



Shepard Spirit

FEBRUARY 2026

Principal's Corner **Mrs. Perwien**

Welcome to February! This month we celebrate Black History Month, a time to learn about and honor the important contributions and achievements of African Americans throughout United States history. We are excited to explore these stories and learn why they matter. February also begins the Third Marking Period of the school year. After looking at report cards, the staff at Shepard is very proud of how hard you have been working. Your effort, growth, and progress really show! Even during times of change, you continue to adapt, learn, and do your best. We are proud of your strength and perseverance. Keep working hard, keep trying your best, and remember to be kind to one another.

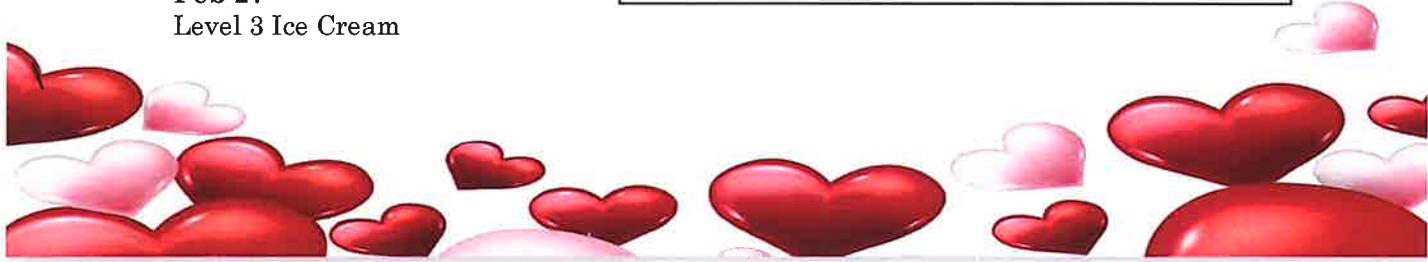


Upcoming Events

- **Feb 4**
Student of the Month Lunch
- **Feb 6**
Level 3 Pizza
- **Feb 13**
Early Dismissal 12:30
Level 3 Ice Cream
- **Feb 16-17**
No School
- **Feb 20**
Level 3 Pizza
- **Feb 27**
Level 3 Ice Cream

Congratulations! Students of the Month

Ardon's Class – Ethan B.
Manning's Class – Mason R.
Elsenbeck's Class – Sarah V.
Kishbaugh's Class – Garrett H.
Sillett's Class – Jared K.
Lezynski's Class – Kellan M.



Teacher's Corner

Mrs. Whitty

As we begin the second half of the school year, we are excited to welcome February with continued curiosity and growth in our classrooms! In Science, middle schoolers will be exploring waves and electromagnetic radiation, building their understanding of how energy moves through the world around us. We will be conducting hands-on investigations that allow students to observe, model, and explain different types of waves. In Writing, students will be engaging in the full writing process, from brainstorming and drafting to revising, editing, and publishing their work. We will be focusing on developing strong ideas, clear organization, and thoughtful revisions. We look forward to a productive and engaging February!

Ms. Elsenbeck

It is the month of love, and I hope that in Room 106 loves learning. In reading, we began our unit on historical fiction and non-fiction on how journeys take character to many places. The unit we are reading is Pedro's Journal, which is a historical fiction about coming to America during Colonial Exploration. In writing, we are focusing on elaboration in writing using the RACE strategy. In math we are dividing decimals. For social studies, we are learning about The Causes of the American Revolution. In science, we are learning about the various levels of our Earth, the hydrosphere, biosphere, etc. We are also working on dioramas for biomes. We continue to learn each day, and I am excited to see how the students continue to grow and learn as this year continues.

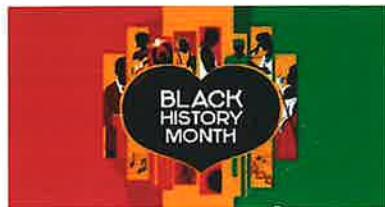
Mrs. Kishbaugh

We are off to a great start this winter and are excited at what February has in store! In math, we are wrapping up our multiplication unit. Students have been working hard to strengthen their understanding of multiplication strategies and build confidence with facts. As we move forward, we will begin introducing fractions, focusing on identifying and understanding fractions through hands-on activities and visual models. In English, students are continuing to practice writing personal narratives. They are learning how to organize their ideas, add descriptive details, and revise their work to make their stories clearer and more engaging. In reading, we are exploring stories that model strong personal narratives, helping students make connections between reading and writing. In science, we are diving into an exciting new project centered on our topic, *Earth's Features*. Students will explore landforms, bodies of water, and how Earth's surface changes over time. In social studies, students are being introduced to the American Revolution with a special focus on New Jersey's role during this important time in history. We will discuss key events and why New Jersey was known as the "Crossroads of the Revolution."

