



# CTL CORNER

Center for Teaching & Learning | 10431 Hufsmith Rd., Tomball, TX 77375 | 832-474-8214



## Important Dates

**October 12** - Columbus Day  
Holiday - No School.

**October 30** - Halloween  
Celebration (modified for CDC  
Guidelines). More information to  
follow.

## Important Reminders

- \* School begins at 7:55 a.m.
- \* Tennis shoes PE days.
- \* Water bottle every day.
- \* Mosquito spray if needed.



## *What a Great Start to Our School Year!*

What a beautiful start to a new school year! The cooler weather over the last week has refreshed us all as we feel the crispness of fall in the air. It's great to see the students relishing the great outdoors.

We LOVE our new home and have enjoyed exploring and making it our own. We have just finished our third week of school without incidence. Teachers and students are using every precaution to make sure we stay safe. We look forward to what October has to bring with Columbus Day holiday and Halloween celebrations.

Thanks to all who attended the Parent Orientation night on Wednesday, September 30 and to those who weren't able to attend because of our limit to one parent for the evening. I am sure you felt the excitement of the wonderful team of teachers your students experience each day. I am thankful to be a part of such a great team.

Aside from the safety precautions we have taken with temperature checks, masks, hand washing, sanitizing and social distancing, we have also adjusted some of CTL's cherished traditions. We miss parent visits and our traditional monthly family events like our September Bingo Night. We have adjusted morning meetings to short intercom announcements with pledges and birthday celebrations and an inspirational thought followed by student celebrations in individual classrooms. We are excited to move morning meeting outside on Fridays, and so far we have had beautiful weather. Friday book buddies and clubs have been adjusted to be within individual classrooms instead of across grade levels. We miss our opportunities to get to know each other as a whole school family but we love being in school, and we know that before long COVID will be gone, and we will be able to join together to build our whole school community.





We are grateful for many things—for being back in school, for a beautiful new facility, for those who worked so hard to get the building completed and get all permits in time to move in, for those parents who assisted with getting the building ready and for those who have contributed funds to assist us during this time with our limited number of students because of COVID, for supportive parents and wonderful students and teachers, for the health and the careful actions of all the CTL family in doing everything possible to keep us all safe and well.

The *CTL Corner* is our monthly newsletter—a space for reporting on what we have accomplished over the last month and reflecting on those experiences and looking forward to goals for the next. It is a place to preserve our memories and the lessons we have learned. Enjoy the CTL Team's reflections as you reflect on your own. We can all learn from these challenging times. Some day we will look back on these times and the priceless memories made and lessons learned and be thankful for them. Have a wonderful October full of celebrations! Cherish every moment!

**Linda Ellis**

### *Pre-K Class*

We were excited to finally get our school year started, and we have had a great start to the school year. Pre-K has been busy getting to know each other and learning the rules and routines of CTL. We have started our reading workshop, and here are a few of our favorite books we read this past month. *The Kissing Hand*, *Chrysanthemum*, *Pete Goes to School*, *If you Take a Mouse to School*, and *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* to name a few.

In math workshop our young mathematicians have also been exploring some of the manipulates we will be using throughout the year. Many of our activities will have an emphasis on number sense and counting while incorporating fine motor skill practice.

Our young scientists have been busy conducting a few experiments in our science workshop. After reading *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, we used our prediction skills to see if our coconut would sink or float. During our apple investigation, we sampled red, green, and yellow apples and picked our favorite. We also acted out the story of *The Little Red House* where the characters







were looking for the red house (apple) with no windows or doors but with a star on the inside. To conclude our apple unit, Pre-K students made homemade applesauce and were able to taste it for afternoon snack. Thumbs up by all!

In social studies we continue learning about ourselves and our new friends. Your children made beautiful nature self-portraits using supplies from CTL's playground and surrounding area.

Pre-K's unique artwork is displayed proudly in our hallway. In October we will be discussing spiders, bats, and pumpkins.

### ***Beckey Billings***

### ***Kindergarten Class***

It has been an amazing start to kindergarten. We have all settled into the daily routines, and things are going smoothly. It is such a joy to see the students so excited about school each day. They are loving all the beautiful space at our new home. The end of the day often catches them by surprise, because they are so engaged as learners.

