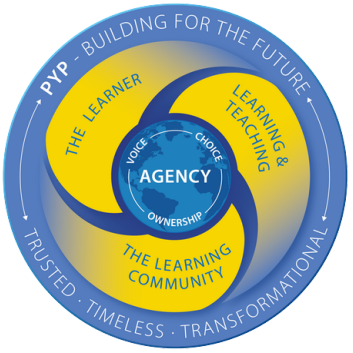
EXPLORATIONS: OUR PYP JOURNEY

VOLUME #1 2025-2026

FROM THE COORDINATOR'S CORNER

What is the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP)?



The International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) is an inquiry-based approach to learning designed for students ages 3–12. At Phillippi Shores Elementary, our PYP framework encourages students to become active, caring, lifelong learners who think deeply about the world and their place in it.

Through the PYP, students explore Units of Inquiry that are organized around six transdisciplinary themes:

1. Who We Are
2. Where We Are in Place and Time
3. How We Express Ourselves
4. How the World Works
5. How We Organize Ourselves
6. Sharing the Planet

Each unit challenges students to ask questions, investigate real-world issues, and take meaningful action based on their learning.

The programme also develops important IB Learner Profile attributes, helping students grow into individuals who are inquirers, thinkers, communicators, risk-takers, principled, open-minded, caring, balanced, knowledgeable, and reflective.

In addition, students build essential Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills—such as thinking, communication, social, self-management, and research skills—that help them succeed both inside and outside the classroom.

Through the PYP, learning goes beyond traditional subjects to help children make connections across disciplines, understand global perspectives, and see themselves as capable of making a

positive difference in their communities and the world.

LITTLE INQUIRERS- KINDERGARTEN

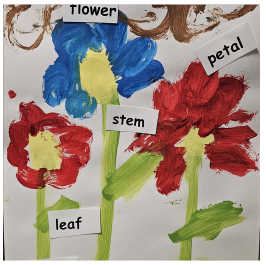
Our kindergarten students are soaring above and beyond with their observations, investigations, and connections! We began the year with our unit **How the World Works**, where our learning focused on recognizing patterns and cycles in the world around us. Through hands-on lessons and activities, students explored the needs of living things, practiced counting to 10, used their five senses, and developed their calendar skills. Creating personal timelines helped students share their stories and make meaningful connections with one another. They also collaborated with partners to observe, discuss, and document their discoveries using their senses.

We are now diving into our second unit, **Who We Are**, centered on the idea that rules and structure help us better understand the world around us. Students have been learning about characters' experiences and perspectives, comparing two-dimensional shapes, how plants grow and change, and what it means to be a good citizen. A highlight of this unit was our field trip to the Florida Studio Theatre to see *Peter Pan*! This interactive performance allowed students to explore different characters' perspectives and discover lessons that stories can teach.

As we move through the rest of the month, we'll continue learning about rules at home and school, begin exploring addition and subtraction, and investigate the properties of matter. Our young scientists have also been busy growing plants both in the classroom and in the garden—hands-on learning at its best!







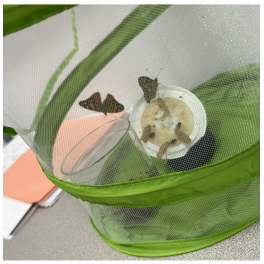
WONDER SEEKERS - FIRST GRADE

We've had a wonderful start to the school year! Our first IB unit, **Sharing the Planet**, focused on how living things experience both similar and different changes throughout their lifetimes. Students explored how plants, animals, and humans go through various life processes. They learned about plant growth and seeds, discovering how seeds help continue the life cycle. Many classes enjoyed connecting this learning to their own experiences and making observations outdoors — some even adopted caterpillars and watched them transform into butterflies!

Next, we moved into our unit **How We Express Ourselves**, where students explored the many ways people share ideas and emotions. They learned that authors use stories, such as fables, to teach

important life lessons, and that artists around the world express themselves through their artwork. We studied artists like **Joan Miró, Jaime Domínguez, Pablo Picasso,** and **Lourdes Villagómez**, and students had the opportunity to experiment with different artistic styles — which they absolutely loved!

We are now beginning our new unit, **Who We Are**, where students will learn about citizenship and what it means to be caring, responsible members of their communities. We can't wait to see their growth and discoveries in this next inquiry!













