



CTL CORNER

Center for Teaching & Learning | 26131 Kuykendahl Rd., The Woodlands, TX 77375 | 832-474-8214



Important Dates

April 1, 2, 3, 5 - 8th Grade Moving-Up Celebration Week; 7th graders will be joining them

April 4 - 5th-8th grade field trip to George Ranch Farm

April 5 - CTL Parent Council, 12:00-1:00 p.m. at the CTL Library

April 11 - CTL Spring Musical at New Hope Christian Church, 7575 Alden Bridge Dr., The Woodlands, starting at 6:00 p.m. Please drop off your child at the church by 4:00 p.m.

April 15-18 - Stanford Achievement Test, 10th Ed., Online, Grades 3-4

April 19 - No School - Good Friday

April 22 - Earth Day at CTL

April 25 - CTL Community Open House, 6:00-7:00 p.m. at the CTL Library

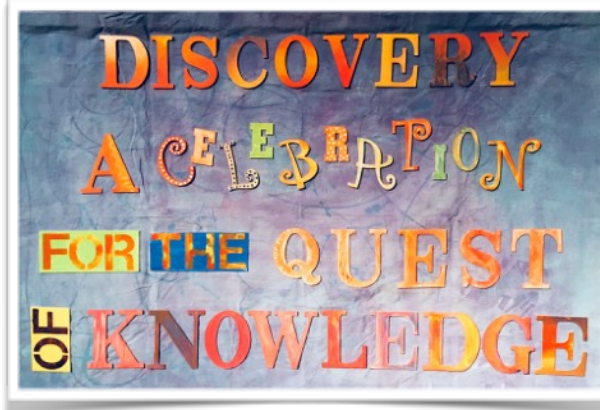


Discover

Still on a high from a fantastic evening of *Discovery*, I want to take this opportunity in this month's newsletter to say thanks. Thanks to all you parents who have brought your wonderful children to us and for trusting us with their education. I am about to complete my 35th year as an educator, and I can honestly say that each year gets better. Never have I been in an environment (since my early days as a teacher) where children and teachers can truly discover who they are as learners—where teachers can truly teach children without the restraints of mandates they must follow. Because of this, we truly have a CTL family where we know each other as learners.

I was touched last week when our Grades 7-8 students returned from a field trip to Moody

Gardens. One of the teachers announced in Morning Meeting that the students had commented that they wished David could be there. David is a Pre-K student, but because of Morning Meeting where David shares almost daily about his cockroach collection, his wolf spider, or all kinds of crawly creatures he is fascinated with, the



Important Dates

April 16-17 - Stanford Achievement Test, 10th Ed., Online, Grades 3-4

April 22-25 - Stanford Achievement Test, 10th Ed., Online, Grades 5-6

April 29-May 2 - Stanford Achievement Test, 10th Ed., Online, Grades 7-8

April 30 - Deadline to order a CTL Yearbook online at <https://www.treering.com/validate?PassCode=1014599995451624>

May 3 - CTL Parent Council, 12:00-1:00 p.m. at the CTL Library to discuss CTL's Needs Assessment

May 6-10 - Teacher Appreciation Week

May 13-16 - Trimester 3 Club Showcases during Morning Meeting at the CTL Library

May 14 - Parent Appreciation Breakfast

May 20-23 - CTL Talent Show during Morning Meeting in the CTL Library

May 20-23 - Portfolio Workshop - CTL students will put together portfolios for Trimester 3

May 23 - CTL Drama Class Performances, Live Music by CTL Students, and a Community Fundraiser with a Silent Auction, Food, & More!

May 24 - Staff Workday - No School

May 27 - Memorial Day - No School



students knew him as a learner and thought of him when they were on a field trip almost a hundred miles away, wishing he was there to see what they were seeing.

I am so thankful I can share this journey with each of you who entrust us each day with the education of your children and with a fantastic team of teachers who come to school each day with smiles on their faces, ready to greet your children—teachers who love to teach, love the content they teach, and love each individual child for the gifts that child brings, ready to take them on the next discovery with them. They care deeply. CTL is a happy place because of it.