Congratulations to our Student of the Month, Garrett H.!

Ms. Lezynski

Happy February! Our classroom has been busy with lots of learning and discovery. In Social Studies, we are continuing our voyage through ancient Greece. Students are learning about Greek gods and goddesses, art and architecture, and some of the most influential Greek philosophers, along with the legacy they left behind. They especially enjoy exploring the exciting myths, heroes, and monsters rooted in ancient Greek history. In the coming weeks, we will begin our journey to ancient India. In Financial Literacy, we are discussing the importance of finding bargains and comparing prices. Students are learning how small savings can add up over time and help make room for other essentials or future savings. We are also emphasizing the importance of being a mindful consumer so students can make informed financial decisions. Congratulations to our student of the month, Kellan M! Keep up the great work!



Mrs. Sillett

Happy February! I hope you are enjoying a good book under a warm blanket as temperatures drop. The students in Mrs. Sillett's ELA Reading classes are covering a unit on "Resilience". In Mrs. Sillett's homeroom, students have begun reading "The Watsons Go to Birmingham - 1963" by Christopher Paul Curtis, a book that discusses the Civil Rights movement and follows a family that is experiencing the changing times. In Ms. Lezynski, Ms. Orlando and Mrs. Whitty's homerooms, students are reading the play "Anne Frank, The Diary of a Young Girl", a play based on Anne Frank's life and the Holocaust. Both stories teach us about the human spirit and how humans have, can and will overcome adversity. Congratulations to the February Student of the Month: Jared K.

Ms. Mathis

February has arrived, bringing with it new learning, exciting discoveries, and lots of reasons to celebrate in our classroom! Students in Ms. Mathis's class have been working super hard, and have currently been working on lots of interesting discoveries! In writing, students are working on argumentative writing by defending a topic that means a lot to them. In math, students are working on evaluating algebraic expressions and understanding inequalities. In school, we have been learning about how the Earth is always changing. We studied the ocean floor, where new land is made, and trenches, where plates move under each other, and how magma rises to create new crust. We also looked at maps and fossils to understand how continents were once connected long ago. In health, students are continuing to work on problem-solving skills and how to make and maintain healthy habits. This month, students will continue to explore the importance of friendship and kindness by learning how to work together, show empathy, and make positive choices that help everyone feel valued and included.

Ms. Manning

In February, students deepen their reading and comprehension skills by working with stories and informational texts, answering questions, and expressing ideas through writing. In math, students strengthen number sense through addition and subtraction practice, comparing numbers, and beginning measurement concepts. Science learning focuses on observing the natural world, including animals, light, and sound, while social studies emphasize classroom community, helping others, and understanding basic needs. Health lessons highlight friendship, kindness, and heart health, supporting students' social-emotional growth and healthy habits.

Ms. Ardon

In math, we are currently working on fractions as well as identifying and describing 2D and 3D shapes. Students are learning to recognize these shapes in everyday objects and understand their attributes. In reading and writing, we have been focusing on adding details to our writing samples to make our work clearer and more interesting. Coming up next, we will begin learning about past and present tense verbs and how to use them correctly in our writing. We are finishing up our unit on planets and the solar system, where students have been learning about the sun, planets, and their characteristics. Next, we will move on to learning about rocks and soil. Additionally, students are learning about the properties of objects. Our next science topic will be exploring solids, liquids, and gases. In social studies, we are wrapping up our work on cardinal directions. Students have been practicing how to use maps and directions. Next, we will begin learning about states, rivers and lakes in the United States. Congratulations to our student of the month Ethan B.!!! Keep up the great work!

Ms. Orlando

January has been a busy and exciting month in middle school math! Our 7th graders will be diving into the world of angles, learning how to identify, classify, and measure them. This unit is building a strong foundation for geometry concepts they'll continue to use throughout the year. Meanwhile, our 8th graders are hard at work studying transformations. They are learning how figures move on the coordinate plane through translations, reflections, rotations, and dilations. Students are analyzing how these transformations affect size, shape, and position, while strengthening their spatial reasoning and precision.



Mr. Van Wert

February is here and even though it's been a chilly winter, we're not letting that stop us here in class! In language arts class, we continue to craft our skills in reading comprehension, vocabulary, and word recognition, while also crafting our own writing pieces in genres such as opinion, persuasive, and realistic fiction writing. In math class, we are finishing up our unit on adding and subtracting large numbers and will soon be working with multiplying multiples of ten. In science class, we have finished learning about the differences between weather and climate and will now be focusing on the different traits and life cycles of living things. Lastly, in social studies, we have wrapped up our lessons on the responsibilities of the U.S. government and will soon be exploring what it means to be a good citizen. Stay safe and warm out there everyone! Spring will be here soon!