Our reading and writing workshops are off to a full swing. They are learning strategies for both reading and writing. They started to bring home their leveled readers last week. I strongly encourage you to read to and with your child every day. They created their heart maps and they are writing from their life experiences. A favorite part of writing workshop is to share in the author's chair.

In math workshop we are enjoying our daily number talks. We have been building and composing numbers within 10. They have learned different ways to compose a number sentence and the meaning of a sum. We have been talking about the rules of adding on with +1 and +2. This next month we will be starting to decompose numbers within 10.

In science workshop we have been talking about the weather and weather conditions. We have been working on the everyday phenomena questions. What causes the weather to change each day? How is weather different around the world? Next up is weather patterns.

In social studies workshop we have been discovering all about self and family. We read the book *How Full is Your Bucket* and talked about what things we can do to fill each other's bucket. We will continue with community in October.

"Learning never exhausts the mind," Leonardo Da Vinci.

### ***Gina Brown***



## I-2 Class

What a great start to our school year. The class is starting to gel and find their way together as a team. We have had so much fun getting to know each other. They have been introduced to our class pet gerbils, Shadow and Snowflake. I don't think they can get enough of them. The class has fallen into the routines and procedures nicely. We reviewed our schedule and gradually added components of each subject so the class could ease into the structure of the workshops and flow of the curriculum. I am seeing new friendships form and it is exciting!

They began learning about strategies to use when they read and come across unfamiliar words. The students are studying Robert Munsch in our Author Study. We have read several of his books and have learned he is an author who uses humor and many fun characters throughout his books. They are also selecting just right books for independent reading during reading workshop. Each student is able to find a quiet place to read and get comfortable with a book/books that will keep them reading the entire time.

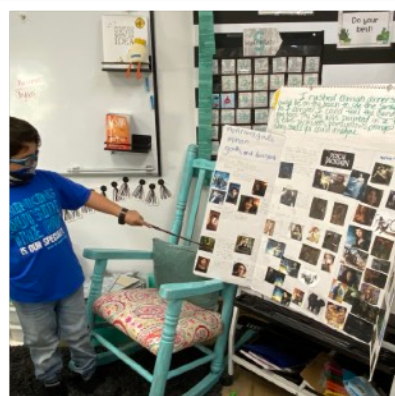
Writing workshop is in full swing. I began with a mini lesson where I am modeling writing by writing my own story with the class. My trip to Michigan is my topic. I am modeling how to incorporate details so that the reader can make a picture in the mind. They learned prewriting strategies to get them started with their own writing topics. They have been sharing their writing in the Author's Chair. This is exciting as they are all anxious to read their pieces to the class and hear comments and connections from their peers. It is a great way to get them encouraged to stretch their ideas further. We will continue with our prewriting strategies in October

In our math workshop the class has learned the importance of Number Talks and have worked on sorting, organizing and grouping items into tens, fives and "loose" ones. The focus of making ten and understanding how to compose and decompose numbers within ten has been enlightening. They are also working on grouping items (seeds) to count up to 999. It is interesting to see how each student is thinking and manipulating objects. I am eager to see where their thinking leads as we move forward! In October for math we will move on to more addition and subtraction strategies and problem solving while reviewing the strategies from this month.

In science the class looked at the various body coverings and characteristics that help animals survive, eat and adapt to their environment. They chose one animal and described three characteristics that help them survive. They also visited various body part centers to explore many animal traits. Next month we will discuss and study parts of a plant and plant survival.

Social studies was fun as the class looked at themselves and what makes them unique. We completed an *All About Me* book and created a life-size drawing of ourselves! They shared and found out





information about each other in a "getting to know you" interview activity. It was so special to see them all interacting with each other and having fun! We are also studying Texas and its symbols which will continue into October as well.

I am eager to guide them through their learning and watch as the class explores, creates and solves problems together while learning how awesome it is to be different and unique. I am encouraged as I hear the rich language and discussions they have shared so far. This is going to be an enthusiastic year full of discovery! Thank you all so much for your support. I truly have been given the privilege to teach your children.