CTL teachers and children are free to discover, free to create, free to dream, free to think outside the box, free to pose problems, free to solve problems, free to make mistakes, free to try new things, free to learn. My job is to support them by providing the resources they need and to break down any barrier that gets in the way, to discover through children, teachers, and parents what will make CTL an even better place for discoveries to begin and continue. Like CTL students shared with us through words and song on the evening of our school-wide musical:

*Everyone says that life is a journey.
Everyone says there is so much to know.
Open your eyes and see what could be. Open your heart and feel
what could happen.
Open your minds and find discovery.
Look around and discover all the things we see.
Come aboard the journey and learn what could be.
Look around discover all the things we'll do.
Like a big adventure.
Like a dream coming true.
Discovery!*

That song is so what we are about at CTL. I learned long ago from a man who went to his leader and said, "I see no way to accomplish the task you have assigned me to do," to which his wise leader said, "The



May 30 - Trimester 3 ends;
Student-Led Conferences; Last
Day of School; Early Release at
12:05 p.m.

May 31 - Staff Workday

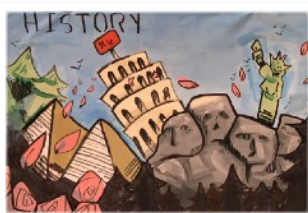
Important Reminders

*Please have your child at school by 7:55 a.m. every morning so he/she does not miss our Morning Meeting that begins at 8 a.m.

*Please make sure your child has a snack, lunch, and water bottle every day, a jacket on cold days, and tennis shoes on PE days.

*Invite your child to show CTL school spirit by wearing his/her orange CTL t-shirt on Fridays.

*Spray your child for mosquitos on P.E. and outdoor activity days



trouble with you is you want to see the end from the beginning. You must learn to walk to the edge of the light, and then a few steps into the darkness; then the light will appear and show the way before you.”

That’s where my mind took me from the program that evening. Our goal at CTL is that students are prepared as lifelong learners. We do not know what jobs we are preparing our students for in the future. They may not even exist yet. But if we prepare them to be excited about the journey, to be excited to discover, to be excited to learn, to problem pose, to problem solve, to be confident, to be kind, to be good citizens, and with the knowledge that will help them be successful learners so they will continue to learn, we have prepared them for the future.

Life is a journey—not a destination—full of discoveries, full of adventure—only through living life that way can we be truly happy—and life is about having joy, even in the midst of hardships.

Thanks for letting us go on that journey with you and your children. We are enjoying every moment!

Linda Ellis

Pre-K Class

Another fabulous job preparing and presenting portfolios for the Pre-K class. I am so proud of their hard work at such a young age. Finally, spring is here! I hope everyone had a wonderful spring break, and I am so glad to welcome everyone back. Pre-K students have been excitedly studying insects. They are intrigued by the little bugs. We are discussing the life-cycles, habitats, and characteristics of insects and other animals. We began our insect unit learning about butterflies.



In reading workshop some of the books we enjoyed included *Waiting on Wings*, by Lois Elhert, *Becoming Butterflies*, by Anne Rockwell, *The Very Impatient Caterpillar*, by Ross Burach, and *The Seeds of Milkweed*. This was an interesting book as it was written and illustrated by second grade students in Florida. Some additional books we enjoyed were *The Grouchy Ladybug*, *The Very Lazy Ladybug*, *Frog and Toad* and *The Sea Turtle*.



In science workshop we learned about the life cycle of many insects and animals. We have completed several projects pertaining to the life cycles of the insects and animals. We have enjoyed watching the metamorphosis of the Painted Lady caterpillars that we ordered. Currently, they are in the chrysalis stage and are waiting on their wings. The students are very excited and check on our winged-friends first thing each morning.

In math workshop we continue to re-enforce our skills in graphing, sorting, patterns and practice writing our numbers. We look forward to our field trip to the Houston Zoo next week. We will be discussing zoo animals and their habitats prior to our visit. All the Pre-K students are extremely excited and ask daily if the field trip is today. It will be such a great experience. A thank you in advance to all the parent chaperones who will be assisting us on our field trip!

Beckey Billings

Kindergarten Class

Happy Spring to you from Kindergarten! Just like the flowers, our learners are blooming!

Trimester 2 Student-Led Conferences were a huge success. The kids were so proud to present their learning to you. The progress they have made is nothing short of spectacular. I relished our visits and marveled at the independence and self-confidence with which the children shared their learning. I hope you all enjoyed some family time over Spring Break. The memories you are creating now are priceless. I subscribe fully to the notion of less things, more experiences.

