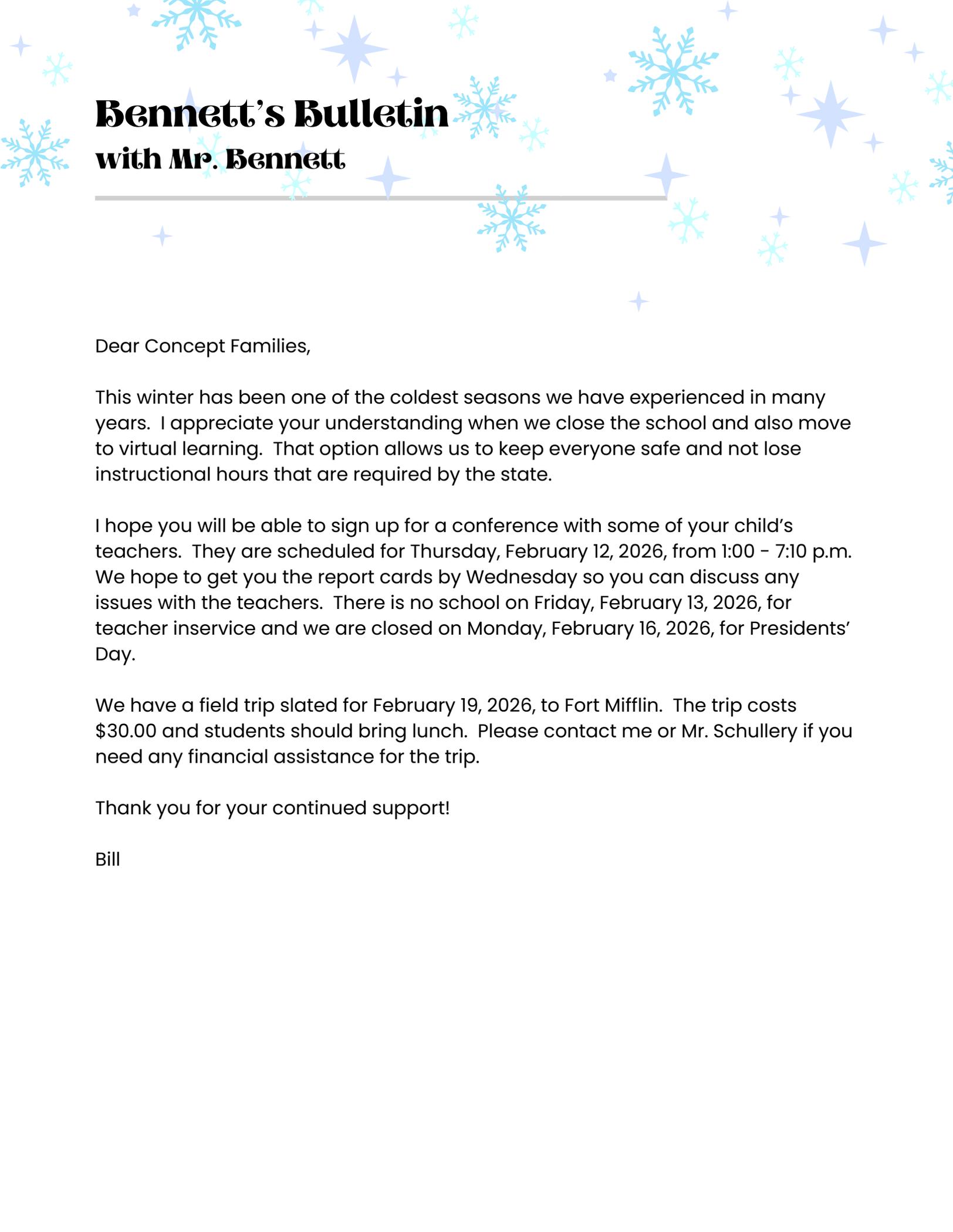


WINTER NEWSLETTER





Bennett's Bulletin

with Mr. Bennett

Dear Concept Families,

This winter has been one of the coldest seasons we have experienced in many years. I appreciate your understanding when we close the school and also move to virtual learning. That option allows us to keep everyone safe and not lose instructional hours that are required by the state.

I hope you will be able to sign up for a conference with some of your child's teachers. They are scheduled for Thursday, February 12, 2026, from 1:00 - 7:10 p.m. We hope to get you the report cards by Wednesday so you can discuss any issues with the teachers. There is no school on Friday, February 13, 2026, for teacher inservice and we are closed on Monday, February 16, 2026, for Presidents' Day.

We have a field trip slated for February 19, 2026, to Fort Mifflin. The trip costs \$30.00 and students should bring lunch. Please contact me or Mr. Schullery if you need any financial assistance for the trip.

Thank you for your continued support!

Bill



Dean's Deal

By: Mr. Schullery

4 Lessons from Shakespeare at TCS

1. We are capable of more than we may realize. Sometimes, we may look at a big goal like putting on a Shakespeare production in front of a large crowd as a monumental and therefore unreachable goal. If we convince ourselves a big goal like this is out of reach, we may not put forth enough effort to achieve that goal.

