



Obama Magnet School Special Subject Newsletter

September 2021
Unit 1

Inside This Issue

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

Save the Date

September 15 – October 15
National Hispanic Heritage Month

October 4 – 8
College Spirit Day

October 20
Unity Day

October 25 –
Red Ribbon Week

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.

Spanish, Naomi Mays

During the first six weeks of school, all grade levels jumped right in to building their communication using the Spanish language.

Kindergarten scholars listened to a read-aloud on a book on the shapes in Spanish. Scholars then took part in an engaging game of "I Spy" in Spanish, where they looked around the classroom and identified shapes in Spanish. Scholars also reviewed the colors in Spanish and learned how to make a simple sentence using the Spanish color words and a conjugation of the verb "ser."

In first grade, scholars explored different ways to retell a story in Spanish. Scholars worked together to creatively retell a story in Spanish through a poem or rap. First graders also learned about the days of the week in Spanish and how to speak and write about the current day of the week using the verb "ser." By the end of the unit, scholars were able to tell and write about the days of the week in Spanish using the correct time markers.

Second grade scholars examined the elements of a basic Spanish conversation and how to effectively apply these elements in speaking. Scholars learned Spanish greetings that align with different times of the day. Second graders also explored different emotions in Spanish and how to express these emotions in conversation.

In this unit, third grade scholars focused on learning about cognates as well as Spanish loan words. Scholars engaged in an interactive game on Spanish cognates where they had to identify the meaning of a Spanish sentence written completely in cognates. Scholars also explored common Spanish loan words that are used in English. Scholars were surprised to learn that some common words in English are actually loan words from Spanish.

Fourth grade scholars explored question words in Spanish and how to utilize them. Scholars also practiced their reading comprehension by reading a few chapters and passages in a Spanish text. Then applied what they had learned about Spanish question words by responding to questions about the text during a Spanish discussion on the text.

In connection to their who we are unit, the fifth grade scholars explored their origins using Spanish vocabulary. Scholars discussed the idea that who they are is impacted by their past, upbringing, and family. Scholars learned to conjugate the verb "ser," which means "to be" and explored some ways that "ser" can be used. Then applied this knowledge to write paragraphs about themselves as well as two of their family members. Scholars also engaged in a reading activity that helped them to practice using inferences in Spanish.



Fifth grade scholars write in Spanish about themselves and their families.

Library, Kacy Hellings

The 2021-2022 school year is off to a great start! The library is a busy place for students and teachers. Our school has one of the highest book circulation totals in the district per person! I am so thankful to work at a school where students love to read!

I have enjoyed welcoming our newest group of students to the library this year- the kindergartners. Reading a wide variety of books has been the focus of their time in the library. Discussions focused on understanding the difference between fiction and non-fiction. Students have completed book sorts and are getting good at knowing the difference between these two types of books.



First graders enjoy selecting and reading their library books.

It's been nice having the first graders in the library. They exhibit tremendous enthusiasm for reading and the looks on their faces on discovering they could check out books were priceless! Students should keep their library books with them daily. Each Thursday, first graders visit the library to get new books, but teachers allow students to visit the library any day of the week. They should let their teacher know when they are ready to make a trip upstairs to check out a new book.

The second through fifth grade classes spent the first unit of inquiry revisiting resources available in the library. Students became reacquainted with our library check out system - Insignia. Students reviewed how to put books on hold and submit ratings and reviews of books. Students reviewed resources available on MAGNOLIA and World Book Encyclopedia online as well as products available

in their Google accounts. In the next unit, the second graders will review using the card catalog to find library materials and will begin using technology to tell stories. The upper grade students will begin research projects to help them utilize the library resources. These resources can be found on [the Obama Magnet web page](#) in the library section.

Counseling, Jennifer Tanner

To start the year off, all scholars were introduced to the role of the school counselor, including how the counselor can help them throughout the year. During this time counseling lessons also focused on skills for learning in the classroom with the Second Step Social and Emotional Learning Curriculum.

Specifically, kindergarten and first graders concentrated on listening, focusing attention, and following directions skills. Second and third grade scholars learned about being respectful learners, focusing attention and listening. Fourth and fifth grade scholars broadened their understanding of showing empathy and respect.

Connections were made to units of inquiry across grade levels. Kindergarten scholars learned about being responsible learners as part of their how we organize ourselves unit. They enjoyed reading about Responsible Rascal and sharing responsibilities they have at home. First graders explored decision making skills in connection to the transdisciplinary theme how we organize ourselves. Scholars role-played various decision-making skills. In their who we are unit, second graders explored how their responsibilities change as they grow. Third grade scholars focused on being responsible learners in their how we organize ourselves unit. As part of their who we are unit, fourth graders completed a self-assessment on leadership qualities and wrote a SMART goal to improve a leadership quality. Scholars then wrote paragraphs about their leadership attributes. Fifth grade scholars also focused on goal setting with SMART goals as well as study skills of organization, time management, and long-term project planning.

Scholars in second through fifth grade completed a needs assessment survey for small group counseling. Small group counseling sessions are offered on a rotation schedule throughout the year. All scholars participated in a PBIS virtual kickoff, and each class signed the No Place for Hate (an anti-bullying program) Resolution of Respect pledge. Each scholar pledged to treat everyone fairly, to be kind to everyone, and to report bullying to a teacher.

Please be on the lookout for these upcoming events in the month of October: Unity Day (scholars will need an orange shirt), College Spirit Week, and Red Ribbon Week.



Kindergarten scholars demonstrate the actions associated with skills for learning – body still, eyes watching, ears listening, and voices quiet.

Music, Larry Weems

Students in kindergarten through fifth grade jumped right in to building their knowledge of music concepts.

Kindergarten students were introduced to figuring out what a beat was and building on their thinking around the fundamental element of music. The songs "Music Has a Steady Beat" and "March of the Ducks" were two student favorites reinforcing these elements. The first-grade students focused on listening to rhythm pattern and repeating patterns played by the teacher. "I Love School" by Nelda Washington was a featured song during this time. In second grade the focus was on choral performance skills; the students learned the Bill Withers's songs "Lovely Day" and "Lean on Me."



Fifth graders enjoy playing Obwi-sana to learn about polyphonic rhythms.

Memory and listening skills were developed by the third grade students while learning form and dictation as it related to music. The main learning tool was the rhythm telephone game. In this game students stood in a straight line and a rhythm was tapped on the shoulder of the person at the end of the line. The person at the end of the line then tapped the exact rhythm on the shoulder of the person directly in front of them. The goal was to transfer the exact rhythm down the line without looking at or seeking help from their classmates. Fourth grade students focused on counting rhythms. The familiar games of musical chairs and tic tac toe were played to reinforce rhythm counting skills. In fifth grade the students played an old African game called "Obwi-sana" (meaning the rock has crushed my hand grandma) to help teach a form of polyphonic rhythms and get them ready instruments and rhythms that require multitasking. This game is reminiscent of older hand games like patty cake that used lyrics and hand eye coordination to simultaneously teach rhythm and how to keep time. The fifth graders really enjoyed this activity!

Stay tuned for more teaching and learning information from the Obama Magnet music classroom!