The children are now seasoned readers. Many have moved up a level or more in their personal reading. They enjoy discussing their



favorite books, and I hear them recommending titles to their friends. Book talks are an important part of developing a love for reading. Think about it; when you watch a movie with a friend, the first thing you do as you exit the theater is talk about it. You discuss your favorite scenes, a scary part or an unexpected plot-twist. Encourage your child to talk to you about their books in the same manner each weekend when they bring home their selections from the week.

We are writing like crazy in our classroom! It is quite a sight to see. Children arrive daily with excitement about their topics. We are preparing to put some of our writing into book format. As we fine-tune the size and neatness of our handwriting, publishing books will be the next step. I look forward to the final trimester portfolio reviews when you see and read your authors' work. On that topic, can you believe how quickly we are approaching the end of kindergarten? As I compose this April newsletter update, I can hardly believe there will only be one more.

As mathematicians, we have been putting a strong emphasis on subtraction. One of the skills we are polishing is how to verbally state the subtraction sentence that goes with a subtraction story we have heard. This flexes our mental math muscles as we develop a deeper understanding of the concept of removing items from a set. We have been taking surveys and placing our data on graphs. The students are becoming experts at analyzing and discussing a variety of graphs.

In social studies, we have turned our attention to the great state of Texas. We are taking a look at the state capitol and other large Texas cities on a map. We are also learning about the various state symbols. Our study of Texas has sparked an interest in maps, so we are exploring basic map skills as well.

In science, we got started briefly on our study of forces and motion when we were pleasantly surprised by the early arrival of our ladybug larvae. We quickly switched gears to our study of insects and will return to pushes and pulls at a later date. We read all about the ladybug lifecycle and the specific care of our new arrivals. We





prepared the ladybug habitat and gathered around to introduce the larvae to their new home for the next few weeks. The Friday Garden Club students busily prepared the CTL grounds for our ladybugs once their transformation from larva to pupa to ladybug was complete. They needed plants, flowers and leaves to grow and thrive once we released them into nature. Speaking of nature, we are also preparing for our fun and educational field trip to the Houston Zoo on April 23rd. Stay tuned!

Annie Manning

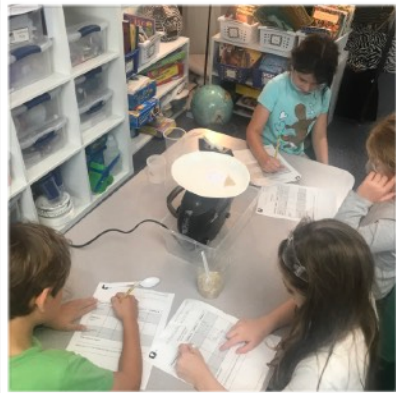
1-2 Class

March winds blew in with more fun activities for the Explorer class! This month we went on our first field trip of the school year. We thoroughly enjoyed the Health Museum. The 1st through 4th grade classes participated in exciting labs and experiments, as well as seeing inside the human body and how it works. We were so proud of all of them as they received hands-on opportunities and participated in all of the learning experiences.

Our reading and writing workshops are proving to create even more growth among the children as they practice skills everyday to become stronger readers and writers. We were introduced to some poetry which we will dive into in April for National Poetry Month.

The class is continuing to work on mapping skills in social studies, and Explorers are learning about the various ways to read a map. They practiced finding cardinal directions using a hand-held compass. They were introduced to the three branches of government. We began our unit on economics which will take us through to the end of the year.

Math workshop was all about geometry. We explored 2- and 3-dimensional shapes and their properties. We will continue working with fractions, money, addition and subtraction up to three digit numbers and measurement. I am noticing more math thinking and more participation during our math talks.





In science workshop we focused on space and the exploration of sound. We completed STEAM and sound stations to learn about how sound is made. We will continue this topic next month as we explore different ways sound travels, pitch and tone. We studied health and nutrition before and during our field trip to learn about what our bodies need to be healthy. Our caterpillars arrived for us to observe as they go through metamorphosis. Currently they are in the chrysalis stage. We will study them until they are released.

April is a month of wonder and discovery as we explore nature in our surroundings and in the classroom, went on one more field trip, and performed in our Spring Musical. We are excited to see you there! Please continue to have your child read every night. Thank you for all of your support in your child's learning experience!

