



# Obama Magnet School Special Subject Newsletter

**December 2021  
Unit 3**

## Inside This Issue

- 1 Library
- 2 Music
- 2 Spanish
- 3 Counseling

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## Save the Date

December 22 – January 5  
Christmas Break

January 25  
80% Day

February 7-11  
Book Fair

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## Is your student an International Student?

*International students follow the essential agreements and display learner profile attributes in all special subjects. Our goal is for each student to be named an International Student each week. International Students are recognized during the announcements on Monday mornings and earn points for their International Star Club calendars.*

## Library, Kacy Hellings

The library and library classes have been so busy! Students worked very hard to meet their AR goals by the end of the nine weeks. The library checked out over 1,000 books in the last six weeks and over 4,000 this school year. Students also delved into their units of inquiry while in the library.

The kindergarten students learned about library science skills, including parts of a book and call numbers. The students read and discussed different genres of books and looked for relationships in the books in relation to their who we are unit. Also, in connection to their who we are unit, first grade students read and discussed holidays and traditions. Many students decided to take action by checking out books on holidays to gain more knowledge about ways people celebrate holidays.

In second and third grade, students completed research using online resources like World Book Online. With second grade, connections to their how we organize ourselves unit were made through discussions about currency around the world. These discussions led the students to formulate questions about other countries to guide their research. Students used the online resources to find answers to their questions. The third-grade students be-



*Third grade students use World Book online and an atlas to research Italy.*

gan a research project for their where we are in place and time unit that will continue into their next unit. They are working with groups to research countries and create a project board to display their learning. During library class, they will use atlases to learn about geographic features as well as other print and online resources to investigate culture and traditions in their selected countries.

Fourth grade used their time in the library to learn more about helping organizations in conjunction with their how we organize ourselves unit. They explored online resources to learn as method for learning more about these resources. Fifth grade students have listened to the novel *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park. The students enjoyed this read aloud and discussion. It inspired several of them to choose water scarcity as their topic for research for their exhibition unit which begins in January.

Exciting and engaging learning opportunities will continue in the second semester. The Scholastic Book Fair will be back! The book fair is a big library fundraiser and will be held from February 7 - 11.

## Music, Larry Weems

Across grade levels, learning in the music classroom focused on the continued development of foundational skills and as well as how music is used to capture ideas and communicate information, perspectives, and opinions.

The kindergarten students worked on their winter holiday program in connection to their who we are unit. They learned several songs from different cultural traditions, including Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah, and Gospel ("This Little Light of Mine"). Repetition was key to mastering the lyrics of so many songs. The first graders focused on breathing techniques and instrumentation. They were so excited to play the xylophones and gain experience with the instruments in the music room. These learning experiences connected with the key concepts of form and function from their how we express ourselves unit.

The second grade students focused on learning signs in music. They compared signs used in music to signs seen everyday while traveling by car with their parents. In third grade, the students concentrated on learning about the classical period of music. They were introduced to influential composers such as Mozart, Beethoven, and Handel. They were amazed at the playing by ear demonstration. For this experience, the students played notes on the piano while I stood on the other side of the room where I could not see the piano. Then I came over to the piano and repeated the notes on the piano by ear.

Fourth graders dealt with the concept of duration in music and learned the length of note values. They used different syllable sounds to become accustomed to counting note values. Fifth grade students listened with intent to song lyrics and focused on deciphering the message within the message of the songs. They viewed music videos to compare song lyrics to the visual interpretation and decided if the two matched. The students also studied Negro spiritual songs such as "Follow the Drinking Gourd" and learned the message within the lyrics contained directions to help Blacks escape toward freedom.



*Kindergarten students enjoyed dancing to their Winter Holiday program songs.*

## Spanish, Naomi Mays

While exploring Spanish connections to the third unit of inquiry, all scholars eagerly practiced communicating in Spanish, increased their Spanish vocabulary, and composed text in Spanish. They also became more knowledgeable about culture, history, and influences of the Spanish-speaking world.



*Scholars enjoy drinking the Mexican hot chocolate they prepared in Spanish cooking class.*

During their who we are unit, kindergarten scholars learned vocabulary for family members. Scholars also described their family members' emotions. Scholars explored holidays in the Spanish-speaking world and how these holidays are celebrated within families. Scholars ended the unit with a cooking class, during which they prepared Mexican hot chocolate. Scholars were encouraged to share the recipe with their families and reflect on how sharing traditions within families and communities helps to build stronger relationships.