CURIOSITY CREW - SECOND GRADE

The second-grade students tee off the year with their **Sharing the Planet** unit. The central idea of the unit focuses on how living things interact with their habitat to meet their basic needs and continue their life cycle. The students used a variety of resources including books, videos and our new science series to inquire and research a variety of habitats, animals, and plants. The students made connections between how the habitats meet the animals' basic needs in similar but different ways. Students shared their knowledge with their classmate though oral presentations, creations of posters, mini-books and personal narratives. Through the student's communication, they gained more knowledge about different habitats, animals, and plant needs.

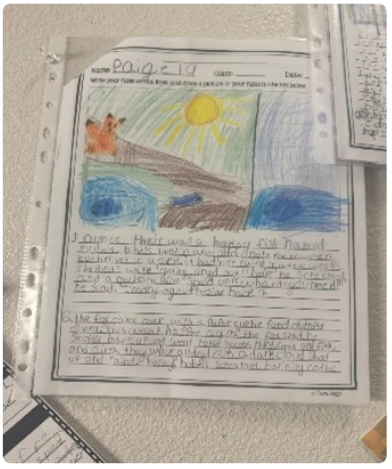
On tee number two, the next IB unit the second grade worked on was **Who We Are.** This unit focused on becoming a good community leader. The second graders learned how responsibilities and traits can help solve problems in homes, schools, communities, states and nations. Understanding different perspectives can assist in deeper knowledge of the problem or situation. Students wrote from different perspectives about sharks, and fictional characters in books such as The Big Bad Wolf, Mike the Cookie and Rot.







IDEA EXPLORERS - THIRD GRADE



In the first quarter, 3rd grade focused on **How the World Works**. Students were given the opportunity, across multiple subjects, to study living organisms and what they need for survival. They learned how scientists classify/organize plants and animals into different groups based on their traits. These IB learners worked through science investigations of plant structures and their functions to create drawings and diagrams of living things and identify the process of photosynthesis. They even put their research skills to the test as they became experts on an animal from our unit learning about their habitats, looks, diet, and adaptations for survival. This unit helped bring them both new research skills and a new understanding of how the world works around them.

In Unit 2, our 3rd grade IB learners focused on **How We Express Ourselves**. This unit focused on how the actions of others, or even ourselves, help us to learn and grow. In ELA, they learned what a lesson/moral is and how it can translate to them in the real world. They worked with characters expression and related that to feelings and actions. How did they show what they learned this unit in a creative way? Our students created their very own fable with their own characters, setting, plot, and theme. With a little bit of imagination and a lot of new gained knowledge, they were able to express themselves through literature.

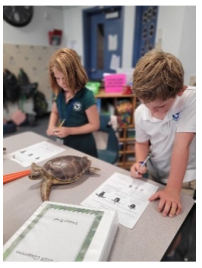




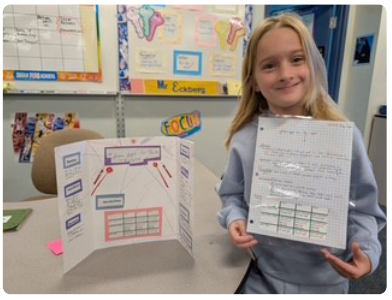








KNOWLEDGE BUILDERS - FOURTH GRADE



This quarter in 4th grade, students engaged in two exciting Units of Inquiry: *How We Organize Ourselves* and *How We Express Ourselves*. Each unit encouraged students to explore the world through curiosity, creativity, and collaboration, while developing the IB Learner Profile attributes and Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills that support lifelong learning.

How We Organize Ourselves

Our six-week unit, *How We Organize Ourselves*, focused on the central idea that "structures help us understand and organize the world around us." Through this inquiry, students explored systems, design, and problem-solving as they connected their learning across science and literacy.

In Science, students showcased their understanding by creating mini STEM Fair boards. They chose between two engineering challenges—designing a structure to protect an egg from breaking during a drop from varying heights or investigating how laser light is absorbed or reflected by different materials. Throughout the process, students demonstrated the Learner Profiles of Thinkers, Communicators, and Open-Minded individuals.