Lisa Lipar

3-4 Class

This month the third and fourth graders are continuing to learn and grow in every subject. As readers, students are reading self-selected texts and log their daily reading progress. Students will select a book to complete a book project in April.

In writing workshop students are writing and sharing their writing with peers. Students support and encourage each other while sharing their stories. We have amazing authors in our class!

During math workshop students will be starting a new unit of fractions. Our daily mental math topic this month is multiplication. Your child will be able to multiply two-digit numbers mentally!

As scientists, students are completing a unit on force and motion. We will wrap up this unit with a six-station lab in which students will be presented with materials and directions to complete and record their findings. Next up after force and motion is magnetic forces!

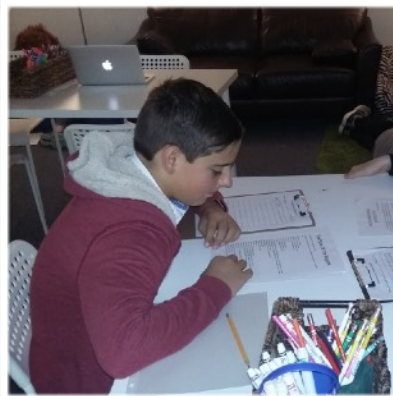
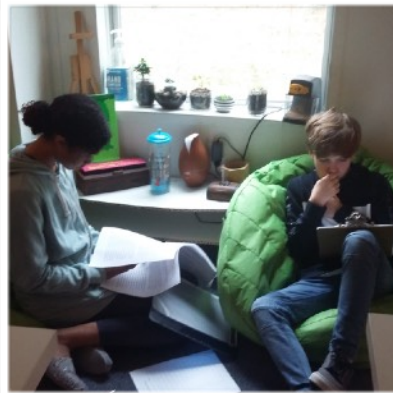
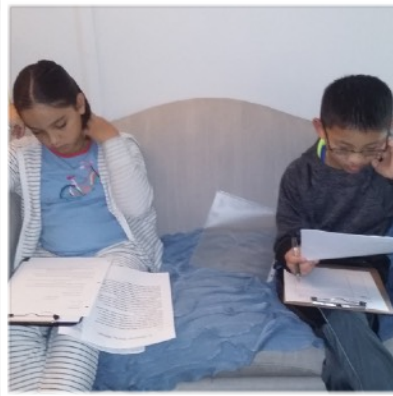
In social studies workshop, students have been learning all about Texas. First we explored the four geographic regions of Texas. Next we will begin learning about the five main Native Texan tribes and how they impacted our state.

Corrie Sheldon

5-8 Reading Writing Workshop

Trimester three has gotten off to a great start. Seventh and eighth grade finished our class read-aloud *The Martian* by Andy Kerr. As a class, we identified several key themes from the book including persistence and not giving up, and the idea that the common core of humanity is to help those in need. We all agreed that *The Martian* was an awesome book!

Meanwhile, fifth and sixth grade students have been getting into our class read-aloud *Bootleg* by Alex Shearer. This book is based on the



premise that chocolate is outlawed. What would you do in this situation? Abide by the laws or turn to a life of crime and bootlegging? We have been having fun making predications and trying to understanding the motivation behind the actions of the characters in this book.

In writing workshop, we have been thinking about planning on paper and the benefits this can have on alleviating writer's block. One of the ways planning on paper can be used is as a way to doodle with words. By getting all the potential ideas that are swirling around our head down in black and white, we can then shift through them and choose which ideas to use next and which to abandon.

Caroline Harrison

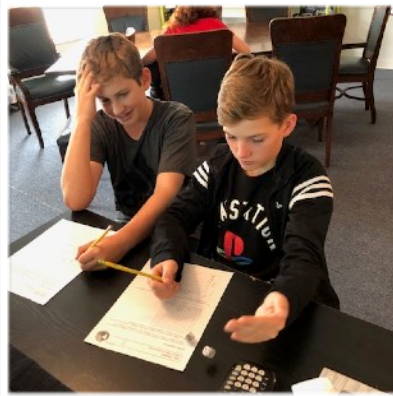
5-8 Math Workshop

At CTL we spend time every day developing our mental math skills to push students into making sense of the numbers they are manipulating. The hope is that our students efficiently reason through mathematical thinking rather than relying on a calculator or pencil and paper. Fifth through eighth grade mathematicians have continued to expand their mental math skills with operations of fractions. Some of these students are becoming more proficient at mentally combining rational numbers rather than using pencil and paper algorithms.