**Lisa Lipar**

### *3-4 Class*

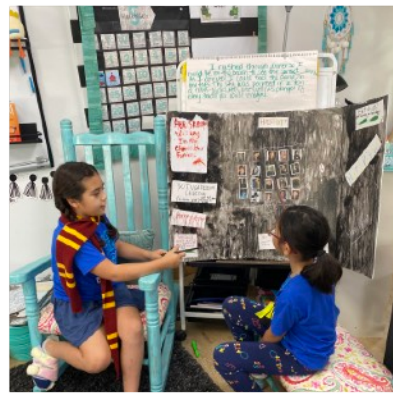
What a great start to our school year! Our class is beginning to really come together and find their way as a team. We have had so much fun getting to know each other. They have been introduced to our class pet, Kevin. He is quite the hit with the kids! We are learning routines and getting used to our new safety measures. I am so impressed with them. They are safety experts!

During reading workshop students are selecting just-right books for independent reading. Each child is able to find a quiet place to read and get cozy with books that will keep them in the reading zone the entire time. They are also enjoying our read aloud book, *Restart* by Gordon Korman which leads to great discussions about life lessons.

Writing workshop is in full swing! I am blown away with their writing! We decorated our writer's notebooks with all things special to each child. We have been adding lots of pre-writing activities to give plenty of ideas to spark their writing. We completed a heart map, expert list, writing territories, and blueprint. They love writing and sharing their writing in the Author's Chair. This is exciting as they are all anxious to read their pieces to the class and hear comments, compliments, questions and connections from their friends.

During our math workshop the class has enjoyed learning the importance of number sense. We have spent the last few weeks reviewing place value and strategies. We have introduced our fun multiplication songs at the beginning of math workshop. Ask your child to sing you one of his/her favorite songs! We move on to addition and subtraction strategies with numbers to the hundred thousand and multiplication. I am enjoying being able to work with students in small groups to help those struggling with a concept or to challenge students.

In science workshop the class looked at the scientific method and how to look at the world like a scientist. We began our study of plants and the life cycles.



Social studies workshop has been so fun as the students became the teachers and after becoming “experts” on Texas regions and Texas Native Americans. They are enjoying working with partners and groups to present to the class as experts.

Thank you all so much for your support. I am so privileged to have the opportunity to teach your children. It is going to be a wonderful school year!

**Melanie Welsh**

### *5-8 Reading-Writing Workshop and English I/II*



In grades 5-8 reading workshop, we started our first read aloud book of the year, *Fish in a Tree* by Lynda Mullaly Hunt. It's an emotionally charged, uplifting novel that speaks to anyone whoever thought there was something wrong with them because they didn't fit in. Having fallen in love with the main character Ally, students are highly engaged with the story, always wanting to read more than time allows. Wonderful discussion about confidence and self worth have flourished through the reading of this book.

We are on the cusp of presenting our first book project for the year! The students are excited to creatively share their favorite book they have read recently. Reading books of choice and sharing those books through book projects foster a love of reading within our students and grows our community of readers. We look forward to hearing about all the books our friends are loving.



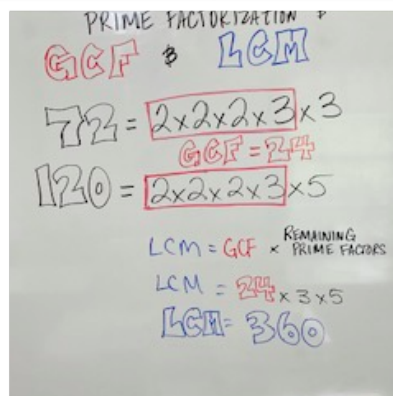
In grades 5-8 writing workshop, we are working toward our first publishing day of the year. We have brainstormed, created a list of topics to write about, picked a meaningful memory, written as much as we can, and have now begun the revisions. We have shared our initial writings and revisions with our friends and provided feedback to everyone's stories. This turns the writing process into something real and meaningful. Stories aren't written to only be filed into portfolios, they are written to be read and enjoyed by others. We are all looking forward to Publishing Day!