Counseling Corner

Dr. Campos

Hello Everyone!

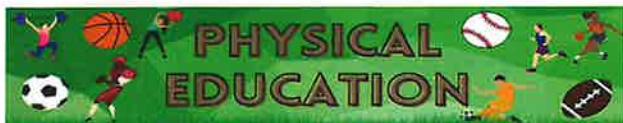
This month in group counseling, students are focusing on building self-awareness—an important skill that helps them better understand themselves and their emotions. Through class discussions and activities, students are learning to recognize their thoughts, feelings, and reactions, and how these can influence their choices and behavior.

As students become more aware of their emotions and responses, they are gaining tools to communicate more effectively, manage challenges, and make thoughtful decisions. Developing self-awareness lays the foundation for confidence, empathy, and strong relationships, and we're excited to see students continue to grow in this area!



Mr. Arlequin – Aleem

Hello everyone and Happy New Year! It is exciting to get back into the swing of things. It is a transition period for especially after the long break. Groups have been going well so far and looking forward to how the rest of the year progresses. In Orlando-Whitty's classroom, we are discussing conflict resolution skills including self-regulation strategies and assertive language. The students are very insightful with their comments and are supportive of each other. In Ms. Ardon's classroom, we are discussing how to build one's self-esteem including identifying social, academic, and personal strengths and positive coping thoughts. The students are very engaged during the social emotional learning games. Thank you!



Ms. Guerrero

As we step in February, we are excited to dive into two dynamic and engaging sports: volleyball and paddle games. This month will be filled with skill-building activities, teamwork, and plenty of fun! Students will practice serving, passing, and spiking. Students will participate in drills that focus on communication and cooperation, such as "keep it up," where teams work together to keep the ball in the air. Just a friendly reminder to have students wear sneakers for PE class. Proper footwear is essential for safety and helps them participate fully in all activities.



Ms. Rodriguez

This February, both counseling groups focused on building positive relationships, empathy, and emotional awareness through Valentine's-themed social-emotional learning activities. In Mrs. VanWert's class, students worked on identifying feelings, showing kindness, and strengthening peer connections through engaging, hands-on activities. Students practiced emotional identification using activities such as Heart Feelings Sort and Color the Emotion Hearts, helping to expand their emotional vocabulary. Cooperative activities like Kindness Bingo and Friendship Building Challenges encouraged teamwork, turn-taking, and positive communication. Students also practiced self-regulation strategies, including Heart Breathing and creating Kindness Cards to promote calming and thoughtful choices. Overall, students continued developing social skills, emotional regulation, and positive interactions in a supportive group environment.

In Ms. Lezynski's class, sessions focused on healthy relationships, emotional expression, and stress management, with an emphasis on self-awareness and peer connections. Each session began with a structured mood check-in, allowing students to reflect on their emotions and how relationships and school expectations impact their well-being. Valentine's-themed activities such as Relationship Scenarios, Emotion Match-Up, and Healthy vs. Unhealthy Friendship Discussions encouraged students to explore communication, boundaries, and empathy. Students also engaged in reflective activities focused on self-compassion and appreciation, including Strengths & Gratitude Exercises. Throughout the group, students strengthened their ability to express emotions appropriately, navigate peer relationships, and apply coping strategies that support emotional well-being and readiness for high school.

Ms. Soehngen

Happy February everyone! Our Shepard students have started the new year off strong. The students in Mrs. Kishbaugh's and Mathis's class came back to school ready to share their new year's resolutions in group counseling. We discussed the importance of setting goals and making plans to reach them.

In Mrs. Kishbaugh's class, students will continue to practice social skills, including social problem solving and conflict resolution. Students will share their experiences with conflict by writing about an argument they've had and exploring how its outcome could've changed with the use of learned skills, like "I" statements.

In Ms. Mathis's class, we will continue to learn and apply communication skills to our group conversations. As a class, we will practice active listening to help students make connected comments when others are conversing with them. I'm looking forward to continued progress!



Ms. Kenny

I hope everyone had a restful winter break and is off to a great start in the new year! January has been an exciting month as we settle back into routines and continue building important social-emotional skills in group counseling.

In Ms. Sillett's group counseling, we have been focusing on accountability through the Everyday Speech curriculum. Students are learning what it means to take responsibility for their actions, reflect on choices, and make positive decisions moving forward. We also had a special guest speaker join us to discuss confidence building and self-advocacy. Students practiced identifying their strengths, using their voices appropriately, and understanding how to advocate for themselves in both academic and social settings.