Fifth and sixth grade math students studied measurement conversions. Recalling knowledge of operations of fractions and decimals, students were challenged to convert measurements in a variety of real-world scenarios (recipes, blueprints, maps). Students studied the workings of the metric system and quickly discovered patterns when multiplying and dividing by tens. This unit culminated with an Escape Room challenge where the students had to solve problems and puzzles to unlock digital locks on various levels. Students were fully engaged while problem-solving, collaborating, and extending their thinking to a variety of stages. Up next for these mathematicians is an introduction to algebra. Students will examine and solve algebraic expressions and equations through the context of the California Frog-Jumping Contest.

In the seventh and eighth grade math classes, students compared various methods for analyzing data. We graphed linear equations, systems of equations, and scatter plots and explored characteristics of each. Students surveyed the school to discover correlations between age vs. shoe size, age vs. energy level, and age vs. minutes spent in the car. These mathematicians also investigated the inner workings of probability through a dice game. Students made predictions about the "fairness" of the game. Experimental trials showed a wide range of data, but the actual probabilities were surprising. During our great week of celebrating the eighth graders, we discovered the need to revisit calculating tax, tip and total. We are looking forward to adding this into our next unit on financial literacy.

Claire Want



5-8 Science Workshop

During our two weeks in March our 5th grade unit of study was *Observations of Patterns In Objects In the Sky* with the following modules: *Observing the Stars*, *Objects in the Sky*, and *Earth's Rotation*. The students' expectations are to support an argument that differences in the apparent brightness of the sun compared to other stars are due to their relative distances from Earth. The students tracked their shadows with sidewalk chalk outside. They learned how and why their shadows changed during the day. We then stretched that learning by researching and creating our own sundials! We will continue this unit as we concentrate on objects in the sky the second week of April. Later in the month we will be moving to our unit on *Earth's Systems*.

In sixth grade the students were focused on their unit about *Energy*. Our two weeks in March included units on *Kinetic Energy* and *Potential Energy*. Students analyzed the relationship between kinetic energy and mass and kinetic energy and speed by graphing provided data. Students analyzed the data and used it as evidence to demonstrate that an increase in the speed of an object affects the kinetic energy more significantly than does a change in the mass. Moving in to April we will continue our unit on *Energy* but move into *Thermal Energy Transfer*. The students will be expected to apply scientific principles to design, construct, and test a device that either minimizes or maximizes thermal energy transfer. The students will be expected to plan an investigation to determine the relationships among the energy transferred, the type of matter, the mass, and the change in the average kinetic energy of the particles as measured by the temperature of the sample. They will also be expected to define the criteria and constraints of a design problem with sufficient precision to ensure a successful solution, taking into account relevant scientific principles and potential impacts on people and the natural environment that may limit possible solutions. Finally, the students will be expected to develop a model to generate data for iterative testing and modification of a proposed object, tool, or process such that an optimal design can be achieved.

During two weeks in March, seventh and eighth grade students finished their unit about *Dynamics In Ecosystems* with units like *The Dynamic Nature of Ecosystems*, *Ecosystem Biodiversity*, and *Changes In Biodiversity*. The students designed their own wetland that had to have a dynamic ecosystem, they analyzed the changes to ecosystems after natural disasters, and they also played a fun game to analyze ocean biodiversity and the effects to changes in the energy pyramid. Moving into April, we are diving into my personal favorite unit *Heredity*. Our first unit inside *Heredity* will be *Genes and Gene Mutations*. The students will be expected to develop and use a model to describe why structural changes to genes (mutations) located on chromosomes may affect proteins and may result in harmful, beneficial, or neutral effects to the structure and function of the organism.

Laura Wellbrock



5-6 Social Studies Workshop

We have had an exciting month in social studies. The whole class did a fantastic job with our living wax work museum. The costumes and presentations showed they had completed great research and clearly understood the contribution their founding father or patriot had to the formation of America. The passion and enthusiasm the students displayed made it a whole lot of fun for other classes and parents to visit and learn a little more about an important historical figure.