The TCS students proved that there is another option: to work hard every day, practice, support each other, and improve from one day to the next. As they kept pressing forward and practicing, their confidence grew. Often, as we grow our skills, we grow our confidence. If we wait to be confident to practice our skills, it might not ever happen!

2. Small steps every day can cover a lot of distance. When asked how he writes so many lengthy novels, prolific horror author Stephen King replied, "One word at a time." Although his response appears humorous at first, it really is true. A little bit every day can add up to wonderful results. On the flip side, the same is true for bad habits!

3. Teamwork makes the dream work. We can accomplish big things when we work well with others. No one person could have put on our Shakespeare performance by themselves. The production was a true team effort, with directors, actors, stage hands, props, lights, music, and everyone collaborating toward a common goal.

4. Taking positive risks promotes personal growth. The thing about our 'comfort zone' is that it's comfortable. When we're comfortable, we want to stay there. It's cozy. But when we're cozy, we're unwilling to take positive risks. Now, some risks may in fact be dangerous – like jumping into shark-infested waters in a wetsuit made of steaks. Not wise! But taking other types of positive risks can have enormous payoffs.

I hope our students can apply these lessons moving forward. They really did do an amazing job and I am very proud of all of them. Students, next time your faced with a challenge that feels impossible, just remind yourself, "This is nothing- I've done Shakespeare at TCS."

-Mr. Schullery



Transitions Updates

By: Ms. Cuff

Transition Class: Financial Literacy

In Transition class, students have been developing real-world money skills, including:

- Understanding budgeting and tracking expenses
- Learning the difference between needs vs. wants
- Understanding taxes and other deductions from pay
- Practicing how to use checking accounts, debit, and credit cards responsibly
- Exploring saving strategies and financial goal-setting!

By the end of this unit, students will complete a budget project based on what we have been learning! They will chose a career, research average starting salaries of that role, find a place to live, and create a monthly budget.



College Support Programs for Students with ASD

Many colleges now offer specialized support programs for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). These programs can include academic coaching, social skills support, executive functioning assistance, and structured residential supports, while students still work toward earning a college degree.

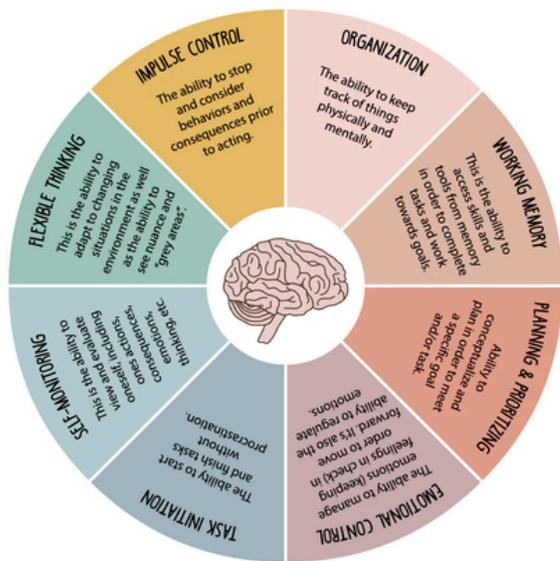
The Transition Website has a list of ASD college programs in PA and other postsecondary options. Reach out to me with any questions!



Functional Strategies

By: Ms. Cuff

EXECUTIVE FUNCTION WHEEL



lightandsaltdesignco.com

Class Update: Impulse Control

In Functional Strategies class, students have been working on their executive functioning skills, with a focus on impulse control.

Students practiced strategies to help them:

- Pause and think before acting or responding
- Think about the short and long-term consequences of decisions.
- Recognize emotional and situational triggers
- Use coping tools (deep breathing, taking a break, asking for help)
- Make thoughtful choices in academic and social situations

Building impulse control supports success in the classroom, relationships, work, and independent living settings.

What Is Executive Functioning?

Executive functioning refers skills that help us plan, organize, regulate emotions, manage time, and control impulses. These skills act like the brain's "CEO," helping us make decisions and stay on track.

Where does Executive Functioning happen in the brain?

Executive functioning is largely controlled by the *prefrontal cortex*, the front part of the brain.

Why Is Executive Functioning hard for teenagers?

The *prefrontal cortex* is one of the last parts of the brain to fully develop, often not until the mid-20s. This means teenagers are still building the brain structures needed for planning, organization, and impulse control, which can make these skills especially challenging during adolescence.

Executive Functioning, ADHD, and Autism

Students with ADHD and/or ASD often experience differences, or additional challenges, in executive functioning. This can impact organization, emotional regulation, attention, and impulse control. Explicit teaching, practice, and supportive strategies can significantly strengthen these skills over time!