In grades 9-10 English we have made it to the midpoint of our first read aloud of the year, a nonfiction memoir, *Night* by Elie Wiesel. It has gripped us all. *Night* is Elie Wiesel's testimony to what happened in the camps of Auschwitz during the Holocaust. His unforgettable message that this horror must never be allowed to happen again has kept us gripped to hope and humanity. The memoir has opened up lots of interesting conversations about life, struggles, and willpower. Deep discussion of empathy has been the hallmark of reading thus far.

The self-selected books of our 9-10th graders range from non-fiction to unrealistic fantasy. Our first book projects coming up are sure to be creative masterpieces.





In grades 9-10 writing we have focused on autobiographical writing, taking a memory of importance and crafting it into a story that pulls in all readers. Revisions are underway and each piece will be carefully crafted by Publishing Day.

It's been a great start to the year, and we are eager to continue our journey as lifelong readers and writers.

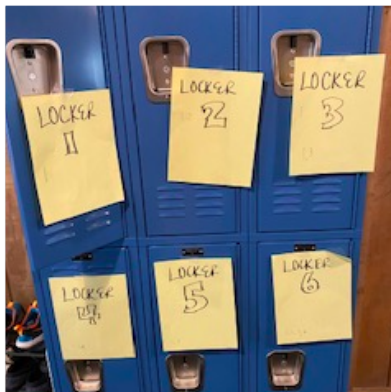
**Kristy Moreno**

### *5-8 Math Workshop & 9-10 Geometry & Chemistry*

It has been a busy first month in grades 5-8 math at CTL! I have really enjoyed getting to know the students and their unique personalities. For the 5th graders, this has been a big transition for them moving into middle school, and they have made some good progress in the first few weeks.

Grades 5-6 students began the year in the Numbers Foundation unit by discovering special types of numbers through games like the Factor Game and Product Game. In the Factor Game, students competed to get the highest score by choosing a number that has very few factors. This led to the discussion of why the best "first move" in this game is to choose the largest **prime number** to maximize the point differential between yourself and your opponent. Learning about **composite numbers** naturally came from this discussion and summary as students realized that they did not want to pick a number that had multiple factors because it would give their opponents more points. The Product Game reviewed and reinforced students' knowledge of **factors** and **multiples** as they determined what other factor is needed to get to a desired product given one factor to begin with. Digital versions of these games were posted in Google Classroom for students to continue to play and try new strategies to win.

We planned real-life field trips for Dr. Ellis and Mrs. Maia where students solved problems using **Greatest Common Factor (GCF)** to create snack bags for everyone. We used different sized ferris wheels at an amusement park to find **Least Common Multiple (LCM)** in order to determine when both ferris wheels would be at the same position. Students learned how to use a **factor tree** to create the longest factor string possible which is also the **Prime Factorization** of the number. We then discussed how to use **exponents** to write the Prime Factorization in a shorter way. Some great connections were made when they realized that the prime factorization of a number could be used to find the greatest common factor (GCF) and the least common multiple (LCM)! Most students preferred to use this new strategy for GCF and LCM over traditional strategies of listing all the factors for GCF and listing multiples for LCM.



These concepts all culminated in the Locker Problem where students tried to figure out which lockers would remain open after multiple students opened or closed them in a repeated pattern. Thanks to the Spurlin Family, we were able to use our new set of 18 lockers in the hallway to simulate this problem with "18 students" so they could visualize the scenario and see the open lockers at the end. After the simulation, students quickly noticed that the "student #" represented **factors** of the "locker #." The locker numbers that remained open were 1, 4, 9, and 16 which are all **square numbers** with an odd number of factors which resulted in them being open at the end. The original Locker Problem had 1,000 lockers and 1,000 students so we had fun making a list of all of the square numbers up to 1,000 that represented all of the open lockers.