First graders explored vocabulary for clothing and practiced describing their clothes in Spanish. They also learned to shop and barter in Spanish. Scholars engaged in the interactive activity of practicing shopping in a Spanish online store. This activity provided students with an opportunity to apply and utilize their knowledge in the real-world setting.

In connection to their how we organize ourselves unit, second graders explored changes in currency over time and the practices of bartering and buying items. Scholars learned Spanish vocabulary supporting the creation of their own interactive Spanish stores. They engaged in learning about currency in the Spanish-speaking world. This knowledge was applied to a bakery simulation where they "bought" real Mexican baked pastries called buñuelos.

During their who we are unit of inquiry, third grade scholars studied the history of the Spanish in the Caribbean, learning about different groups shaping the region, such as the Tainos. Scholars reflected on how afrodescendientes, or

people of African descent, influenced the Caribbean through contributions to music, dance, food, and other cultural elements. Scholars learned how many exports of this region, such as sugar cane, are processed and used throughout the world. Scholars also practiced conjugating Spanish verbs in the present indicative.

Fourth grade scholars explored cognates between English and Spanish. Scholars composed original, creative stories using cognates in both verb and noun form. They also learned about different professions in Spanish and practiced writing about their parents' professions. Fourth graders additionally wrote about their desired professions in Spanish and created a Mexican corrido (a poem recounting history) as an artistic representation of their writing on this topic.

In their how the world works unit, fifth grade scholars delved into the world of science in Spanish, learning about plant and animal cells, organelles, and the functions of cell structures. They also learned about famous Spanish-speaking scientists and collaborated to create presentations on their designated scientists. Additionally, fifth grade scholars learned about mixtures and solutions in Spanish and applied this knowledge to mixing ingredients for Mexican hot chocolate. They also enjoyed tasting this traditional Mexican beverage.

## Counseling, Jennifer Tanner

Empathy and considering other perspectives were important topics in counseling during the fourth unit of inquiry. These social-emotional skills help scholars build and maintain a learning environment to benefit all students.

Kindergarteners continued to focus on their who we are unit. In counseling, making friends was focus. They explored literary examples of how to be a friend. They listened to *The Berenstain Bears Trouble with Friends* and discussed good and bad friendship behaviors. *Making Friends* was read aloud to highlight the social skill of making new friends; making and keeping friends was another important discussion. While exploring empathy, scholars learned how people can have different feelings about the same situation and it is okay for people to have different feelings about the same thing. Students also learned about accidents and what to do and say when accidents occur.

First grade counseling lessons also connected to their who we are unit and focused on empathy. The scholars continued learning to identify feelings in others and respecting people's differences and perspectives. They read *Everybody Cooks Rice* and discussed similarities and differences among different cultures. They also explored how feelings can change toward certain situations.

Second graders also focused on empathy, specifically feeling confident, respecting different preferences, showing compassion, predicting feelings, and managing embarrassment. Scholars learned to understand and manage their own emotions while considering and accepting differing opinions and other perspectives.

During the third grade who we are unit, counseling lessons connected to the key concept of perspective. This concept was crucial to scholars' exploration and understanding of empathy. Empathy was explored by identifying other's feelings, understanding others' perspectives, having conflicting feelings, accepting differences, showing compassion, and making friends. All these topics propel them forward as IB learners and support working together in collaborative class groups.

Fourth grade scholars focused on their how we organize ourselves unit and explored their responsibilities regarding perspective as members of a learning community and larger communities. During this time, they deepened their understanding of seeing other's perspectives through activities allowing them to take on a different view.

They explored respecting similarities and differences of others, understanding perspectives, and showing compassion.

During the fifth grade how the world works unit, counseling lessons connected to the key concept of causation. Scholars learned the importance of listening with attention and strategies for letting someone know you heard what they said, even if you have a differing opinion. They also investigated other topics such as exploring others' perspectives, accepting differences, disagreeing respectfully, and responding with compassion. Fifth grade scholars engaged in role play scenarios to practice dealing with situations that may arise.



*A first grade scholar connected with the book *Everybody Cooks Rice* and was inspired to share a biryani dish cooked by his father.*