Literature

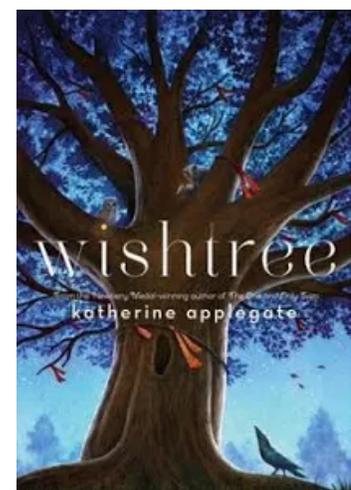
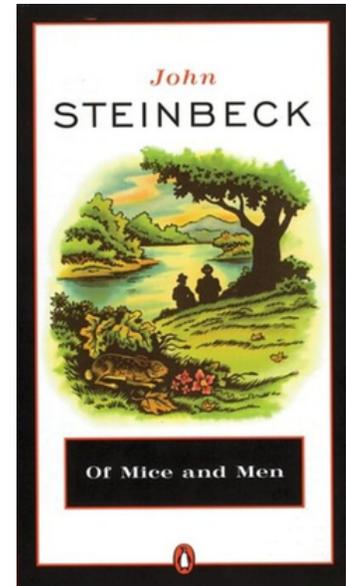
Mrs. Griffith

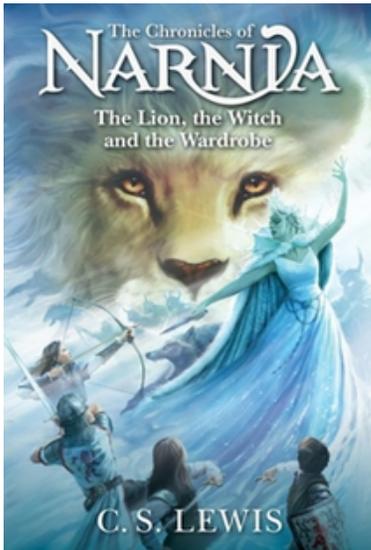
We all concluded our reading of *Sleeping Freshmen Never Lie*, and all of my classes created super creative "One-Pagers" to demonstrate their understanding of the novel, its literary elements, and their visions whilst reading. The bulletin board is bedecked with their artistic renderings of language art! As a culminating activity, we all watched the gem *The Princess Bride* as it was one of the multiple allusions in the novel! No surprise, the students all loved Rob Reiner's film!

Period One is composed largely of seniors who plan to go on to secondary education. Their maturity and knowledge of language art lead me to expose them to John Steinbeck's perfect (in my opinion) and poignant novella. They are learning about choosing every word deliberately, fiction as poetry, showing vs. telling, dreams, loneliness, and man's inhumanity to man, among other themes. They will end the marking period with a formal essay exploring the depths of the themes.

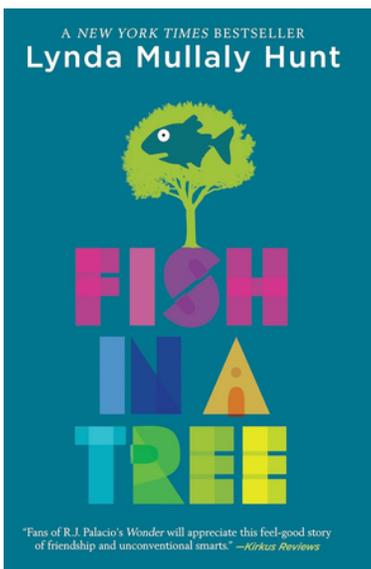
Period Two created their very own wishtree in our classroom! We are reading Katherine Applegate's (of *The One and Only Ivan*) wishtree. Red, our narrator and Red Oak tree, has seen it all and is beloved in the community. The animals seek shelter from its branches, and humans write their innermost wishes on rags or paper, and adorn its branches. We don't have a Red Oak in our room, but we are lucky to house a local artist's "trees" and "bushes" for the winter at TCS! So, the students named one of the trees in our room "Fred" and are working together to water it, clean out the pots, and nurture it. Check out how they've bedecked Fred with their wishes!

We are at an initiating incident in our story where someone has carved the word "LEAVE" into Red's trunk. The students are all wondering who did this act of vandalism and are hoping Francesca, the owner of the tree, doesn't take an axe to Red.





Period Three, at one student's request, has ventured into the world of Narnia reading C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe*. They enjoy learning (and rolling!) on yoga balls as their auditory preference lends itself to a bit of kinesthetic enjoyment. Listening to a book being read is still reading! They are picking up every nuance and share their theories of the magical realm where it is always Winter. Oh, and we are still awaiting the Turkish Delights that have been ordered for them. Let's hope that when they arrive, these candies don't make the students more enchanting than they already are! Additionally, there is already a request for another One-Pager, so this activity was a real hit!



Period Four is reading Lynda Mullaly Hunt's *Fish in a Tree*. This feel-good story is a slightly fictionalized account of the author's experience in school. Ally dreads school because, although she doesn't fully know it yet, she learns differently from her peers. Everyone writes her off, and her self-esteem is low, but she just met Mr. Daniels who will change her world (for the better) and help her see that all the things people think are negative about her are really her greatest strengths. This novel was recommended to me by one of our own TCS students who I taught last year. It really resonates and makes me think of our dear community where we all learn differently and have felt, at one point or another, like a fish in a tree.

