



Specialist Newsletter

JANUARY 2025



Think Tank with Mrs. Jenkins

Our fourth-grade students are currently engaged in learning about the scientific method. They have been introduced to essential science vocabulary, including terms such as dependent and independent variables. As part of their hands-on experience, students conducted experiments to determine how many drops of liquid a penny can hold and how far their hoop glider can travel. The students thoroughly enjoyed their science experiments.

In sixth grade, students are exploring energy. The Jason Learning curriculum facilitates this exploration by incorporating games and activities related to various science topics. Students participated in the Coaster Creator game, which deepened their understanding of potential and kinetic energy as they designed and tested a virtual roller coaster, ensuring its safe arrival at the end of the course. Furthermore, leveraging their knowledge of energy forms, students collaborated to create Rube Goldberg machines using a variety of materials, with the goal of achieving a specific final action. These hands-on activities allowed our students to actively engage with the concept of energy in an enjoyable and meaningful way.



Music with Mrs. Cooper

It may have been a chilly start to our back-to-school journey, but we've already had a fantastic time together! In just our short time in January, we've had a blast reviewing staff performances, playing fun team-building games, and diving into music concepts we've learned before. We've also picked up some new songs and enhanced our dance skills! We're super excited to kick off our dance unit this January and can't wait to show off everything the students have achieved at our annual dance assembly!



Library with Mrs. McKeon

In January, our elementary students discovered the Caldecott Medal, an annual award given by the Association for Library Service to Children. This award honors the artist of the best American picture book for children.

Named after the famous 19th-century English illustrator Randolph Caldecott, the award has recognized outstanding children's book illustrations since 1938.

Our young readers were captivated by the wonderful stories and beautiful artwork found in these award-winning books. Exploring both classic and modern Caldecott Medal recipients, students not only enjoyed the stories but also gained a deeper appreciation for the art that brings these stories to life.

This experience helped them understand visual storytelling better and emphasized how important illustrations are for enhancing the reading journey.



Steam with Mrs. Strotman

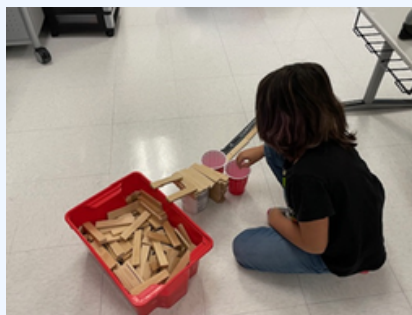
Kindergarten students explored how animals survive in winter, focusing on hibernation. They learned about how bears prepare for the cold months by finding or creating a warm, safe place to sleep. To bring their learning to life, the students were challenged to design and build their own bear dens using various materials.



After reading *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Sleigh!*, first-grade students put their engineering skills to the test in STEM class by designing and building their own sleds. Using a variety of materials, they worked to create sleds that could glide smoothly and safely. Once built, the students eagerly tested their designs, making observations and adjustments to improve their sleds' performance. This hands-on activity combined creativity, problem-solving, and winter fun!



Second grade students took on exciting marble run challenges, testing their creativity and problem-solving skills. One challenge required them to design a marble run where two marbles traveled simultaneously and landed in separate cups—without using any force to push them! Through trial and error and continuous testing, students adjusted their designs to create successful runs. This hands-on activity encouraged critical thinking, perseverance, and lots of fun experimentation!



Art with Mrs. Dovey



Kindergarten Winter Landscape

In art, students in all grades continue to create works of art from the FCPS Visual Arts Curriculum. A few examples of this include:

- In Kindergarten and 1st grade, students have been working on winter landscape paper collages. We have discussed natural and geometric shapes, and have practiced our skills using scissors and glue! We have also created architecture using magnets, building blocks, and other materials.**
- In 5th grade, students created their own clay "vessels" after reviewing clay building techniques and making connections to contemporary clay artists.**