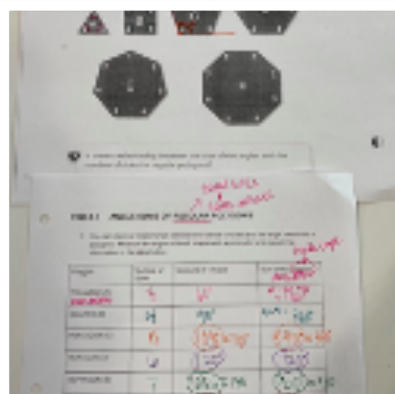
In early October we have just begun to discuss how the **distributive property** can be used to rewrite a number using the visual of the area of rectangles. These discussions will progress into writing and simplifying numeric expressions using the Order of Operations. The distributive property will be used in algebraic expressions as well later this year.

We should wrap up the Numbers Foundation unit by mid-October. We will then begin working on the Fraction Operations unit which covers addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of fractions. Students can always improve with their knowledge of multiplication and division facts by practicing outside of class. Also working on a solid understanding of fractional parts of a whole is a great way to prepare for the upcoming Fractions unit. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns via Remind Direct Message (Remind App - Class code @56mathctl) or by email.

Grades 7-8 math students began the Triangles & Parallel Lines Unit by sorting and discussing properties of polygons. These discussions led to the classification of polygons with a focus on different types of triangles and quadrilaterals based on angles and side length relationships. We then learned and practiced how to measure and draw angles with protractors to further solidify students' understanding of the angle relationships within polygons. Students were challenged to design shapes with certain angle and side length parameters and discovered requirements for creating triangles.

We investigated the angles of regular polygons (equal sides and equal angles) from 3 sides to 8 sides and determined the pattern for finding the Sum of all Angles of a Polygon with  $n$  sides. This investigation led us to the Gaga Ball Pit project! Students used the smaller gaga pit design of a regular hexagon to design the size and shape of the larger gaga pit for the upper grades. Students initially decided on an octagon (8-sided) shape to have a larger area to play in. However after counting





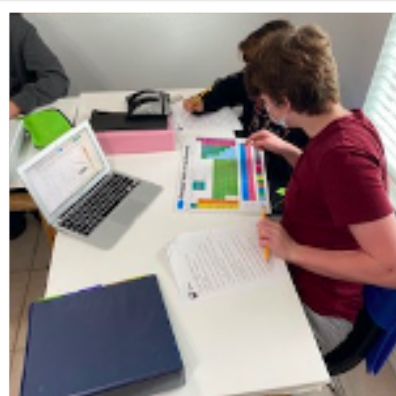
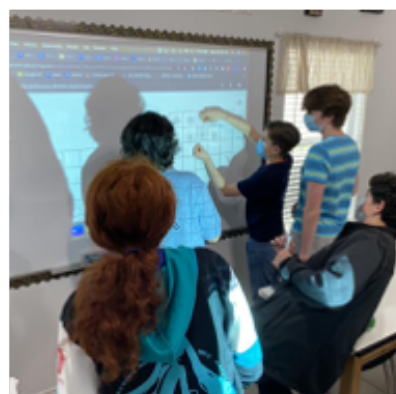
how many wood planks we had to use, they had to adjust the design to a heptagon (7-sides). We are going to keep working on this gaga ball pit project into October for the upper grades to enjoy!

We then moved into investigating the angle sums of triangles and quadrilaterals and found that all 3 angles in any triangle “magically” all add to 180 degrees or a straight line angle. They tested this theory out on quadrilaterals and found that all 4 angles add to 360 degrees or a full rotation and named these properties “Angle Sum Magic.” Students then practiced finding the missing angle in triangles and quadrilaterals and writing equations using these properties.

Students will continue in this first unit of Triangles and Parallel Lines through October. We will investigate triangle side length requirements, right triangles side relationships using the Pythagorean Theorem, and angle relationships between parallel lines and transversals. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns via Remind Direct Message (Remind App - Class code @78mathctl) or by email.

In Geometry our first unit focuses on the foundations of geometry involving points, lines, angles and planes. The concepts addressed in geometry are problem-based in nature and tiered by complexity. Students began tackling real-world problems involving area and right triangles. Students led each other to the distance formula through the application of Pythagorean Theorem in order to find the shortest distance across a beach. More challenging problems using distance formula involve finding missing endpoint coordinate(s) given the distance and the other endpoint. We then derived the midpoint formula given endpoint coordinates. Angle relationships were investigated by measuring angle pairs in complementary, supplementary and vertical angles. The first unit will conclude parallel and perpendicular line relationships and equations in October. We will then begin the second unit on geometric transformations of figures on the coordinate plane.