Period Seven, Creative Writing, just presented their expository five-paragraph essays from the podium in our classroom. (Shout-out to Ms. Cuff, Ms. Kelly, and Mr. Bennett for being our audience!) They had a lot of fun determining the three mystery (and revelatory) items to put in their brown paper bag and then share with the class! All did a good job and picked up the style of writing through models and logic. Students have shown a surprising interest in grammar, so we are delving into sentence structure...practicing and then composing an extended metaphor story demonstrating their understanding. The kids like coming to the board and showing their knowledge and are eager to write each day. One student remarked, "I feel like Shakespeare! I am in a flow, and I think my writing expresses exactly what I want to say!"

History of Classic Cinema

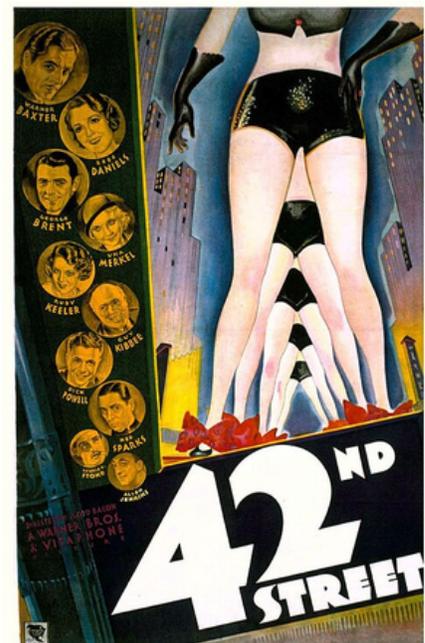
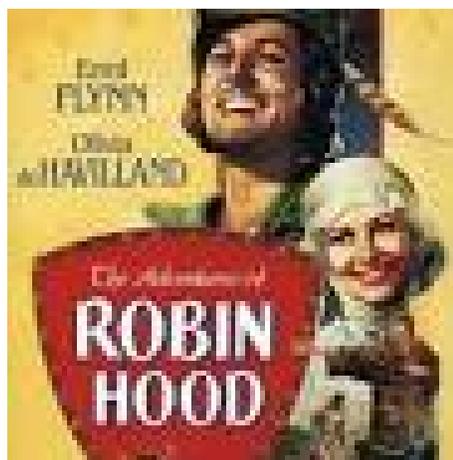
Ms. Tilmon & Mr. Burtch

The Classic Cinema class has continued its exploration of some of the best movies from the classic era. Prior to the Winter Break, the class studied *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), starring Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland, Basil Rathbone and Claude Rains. The film was noteworthy for its:

- Swashbuckling action and stunts.
- Early use of the three-strip Technicolor process.
- Rousing musical score by Erich Wolfgang Korngold.

Upon returning from the winter break, the class watched and discussed the 1940 classic, *Shop Around the Corner* starring James Stewart, Margaret Sullivan and Frank Morgan. It is a great example of the subtle, sophisticated and often humorous directorial style of Ernst Lubitsch, known as "the Lubitsch Touch".

The class now will turn its attention to the musical genre, starting with the 1933 pre-Code musical classic, *42nd Street*. The film stars Bebe Daniels, Ruby Keeler, Dick Powell and Ginger Rogers. It is a great example of the early choreographic genius of Busby Berkeley. Upon first seeing the song and dance sequence, *Young and Healthy*, one student gasped and described it as "mesmerizing motion". That's Busby Berkeley!



Geography

Mr. Burtch

North American Geography Update

Before the Winter Break, the class moved from an exploration of Atlantic Canada to Quebec. The class completed research presentations on Greater Montreal; Quebec City, the Eastern Townships and the Gaspé; and Northern Quebec. The class learned about the incredibly diverse physical and urban geography of this single province that is well over twice the size of Texas!

Since returning to school, that class has turned its focus to the geography of Ontario. The class will explore:

- The Greater Toronto Area, 7th largest metropolitan area in Canada, Mexico and the U.S.
- Southern Ontario, an industrial and agricultural heartland bounded by Lake Huron, Lake Erie and Lake Ontario.
- Northern Ontario, a vast landscape of ancient rock outcrops, dense Boreal forest, thousands of lakes and the Hudson Bay Lowlands (also much larger than Texas!).



