

The PACESetter

A Quarterly Publication of PACE at Lockwood



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Chris Gray, PACE President

And just like that, we are halfway through this school year! It is currently re-enrollment time, and the lottery is just around the corner. It is hard to believe that we are already planning for the 2026-2027 school year. This is a busy time for the Membership Team and Treasurer. Thank you for tracking the numerous processes, communications, and payments all while ensuring re-enrollment goes smoothly.

The past couple of months were filled with so many activities- art docent lessons, field trips, incursions, Spanish lessons and Winter Mini Units. Countless volunteer hours and dedication of our PACE teachers have made this all possible.

Looking ahead, we have Spring Mini Units and the Toymaker in February. Shortly after, we have more Spanish lessons and Dia del Niño to look forward to.

As you read through the various class articles, please take a moment to celebrate the ways that you have contributed to the richness of this program. None of these experiences would be possible without your time, dedication, and engagement in PACE.

Thank you for all that you do in support of our children!

UPCOMING EVENTS

JAN 31 - ENROLLMENT & OBLIGATIONS

FEB 2/3/4 - TOY MAKER SHOP

FEB 9 - 4TH GRADE OLYMPIA TRIP

FEB 10/12 - MINI UNITS

FIRST GRADE

by Akshay Ram and Pavithra Kannan

Winter has arrived, and the Terrific Turtles jumped right back into learning after winter break with impressive energy. With school resuming in early January, the class quickly settled back into routines, proving that first graders are far more adaptable than they sometimes get credit for.

Somehow, we are already nearing the halfway point of first grade.

The classroom has been buzzing with activity. Students recently began their winter iReady diagnostic, a chance to pause and see just how much growth has happened since the fall. Alongside academics, the class celebrated a joyful winter party, made extra special by the many families who volunteered their time and support. The kids had a fantastic time, and the smiles said it all.

One of the highlights of early winter was the class's first incursion—the much-talked-about insect safari. Students learned all kinds of fascinating bug facts, including how to tell insects from non-insects (six legs is the magic number, which officially makes a cockroach an insect). The excitement carried over for days, and many families are still hearing insect trivia at the dinner table. The class is already looking ahead to the upcoming Toymaker visit, which promises another round of curiosity and creativity.

December was full of community-building moments. The Terrific Turtles earned their very first PAWS party by consistently showing Perseverance, Acting Responsibly, Working Together, and Staying Safe.

Their reward was a well-earned Stuffy Day, which brought an extra dose of comfort and joy to the classroom. Students also celebrated success in music with a special show-and-tell, sharing meaningful items and stories with their peers.

Friendship and kindness have been a strong focus this winter. Before break, students participated in a heartfelt Friendsgiving project, writing kind notes to one another and creating keepsakes filled with encouraging words. This work continues into the new year as students begin a writing project centered on how to be a good friend—learning important social skills alongside reading and writing.

Creativity has also been on full display. Through Mini Units, students explored Coast Salish art and Chinese lantern paper art, working collaboratively in small groups. Art lessons continued with texture exploration and colorful Petrykivka flowers, created with the help of dedicated art docents. Pajama Day, spirit events, and a cozy PTA Movie Night added to the festive winter feel.

As winter continues, the Terrific Turtles are learning, growing, and supporting one another every step of the way. The classroom is filled with curiosity, kindness, and just the right amount of joyful noise.

A heartfelt thank you to Mrs. Iverson and Ms. Esping for guiding the class through such a busy and meaningful season, and to the families whose support makes all of this possible. Winter learning is off to a wonderful start.

SECOND GRADE

by Josh Trygg

The new year has begun! Second graders continue to engage in meaningful learning experiences that blend academic skill-building, creativity, and community connection.

In November, through teamwork and positive classroom habits, students earned tokens toward a class celebration and selected a slime party as their reward. They explored Oobleck, a substance inspired by Dr. Seuss, discovering its unique properties as both a solid and a liquid. This activity encouraged hands-on experimentation and scientific curiosity.