In Chemistry we began our study of Element Structure and the Periodic Table with introductions to the subatomic particles that make up all elements, protons, neutrons, electrons and the Bohr atomic models. Students discovered patterns in element structure by sorting Bohr atomic models of different elements within groups and then together as a whole class. They were then challenged with placing these unknown elements on a blank periodic table and explaining their placements. Through this inquiry-based activity students were able to determine the



relationship between atoms within the Groups (columns) and Period (rows). They also determined which type of elements would bond with one other element based on their valence electrons in a similar card-sorting activity. This helped students solidify their understanding of the positioning of elements on the periodic table. We learned how to draw Lewis dot structures and write electron configurations to describe electron placement of elements and confirm students' predictions on bonding.

Students completed a technology activity using a STEMScopes TUVA program that organized data for the first 40 elements of the Periodic Table. They worked collaboratively in partners to analyze the patterns of atomic radii, ionic radii and electronegativity and then shared their results with a person from a different group to determine trends across the periodic table.

In October these investigations will culminate in a project where students will create presentations on two specific elements of their choice. Students will describe each element's atomic structure, electron configuration, physical and chemical properties, compounds formed, reactions and real-world uses and present their elements to students in lower grades. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns via Remind Direct Message (Remind App - Geometry code @geomctl, Chemistry code @chemctl) or by email.

***Rachelle Petrovic***

***5-8 Science & Social Studies Workshops, 9-10 World History & College and Career Readiness***

In grades 5-6 science we have been busy learning about each other and exploring the new school property as we learn about science. We explored the scientific method by designing our own experiments. They chose to learn about how sugar affects our teeth and bones by experimenting with eggs and their shells which closely replicate bones and enamel of teeth. We then began learning about the periodic table and elements with candy models, puzzles, and cookies. Who knew science could be so YUMMY!





For grades 7-8 science we also explored the scientific method by designing our own experiment. The students chose to create a maze for our classroom pet to navigate. They wanted to find out if he would learn and improve his time through the maze if he went through more than once. It was a success for him and the students because he was able to navigate the maze and do so in half his time by the third trial. Next, we reviewed atoms, molecules and heat transfer methods. Students simulated various heat transfer actions and molecule reactions within stations. Most exciting was learning about density and how to calculate it with an experiment creating a density tower and adding items like marbles, corks, and rocks to see how their density interacted with the density of a liquid. It was messy but it was educational!

Grades 5-6 social studies students began with learning about when humans appeared on earth and how they lived. They created a poster of a few known early human tribes, where they were found to have lived on earth and where they migrated to over the years. All of them were hunter-gatherers and nomads and moved a considerable distance during their lifespans which the students found fascinating considering there were no easy methods of movement and travel. They also learned how their skeletal and cultural differences impacted their lives and success as a race. They are also creating a live-action video showing how early humans lived. With many retakes it is coming along nicely, and we hope to be able to share this

For 7-8 social studies, they also explored when humans appeared on Earth and how they lived so students will see contextually and visually how the United States fits on the globe and within the entire world. Compared to many other countries and civilizations, we are such a young nation with so much more growth and opportunities ahead of us. Knowing our place in the world and how our nation developed is so important for everyone. In learning about the early humans they created models of how early human groups lived and compared their culture, bodies, and way of living to modern day. They shared these with each other in a gallery walk. They put a lot of time and effort into making their models wonderful and they enjoyed seeing each others finished products.