American Geography

Mrs. Culler

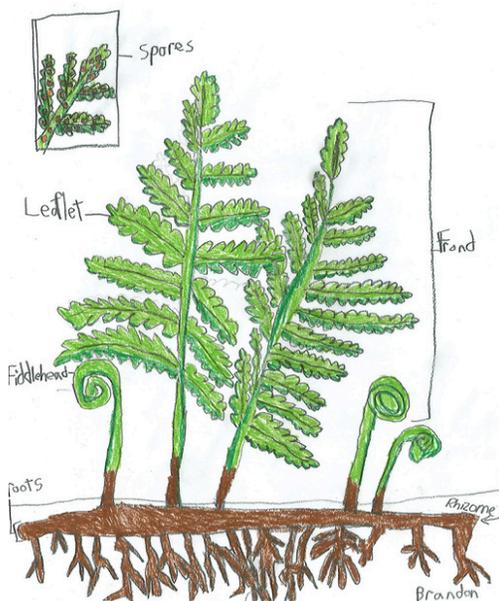
Mrs. Culler's European Geography Class divides the class between learning about physical, human, and cultural geography of various European countries. As we returned from Winter break, we studied the regions of the Alpine Forelands, the Bavarian Alps, and the Central Uplands. We've been learning about German culture including some fun items like Germany's love of board games (they produce hundreds of new board games each year and are the leading producer of board games in the world) and baking one of Germany's three thousands varieties of bread! Students enjoyed playing Catan, a classic German board game and baking Kartoffelbrötchen (German potato bread rolls.) We also took a student led virtual field trip of the Black Forest!



Life Science

Mrs. Culler

Mrs. Culler's Life Science Classes continued their study of the plant kingdom with Ferns and Gymnosperms. Students learned the principles of scientific illustration and heard presentations from scientific illustrators who work at the Smithsonian! In case you didn't know, there's an easy way to recall the five key principles of scientific drawing:



A: Accurate- Make your drawing as accurate as possible, capturing what the real specimen looks like.

B: Big - Your drawing should fill the entire page, even the specimen is small

C: Colorful- Use color to enhance your drawing and help differentiate between your specimen and similar ones.

D: Detailed- Include as many details as possible.

E: Explain- Use captions, keys, notes, and measurements to explain what your audience is seeing.

PLUCKED

BY EMMY ROHNER

I am an apple.

I tend to be sweet and tart, but can rot under the wrong conditions.

Must the apple be plucked from its mother tree?

Although I try, I don't grow very much.

Leaves.

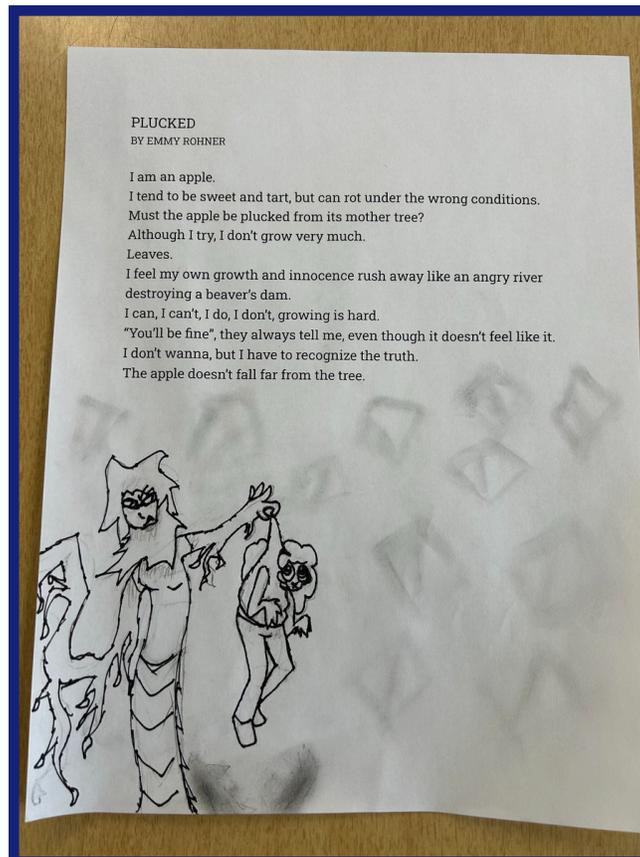
I feel my own growth and innocence rush away like an angry river destroying a beaver's dam.

I can, I can't, I do, I don't, growing is hard.

"You'll be fine", they always tell me, even though it doesn't feel like it.

I don't wanna, but I have to recognize the truth.

The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.



My Life as a Metaphor

I am a hyacinth.

I blossom with new traits, and stay closely rooted to the ground as Christ protects my beautiful petals.

Can anyone see the beautiful colors I can bloom to be?

Although I may wither away dark, my colors will always bloom baby blue and baby pink remaining faithful with affection and joy.

Resurrection.

My thoughts grow wildly, fast like weeds in a flower bed.

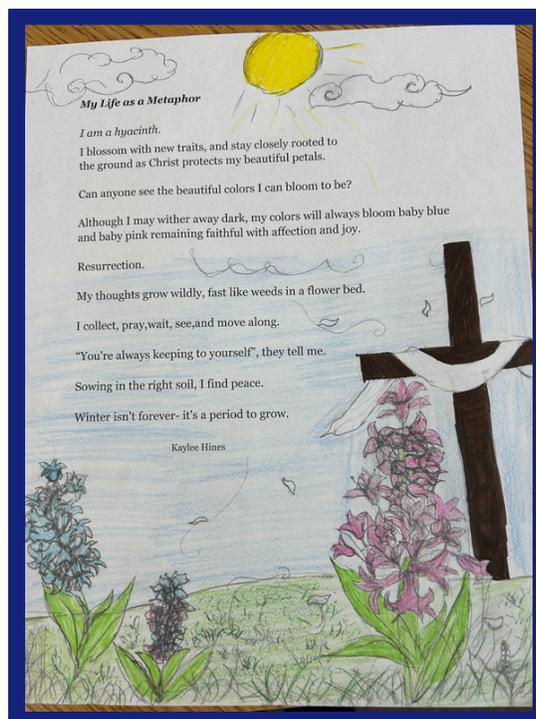
I collect, pray, wait, see, and move along.