In December, the class celebrated the 67th day of school! 😊 You guessed it—it stems from the 6/7 phenomenon that recently infiltrated our lives. In math, students continued developing problem-solving skills by practicing subtraction with regrouping, reviewing multiple strategies, and demonstrating understanding through classwork and assessments.

Learning extended beyond the classroom during a field trip to the aquarium, where students met Ruby the otter and learned about animal habitats, adaptations, and care. The experience offered an engaging opportunity to observe marine life and connect classroom learning to real-world environments.

A classroom economy was introduced to help the 2nd graders understand how money works in real-life situations. Students earn class money through attendance and active participation, they enthusiastically track their progress in personal “wallets.” These skills will later be applied through a planned student store.

January kicked off with the launch of the first Science Docent module, focused on birds native to the region. Students explored bird diets, habitats, and feeder designs while thinking like engineers—connecting animal needs with human-designed solutions.

They’ve also recently begun the i-Ready Diagnostic assessments and are nearing completion. Throughout the process, they have shown perseverance, focus, and flexibility while adjusting to new schedules and expectations.

Looking ahead, there is an exciting opportunity to attend Ada Twist, Scientist during a Children’s Theater field trip, and take part in a Friendship Celebration, which will include creating Valentine’s mailboxes and sharing messages of kindness.

THIRD GRADE

by Jason Tenenbaum

Happy New Year and welcome back to the school year! This time of year offers a chance to take a breath after the busy holiday season and ease back into familiar routines. Our last newsletter ended just before Thanksgiving, when our 3rd graders spent time reflecting on gratitude together. Since then, students have enjoyed a variety of fun activities, celebrations, and their very first field trip.

One of the highlights of the fall was the return of Mini Units, a popular PACE-wide activity. Students split into groups to explore new topics and creative skills. Half of the groups learned about the art of light and nature in Chinese culture, including designing and building real, light-up Chinese lanterns. The other half explored the elements of Coast Salish art, creating their own animal-inspired artwork influenced by traditional Coast Salish designs.

For their first field trip, students (along with chaperones) visited the Burke Museum on the University of Washington campus. There, they explored natural and cultural collections, learned about fossils, and viewed fascinating dissected creatures — rumor has it there was even a tiger! According to several students, a standout moment was eating lunch near a giant dinosaur fossil.

Just before Winter Break, students brought in a favorite book to read and celebrated the final days of the year with cozy pajamas, stuffies, hot chocolate, and a class viewing of Air Bud.

Back in the classroom, learning continues across subjects. Students are making steady progress in cursive writing, and families may notice cursive appearing more frequently in schoolwork and writing assignments. In reading, students are engaged in independent reading, partner reading, and whole-group lessons, with recent work focused on personal narrative writing techniques and the elements of drama. As part of Spanish instruction, students are learning about Las Estaciones (The Seasons).

Our volunteer Art Docents also recently visited the classroom. During this lesson, students created three-dimensional construction paper artwork inspired by *The Wave* by Katsushika Hokusai, combining creativity with hands-on learning.

Looking ahead, students will enjoy additional field trips, participate in Spring Mini Units, and continue learning and growing with Mrs. Jiang. Thank you to our families and community for all you do to support our PACE classroom and make it such a wonderful place to learn.



FOURTH GRADE

by Laura and Loi Nguyen

As the school year and the chilly air of late autumn settles in, our fourth graders can hardly contain their excitement for the festive activities. They eagerly watch for the first signs of the holidays, from thanksgiving that brings turkey and pumpkin pie to christmas that brings hot cocoa and all that comes with Santa.

Let's start with the 'from scratch' food docents. These fun activities help the kids develop important life skills, from measuring and following directions to problem-solving and creativity in making it their own. The fourth graders eagerly rolled up their sleeves to make cranberry relish from scratch. The classroom buzzed with excitement as students took turns measuring sugar, ingredients, and hearing the satisfying pop of cranberries bursting.