We recently began our first multi-genre assignment. A multi-genre project is personal, creative, and can't be copied from some other source. It involves the student making conscious decisions about what information or ideas are important and how it should be presented to an audience. Each student was given a specific battle from the war for independence and then formulated their own guiding research questions based around who, why, what, where, when and how? They then took these questions and began individual research using the internet and books. This information is then presented in any three ways they desire. At the moment we have iMovies being made, picture books, poems, drawings, timelines, photo collages, stories, diaries, and postcards from the battle are also being made. The creativity, understanding and enthusiasm are making these assignments so interesting, personal and exciting.

In the next few weeks, we are going to explore the settlement of the west including the Louisiana Purchase, the Acquisition of Florida and the trials and tribulations around the addition of Texas as the 28th state. Toward the end of the month we will move into a study of the Civil War.

James Milner

7-8 Social Studies Workshop

We have finished our unit looking at the foreign affairs that the early Presidents had to deal with, such as the Brits and the War of 1812, the French Revolution, piracy at sea, and more of the like. Students were given the pieces of information that the President of the day would have had, and we wondered how we would have advised him to act had we been there at the time.

Our next unit focused on President Andrew Jackson and his legacy of wider inclusion of the common man within politics. We also discussed and wrote about his notorious acts of law that culminated in The Trail of Tears.

Caroline Harrison





PK-8 Art Workshop

In March students wrapped up print-making inspired by Albrecht Dürer and the discussions we shared based on the three-book series by Kobi Yamada. Most loved was the book *What Do You Do With An Idea?* We've also worked to create posters, crazy hats and backdrops for our school musical, *Discovery: A Celebration of the Quest for Knowledge*.

It's spring and the landscape is begging to be immortalized! This trimester all students will dive into to the organic and artistic wonder of Vincent Van Gogh. Our new gardens will love the attention as students draw and paint using pastels, watercolor, and explore mixed media in the form of 'loose bits'. I'm hoping to touch on upcycling as a means to creating art. Grades 5-8 will have the opportunity to study the Poetry of Photography. In addition, each class will work on a collaborative artwork to be included in this year's ART AUCTION.

Abby Salazar

5-8 Drama Workshop

During the last month the drama class has been developing scripts and refining their ideas to extend a plot and develop characters. We tried to develop some into performance pieces, and I was impressed to see some students create pieces that others enjoyed playing parts in and bringing life to characters that were on paper. Alongside the development of plays the students rehearsed and memorized their lines and stage movements for our school musical performance.

This week the students will receive their scripts and parts for our final drama performance of the year. We'll be putting a feminist twist to a classic tale, and a little alien invasion is planned for play number two. The students will be under a lot of performance pressure with our new plays as we will have just six weeks from the moment they get their scripts in hand to when they take to the boards and reveal their plays. I'll be reaching out for some help and support with props and costumes closer to our performance date in late May.

James Milner

PK-8 Music Workshop

All of our music classes focused on preparing for our school musical, *Discovery: A Celebration of the Quest for Knowledge*, on Thursday, April 11th. The PreK-4th grade classes spent their time exploring their song's melodies, lyrics, and musical structures, while the 5th-8th grade music class additionally prepared musical solo parts to assist their younger schoolmates. The PreK-4th grade teachers even dropped in on their student's music class to show their support by learning and participating in the dance routines alongside their students.



As we neared April 11th, we had full school rehearsals. While everyone was responsible for their own part in the production, the rehearsals gave us a chance to explore the importance of teamwork and communication in musical endeavors. Everyone was excited to participate in the teamwork necessary to coordinate the dances on tempo, practice singing the lyrics with their peers, and perform an awesome program!

Melanie Garcia

PK-4 Physical Education Workshop

Springtime has arrived and we're looking forward to the new activities this month. The volleyball net is up for the older kids, hooray! The 3rd and 4th graders are anxious to learn how to bump, set and strike the ball. While the net is too high for my younger groups, I still plan to have some activities to teach them how to bump and/or set the ball to each other using our gator balls. We will continue to play our fun tag games this month such as *Protect the Princess*, *Pizza Tag* and more. Our students are very active during P.E. class and are having fun moving without knowing they are exercising! Friendly reminder...please remember to supply your child with protection from mosquitoes.

Sarina Eckhardt

5-8 Physical Education Workshop

Fifth and sixth grade students are working through three levels of challenges in the jump rope challenge. This will take us through the year.

Seventh and eighth grade students are continuing volleyball. We are learning positions, rotations, and ball control. This unit will take us through the year.

Laura Wellbrock