"You're always keeping to yourself", they tell me.

Sowing in the right soil, I find peace.

Winter isn't forever- it's a period to grow.

By: Kaylee Hines



Stained Glass

Mrs. Daniels

Our Stained Glass class has been hard at work this marking period, first learning all about the history of stained glass development through the 1950s, and then synthesizing all of that knowledge into one giant Timeline of Stained Glass Development that we hung up in the APR!

Pausing in the 1950s means we left off right at the end of the period of time in which stained glass was chiefly used to represent ideas, images, and people, so it was the perfect time to create our own representative designs.

Each student first brainstormed several iterations of possible designs, then selected their very favorite one to turn into stained glass. They've taken their chosen designs through each step – scaling them up to a workable size, tracing them onto vellum, and cutting out each individual piece using special (yet tricky) pattern shears. After selecting the glass they wanted to work with, and with a focus on glass stewardship and conservation, they arranged their pieces into several cuttable “nests,” and the real work of cutting and grinding the glass could begin.

Take a look at what they've been working on:



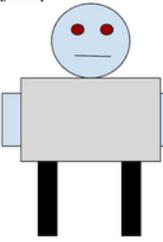
German I

Mrs. Daniels

Our German I students at TCS have continued their hard work in the second marking period, learning how to discuss school subjects in German, as well as name and talk about all sorts of classroom items. They've talked about their daily routines, and have been making their writing and speech much more interesting by both injecting humor and creativity and using a trick called "Satzinversion"! They also learned how to tell time in German (it's so much more than just "military time"), and have been weaving these expressions of time and frequency into their communication. Take a look at some of the projects that they have created so far this marking period – here they each created a "Phantom Student" and (after learning about the German school system) wrote up a report card for their student, assigning them grades and comments based on their student's experience in each class.

Mein Phantomschüler	Schulfächer	Lehrer/Lehrerinnen	Noten	
	Mathematik	Frau Zeichner	6	Ansel findet Mathe nicht interessant.
	Deutsch	Frau Dähne	4	Er findet Deutsch langweilig.
	Biologie	Frau Coogler	6	Schüler Adler ist so böse!
	Geschichte	Herr Brandt	4	Mein Schüler ist oft frustriert in meiner Klasse.
	Sport	Herr Breyne	2	Ansel ist nicht der schlechteste Schüler in meiner Klasse!
	Chemie	Frau Coogler	6	Ansel Adler ist ein entsetzlicher Schüler.
	Englisch	Frau Recht	3	Der Schüler ist sehr unmotiviert und auch entgegenwirkend.
	Physik	Frau Tauben	6	Ansel Adler ist ein sehr schwieriger Schüler.
	Kunst	Frau Schwieger	5	Der Schüler ist nicht so kreativ.

Mein Phantomschüler	Schulfächer	Lehrer/Lehrerinnen	Noten	Mein Schüler heißt Jonna!
	Deutsch 2	Frau Dumm	3	Deutsch 2 ist nicht gut!
	Informatik	Herr Klug	1	Informatik ist spitze!
	Kunst	Herr Kunst	1	Jonna findet Kunst gut!
	Chemie	Frau Wissen	4	Jonna findet Chemie interessant.
	Politik	Frau Gans	1	Jonna liebt Politik
	Chor-Orchester	Herr Singe	2	Jonna findet Herr Singe etwas klug und etwas dumm!!!
	Musik	Frau Singe	1	findet Musik super gut!!!
	Sport	Herr Fußball	2	findet Herr Fußball dumm!!!
	Hauswirtschaftslehre	Frau Albern	6	findet die Klasse bescheuert.
				Jonna ist 17 Jahre alt! Jonna wohnt in Deutschland. ist in der 11. Klasse. ist gerne Taschenspaghetti. Jonna ist athletisch!