World History students really spent time getting to know the property at the beginning of the year. Once we began our history learning, they have focused on early humans with research and a round table discussion. This was particularly fun because they had accumulated so much information and shared their thoughts and ideas about what they had learned. Our next project was an "America's Most Wanted" poster or video where they studied many of the things that made early human groups different from each other and us such as culture, ways of living and travel and skeletal and body differences. These were really fun to see and watch while we were learning



We jumped right in in grades 9-10 College and Career Readiness exploring our personalities, skills, aptitudes, and likes and dislikes to start to think about future careers and plans, knowing that decisions we make now will have an affect, but can be a bit fluid taking some of the pressure off of students in making life choices. After we explored these things, students started looking at degree programs in college and what classes they would be taking and what is expected of them from colleges as applicants. We will use this basic information to create a 4-year CTL plan for each student so that they are maximizing their time by taking classes that will be helpful for their future plans as well as enjoyable to them.

**Amy Kiddy**

### *9-10 Spanish*

HOLA! I am so happy to be the Spanish teacher for the wonderful grades 9 & 10 this school year. We started off a great Spanish learning journey with amazing engagement. In less than four weeks I am proud to say that they know how to use functional and essential Spanish—asking and providing basic personal information including names, origin, age, today's date and numbers. We are about to conclude our special project of Hispanic Heritage Month that is celebrated from September 15 to October 15.



Our mission at CTL and myself as a Spanish teacher is to teach real language, real culture so real communication makes learning Spanish a relevant experience for our CTL students.

**Patricia Padraza**

### *5-8 Music/Drama Workshop*

I am excited to be the music teacher at CTL this year. I love to work with students in schools and in private and group lessons at Play It Right Music School where I am Manager. I have a huge passion for music and for teaching, and there's no better place for me to fulfill my passion than with the amazing students at CTL.

Grades PK-4 will be continuing our lessons on rhythm. In the next month they will learn how to make their own rhythm and their own rhythm instruments and understand the different types of rhythm. Grades 3-4 will begin ukulele next week.

Grades 5-8 students have chosen a musical for their fall production.





They are excited about presenting this for parents and students this fall. A courtroom has never been more lively and fun than in *The Big Bad Musical*! The jury — the audience — must decide the outcome of the biggest trial ever in the fairy-tale world! The notorious Big Bad Wolf is being slapped with a class-action lawsuit by storybooks of quirky characters who want to get even: Little Red Riding Hood, her Grandmother, the Three Little Pigs and the Shepherd in charge of the Boy Who Cried Wolf. With Sydney Grimm as the commentator on live Court TV, the two greatest legal minds in the Enchanted Forest — the Evil Stepmother and the Fairy Godmother — clash in a trial that will be remembered forever after. As our wronged fairy tale characters testify, the wolf seems deserving of all that's coming. Yet, even though the infamous Evil Stepmother resents doing pro-bono work on such an obviously futile defense, Mr. Wolf makes a good case for himself. Was he born a criminal or made one? We are just finishing tryouts this week, and we are excited and look forward to practice each Tuesday and Thursday and performing this smart and wickedly funny musical for parents and students!

I am excited to be working with your children!

***Troy Bennett, Play It Right Music***

### ***PK-8 Physical Education Workshop***

It sure is nice to be active outside, especially in our new huge arena with provided shade. To say I'm overjoyed to see everyone's smiling faces again is an understatement. Students are learning rules, expectations, safety and how to be prepared to participate in activities and understand what is appropriate behavior in PE.

Pre-K and kindergarten students are learning a fun sing-along rhyme to do their physical warm-ups each morning while simultaneously learning personal space. They have been working on locomotive skills (running, skipping, galloping, hopping, etc) and playing a tag game with a long noodle while incorporating these skills.

Grades 1-4 students have been running laps to get those heart rates up while keeping a safe distance, stretching, playing tag games using a long noodle, not hands, while using different locative skills and exercises to get back in the game. We've also played rock, paper, scissor victory lap games and a tic-tac-toe relay game to help build and promote teamwork.

Grades 5-8 students start with running and other warm-up exercises then play a human foosball game, basically same concept of the table game but kicking a soccer ball.

We're off to a fun, healthy and safe start!

***Sarina Eckhardt***



### *PK-8 Art Workshop*

Line, shape, color, texture, value, form, and space are the “A,B,Cs” of art. In the art world they are called the Elements of Art. During the months of September and October, the Center for Teaching and Learning artists have been focusing on using the elements in their projects. See the artists at work.

***Pam Mayo***

