory with a lesson on influence. We started out with an obstacle course activity. We turned the room upside down and blindfolded each other. For the first activity, one student guided the blindfolded student across the room to the door directing them to move and avoid the obstacles. For

the second activity, two students guided the blindfolded student, but this time one person was telling the truth and the other person was telling lies. The blindfolded student had to listen to them both and determine who to follow. After this, we watched two videos describing different types of influencers and how they impact us. We wrapped up the lesson with a journal reflection. The students identified people who influence them in their life both positively and negatively. They reflected on the impact their influencers had on them and if they accepted their influence. Then they were asked to consider and describe how they impact other people. Lastly, they wrote about any changes or adjustments they may want to make to their circle of influence and/or to their influence on others. This whole activity is so important to our 101 group as they are joining and trying to build relationships at a new school. I reference this activity throughout the year as the 101s are learning how to manage their time to complete projects and assignments. We always have obstacles and we always have influencers.



TGIF from Greg

This week the 401s began the final stages of the Senior Thesis Project Proposals. Each 401 filled in their graphic organizers and began implementing them into their learning plans. We have ideas from all aspects of life. Teaching cultural ideas, mechanical ideas, welding, food services, medical practices, mental health, psychology, animation, and photography to name a few areas and ideas to give back to the community.

Thursday we had a great time at the Big Picture Fun Day with Advisory team building games. The 401s showed great leadership, which in turn demonstrated what the Big Picture Learning Program is really all about. They did win the competitions, but really won with how they contributed to the school environment. Expanding our social and emotional skills were a key component of our day. COVID has taken so much away

from our students, but NOT the way they feel about each other and their caring attitudes toward each other. Next Friday, on October 1st, we will have our kids present their proposals to the committee. The 401s are very confident and excited to share their plans for their senior year. I have seen the staff very involved with this process. Nikki, Walt, Erin, and Lenny have been really helpful in stimulating and implementing ideas for our class. Shout out to them! Reality is beginning to set in as they are ordering their caps and gowns as well as preparing their regalia. We also started out Learning Plans for the first trimester. As they prepare to give back to the community, they also prepare to demonstrate their learning once again the first week in November.