Mein Phantomschüler	Schulfächer	Lehrer/Lehrerinnen	Noten	Er ist Bobby Koch.
	Englisch	Herr Stinkend	6	Bobby hasst Herr Stinkend. Er ist sonderbar.
	Sport	Frau Sportlich	5	Bobby wirft Völkerbälle an Einklässler.
	Musik	Frau Tubist	6	Er macht drei Tuben kaputt.
	Politik	Frau Merkel	6	Bobby kämpft mit Frau Merkel
	Mittagessen	Herr Butterbrot	1	Bobby ist hungrig die ganze Zeit
	mathe	Frau Böse	6	Bobby hat Angst vor Frau Böse
	deutsch	Herr Englisch	5	Er spricht nur in Französisch
	Physik	Herr Newton	6	Bobby glaubt die Erde ist eine Scheibe.
	Ethik	Frau Freundlichkeit	5	Bobby hasst jeder gleichermaßen
				Bobby asst fast alles. Er schätzt essen. Bobby hasst lehrer. Bobby kämpft Einklässler

German 2

Mrs. Daniels

Our German 2 class progressed full steam ahead through our unit focused on seasons, holidays, weather, and clothing, then plowed right through our unit dealing with things we must do and things we want to do. (Here's a hint – both expressions use helping verbs, aka Modal Verbs, which work hand-in-hand with regular everyday verbs to give us more detail as to how we actually relate to the action being discussed.) Part of our discussion of weather and seasons allowed us to write some amazing seasonal poetry in German! Through the use of subordinating conjunctions and prepositions of space and time, we've learned many new ways to use language creatively and with precision. Now, at long last, we are diving into the very deep waters of the Conversational Past tense in German – it is finally possible to speak about events in the past, not just those in the present and the future! Take a look at some of the projects that we've created so far:

Hallo, wir haben eine Wohnung mit einem freien Zimmer, und wir suchen einen Mitbewohner. Du musst fleißig und nett sein. Wir suchen einen Mitbewohner, der Pflanzen gießen und am Samstag Abendessen kochen will. Freitag ist Pizzaabend, du musst die Pizza einmal im Monat kaufen. Wir lieben Tiere, aber wir sind ohne Haustiere. Wenn du ein Haustier hast, dann bring doch das Tier mit! Das Zimmer ist möbliert. Es hat alles, du musst nichts mitbringen. Nach dem Interview, aber vor drei Wochen, bringst du deine Sachen zur Wohnung und du kannst mit uns wohnen.

Kommst du zum Interview? Wir freuen uns. So findest du die Wohnung:

Von der Post aus, gehst du links auf die Kampstraße und dann rechts auf die Kastanienallee. Du gehst geradeaus bis zur Marktgasse, und biegst links ab. Biegt rechts an dem Marktplatz ab, und gehst geradeaus. Unsere Wohnung ist auf der linken Seite. Die Adresse ist Geschwister Scholl Straße 67.



Im Winter

Im Winter kommt das kalte Eis,
Schneebedeckt, wird alles weiß,
der Frost und kalter Wind zieh'n ein
und jagen fort den Sonnenschein.

Es flackert warm das Licht der Kerzen,
und bringt das Glück zu unseren Herzen.
Flammen erleuchten Dunkelheit,
und füllen uns mit Gemütlichkeit.

*In Winter comes the cold ice,
Covered in snow, everything becomes white.
The frost and cold wind settle in,
and chase away the sunshine.*

*It flickers warmly, the light from the candles,
and brings happiness to our hearts.
Flames light up the darkness,
and fill us with coziness.*



Im Herbst

von K Daniels

Herbst ist, wenn die Blätter fallen,
Und die Künstler sie aufmalen.
Es ist, wenn der Wind stark weht,
und der Sommer schnell vergeht.

Wenn wir aus den Fenstern sehen
und durch die Kürbisfelder gehen,
Blätter leuchten mit Herbstsonnen,
Dann ist der gold'ne Herbst gekommen.

*Autumn is when the leaves are falling
and the artists paint them down on paper.
It is when the wind blows strong,
and the Summer fades quickly away.*

*When we look out the windows
and walk through pumpkin fields,
the leaves glow with the Autumn sun,
That's when the golden Autumn has come.*

Art

Ms. Schwind

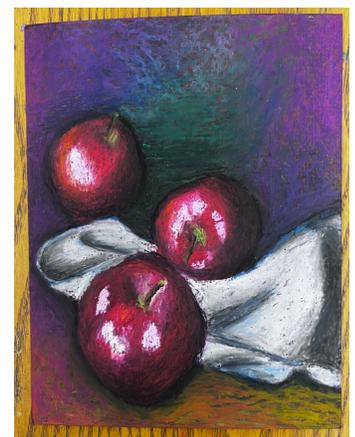
The portfolio class has been busy! Here are some pieces inspired by Fauvism – both paintings done in acrylic. First is Nors and the other is Daniels