By the end of the day, each student had not only a jar of bright red relish to take home, but also a warm memory of teamwork, tradition, and the joy of making something special together. The next docent involves chocolate, m&ms, marshmallows, walnuts, and crushed candy cane. The young chocolatiers used their imagination for whatever creative mix of ingredients that comes to mind and top it off with warm gooey cocoa to transform it into chocolate bark. Hopefully, all the family got to savor those relish and bark.



The mini units saw half the class focus on making Chinese Lantern and half got to work on Coast Salish art. Leaning on their creativity, sheets of color paper, scissors, glue, sticks, tassels, and led light strings were scattered everywhere prior to creating that Chinese Lantern. With careful hands and eager smiles, the students folded, cut, and decorated their lanterns, learning how each design symbolized good luck and happiness. Some adorned theirs with tassels and sparkles that shimmered from the LED lights.

When the lanterns were finished, the room glowed with a festive and beautiful display of art, culture, and the pride of making something meaningful by hand. In the other classroom, filled with curiosity and respect, the kids explored the beauty and meaning of Coast Salish art. The Coast Salish people and their deep connection to the land and sea, represented by shapes like ovals, crescents, and trigons that give the artwork its distinct style. The students carefully painted salmon, eagles, and orcas — symbols of strength, unity, and balance.

This year's winter party was filled with warmth and festive cheer as students gathered to celebrate the season together. Classroom tables were covered with pine branches, holly, and ribbons for wreath-making. Mustering up whatever they can to concentrate, the students twisted and tied the greenery into beautiful wreaths to take home. The highlight of the afternoon was the hot chocolate station, where kids piled marshmallows high, added whipped cream to top of their steaming cups. Laughter and chatter filled the room as classmates compared their creations and sipped the cozy treat.

FIFTH GRADE

excerpts from Beth Dawson

Winter in fifth grade has been full of deep thinking, hands-on learning, and meaningful moments of connection—both within the classroom and beyond it. As the year moves steadily forward, students are stepping confidently into more complex ideas while still finding time for creativity, community, and a little cozy fun along the way.

One of the biggest highlights of the season has been the much-anticipated Boston Simulation, where students stepped back in time to experience life in America during the Revolutionary War. Through role-playing, problem-solving, and lively discussion, students explored the perspectives, challenges, and choices faced by colonists. From grappling with issues of fairness and freedom to understanding how everyday people were affected by historical events, the simulation brought history to life in a powerful and memorable way. It has sparked thoughtful conversations and helped students see that history is more than dates and facts—it's about people and decisions.

December also brought a meaningful and delicious food docent experience centered around Hanukkah. Thanks to two classmates who shared their family traditions, students learned about the history and significance of the holiday. The classroom quickly filled with the comforting sounds and smells of cooking as students worked together to make latkes. This experience blended cultural learning, teamwork, and practical skills, and offered a wonderful opportunity to learn directly from one another.

Fifth graders have also continued to build strong community connections through their study buddy program with second grade. One especially memorable day included hot chocolate, books, and shared reading time. Watching the older students model kindness, patience, and leadership—while the younger buddies looked up to them with excitement—was a reminder of how powerful cross-grade relationships can be. It was a cozy, feel-good moment that everyone enjoyed.

Learning has extended well beyond the classroom walls through field trips. In December, students visited the Burke Museum, where they explored exhibits that deepened their understanding of natural history and culture. This week, they are looking forward to an upcoming visit to Meany Dance Hall, offering yet another opportunity to experience learning through the arts and engage with the broader community.

As winter continues, fifth graders are showing curiosity, empathy, and a growing sense of independence. Whether they're debating revolutionary ideas, cooking together, mentoring younger students, or exploring museums and performance spaces, they are learning in ways that are thoughtful, engaging, and deeply connected to the world around them. It's been a rich and rewarding season in fifth grade, with much more to look forward to in the months ahead.