In Ms. Manning's group counseling, we have been working on developing a growth mindset and setting goals using the Everyday Speech curriculum. Students are learning how effort, persistence, and learning from mistakes help them grow. We also continue our weekly check-ins on the carpet, where students practice working together, sharing their thoughts and feelings, and supporting one another in a safe and respectful group setting. I am so proud of the engagement and progress students have shown this month and look forward to continuing to support their growth throughout the winter season!

MUSIC AND THE ARTS

Mr. LaFalce

Coming off our fantastic concert, followed by a nice long relaxing break is very difficult. However, musicians are built different. Everyone is still pumped about the success we had and ready to move on to the next thing - our spring show! Before picking our setlist for the spring performance we'll get back to basics for a while and work on some fundamentals. Get ready for some serious growth this marking period.

Mrs. Liwanag

Wow—can you believe it's already February? Last month, students explored the artwork of Gustav Klimt, traveled to Austria as our Country of the Month, and focused on shape as our Element of Art, and now we're jumping into new projects and materials! Our Kindergarten–2nd grade artists will be finding inspiration in nature by creating textured leaf rubbings and zoomed-in flower drawings, while Grades 3–5 will explore value and learn how light and dark can make their artwork pop through value scales and light-source drawings. Our 6th–8th graders will dive into visual storytelling, discovering how to tell a story without words by designing sequential story panels and comic-style characters. I can't wait to see all the creativity come to life this month!



This month, as we turn our attention to the warm and fuzzies of Valentine's Day, we have compiled several Valentine Day Trivia questions for your answering pleasure. Dr. Nava will be happy to award the first student who can demonstrate the "knowledge of love" by correctly answering the quiz, with a "heartfelt" gift card. Good Luck to All.

Shepard School Trivia

1. Does the date of Valentine's Day ever change?
a. Yes b. No
2. What does the word Valentine mean?
a. Heart b. Sweetheart c. Love
3. What fruit is also known as the "love apple"?
a. Tomato b. Grape c. Apple
4. What is the winged child shooting arrows at unsuspecting Valentines called?
a. Cupid b. Cherub c. Claude
5. Who are Shakespeare's "star-crossed Lovers"?
a. King Tut & Cleopatra b. Romeo & Juliet c. Fred & Wilma
6. What type of bird symbolizes Valentine's Day?
a. Robin b. Dove c. Swam
7. Do doves mate for life?
a. Yes b. No c. Maybe
8. What flower is most commonly symbolic of Valentine's Day?
a. Red Rose b. Poinsettia c. Lilly
9. What do you need to kiss to turn into a Prince?
a. Gerbil b. Frog c. Snake



Shepard School
Default (K-8)
Lunch, February 2026



Monday	02	Tuesday	03	Wednesday	04	Thursday	05	Friday	06
General Tso's Chicken		French Bread Pizza		Breaded Chicken Fillet on a Bun		Pizzeria Pizza		Super Bowl Sampler	
Vegetable Fried Rice		Cucumbers		Corn		Corn & Black Bean Salad		Tater Tots	
Steamed Broccoli		Applesauce Cup		Orange		Apple Slices		Banana	
Apple									
Monday	09	Tuesday	10	Wednesday	11	Thursday	12	Friday	13
All-Beef Hot Dog on a Bun		3-Cheese Cavatappi		Chicken & Waffles		Pizzeria Pizza			
Sweet Potato Fries		Garlic Bread		Baby Carrots		Cucumber & Tomato Salad			
Apple		Steamed Broccoli		Orange		Apple Slices			
		Applesauce Cup							
Monday	16	Tuesday	17	Wednesday	18	Thursday	19	Friday	20
Closed		Closed		National Pancake Week Pancakes		Pizzeria Pizza		Beef Nachos	
				Turkey Sausage Patties		Corn & Black Bean Salad		Salsa	
				Syrup		Apple Slices		Scoops & Brown Rice	
				Tater Tots				Black Beans	
				Orange				Banana	
Monday	23	Tuesday	24	Wednesday	25	Thursday	26	Friday	27
Popcorn Chicken & Mashed Potato Bowl		Cheeseburger on a Bun		Homemade Baked Ziti		Pizzeria Pizza		French Toast Sticks	
Dinner Roll		Steamed Broccoli		Dinner Roll		Apple Slices		Yogurt Parfait	
Corn		Applesauce Cup		Orange		Tossed Salad		Baby Carrots	
Apple				Peas				Banana	

* Consuming raw or under cooked meat, poultry, seafood, shellfish or eggs may increase your risk of food borne illness, especially if you have certain medical conditions. Menu is subjected to change, notice posted when available. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.