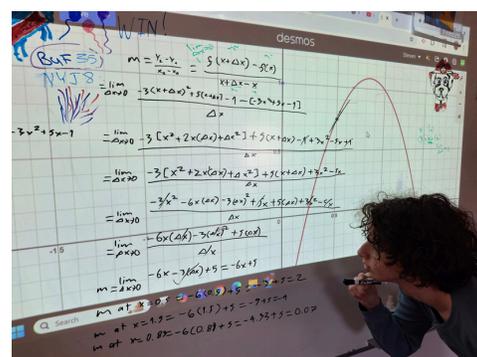
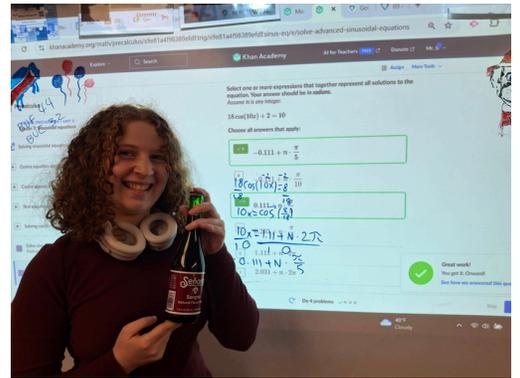
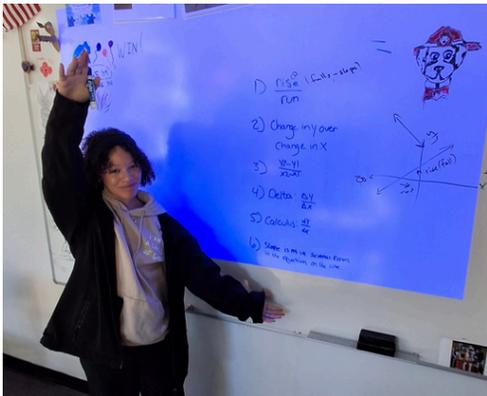
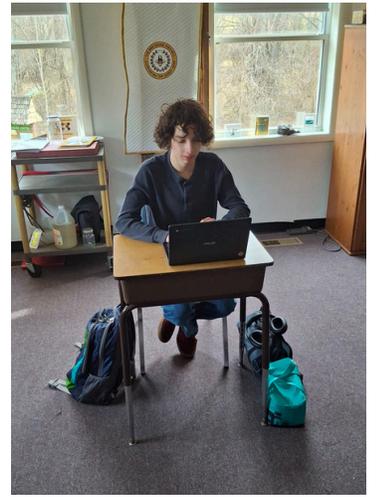


These are impressionistic still life's with oil pastels!



Pears in a bowl are by Mikey,
lemons are by K,
the pitcher with oranges is by Emily,
and the apples are by Daniel!



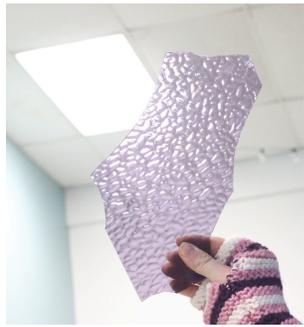
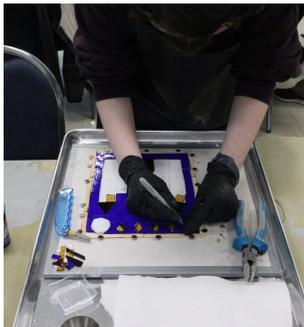
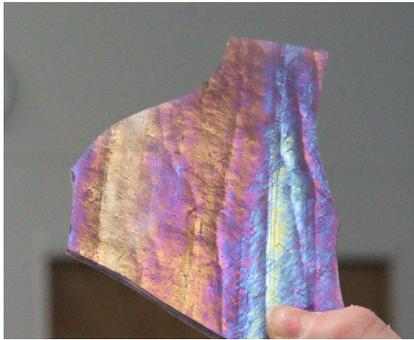




I am Obama.
 I strive for justice, and chant 4 more years.
 Can anyone see how much I love Obama?
 Although I love Obama, I know he isn't perfect.
 Obamacare???



My beliefs are as right as freedom.
 He debates, he thinks, and he cares.
 "Change is never easy, but always possible," said Obama.
 Showing us how to fight for what is right.
 He's not just Obama, he's my passion.
 Gavin King



Staff Highlights



We had the honor of showing Senator Kane our school and what we are all about. Thank you for coming!

Student Highlights

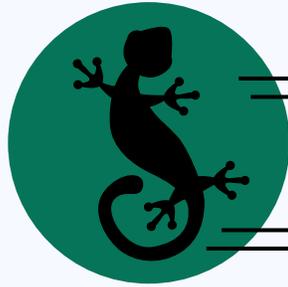
Second Quarter Honor Roll
& Outstanding Citizenship

Mikey

Perfect Attendance

Payton
Lucas
Mikey
Emily
Arham





What's Next at TCS...



2/12

Parent Teacher Conferences



2/19

Field Trip to Fort Mifflin



2/14
2/16

No School- Teacher In Service Day
No School- President's Day



3/9

Senior Portraits

On February 19, TCS will take a field trip to Fort Mifflin. Fort Mifflin was commissioned in 1771, and was originally known as Fort Island Battery. Its long history includes activity during the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Part of the fort is still used by the Army Corp of Engineers.

We will tour the fort, and there may even be a few surprises! If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Burtch (sburtch@theconceptschoool.org).

Follow TCS

@theconceptschoool1972



Our school's Instagram is monitored to ensure a safe and positive space. We ask that students engage respectfully and appropriately with all content.



Our school's Facebook is monitored to ensure a safe and positive space. We ask that students engage respectfully and appropriately with all content.