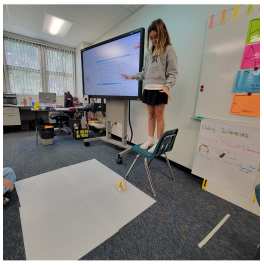
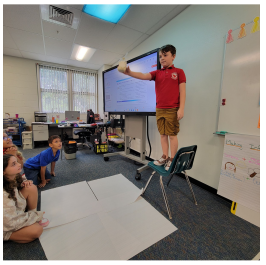
- Vytas G. reflected on being *open-minded* as he listened to his partner's ideas and adapted their design to include wings, extra tape, and paper for added protection.
- Olivia S. described herself as a *thinker* and *principled leader* when she carefully considered how to prevent the egg from breaking and guided her team's decision-making process.
- Kennedy S., who completed the laser light project, shared that she was a *communicator* as she worked collaboratively with her group, discussing observations and listening to others' insights.

Students practiced key ATL skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and research while following the structure of descriptive investigations to design and test their ideas.

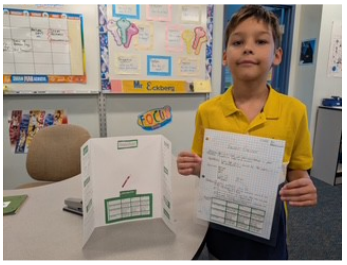
How We Express Ourselves

In our three-week unit, *How We Express Ourselves*, students explored the central idea that "our culture, beliefs, and values influence how we connect and interact with others." Within our English Language Arts curriculum, this inquiry came to life through reading and analyzing drama and prose to understand how authors and characters express identity and perspective.

A highlight of the unit was reading *Peter Pan* in class and then attending a live performance at the Florida Studio Theatre. Students made deep connections between text and performance, discussing how the choices characters make influence the outcomes of a story. Through this learning, students demonstrated the Learner Profiles of Reflective, Knowledgeable, and Caring individuals as they considered how beliefs and values shape actions and relationships. Students also strengthened their communication and social skills, engaging in meaningful discussions and collaborative reflections that connected literature, theatre, and real-world expression.



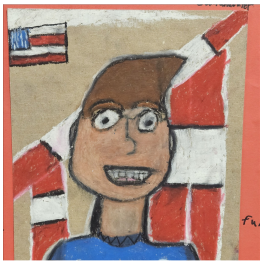


ACTION LEADERS - FIFTH GRADE

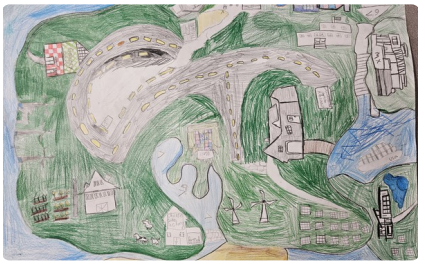
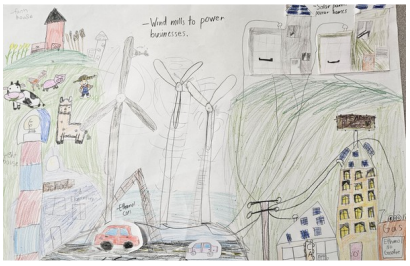
Our 5th grade Falcons soared into their last year of elementary school with energy and a readiness to learn. In our first IB Unit, ***How the World Works***, students investigated how the cultivation of natural resources impacts the environment, deepening their understanding of the relationship between human activity and the natural world. They explored how resources like water, wind, sun, biomass, forests, and fossil fuels are extracted and used to support communities, economies, and daily life. Students read *Energy Island* and used their knowledge from the book, ELA stories, and science lessons to imagine and design their own energy-independent islands. This project encouraged critical thinking, creativity, and communication—bringing together literacy, science, and social responsibility in a fun and meaningful way!

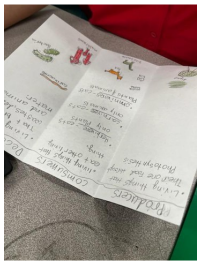
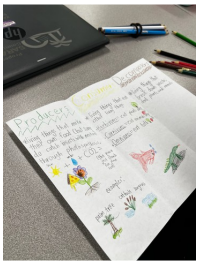
Our falcons continue their momentum into their second unit, ***Who We Are***. Students explored how relationships and experiences shape our perspectives by examining the interconnectedness of personal traits, biological systems, and mathematical thinking. Through literature and discussion, they analyzed character traits and how individuals' actions and emotions influence others. In science, they studied the structures and relationships of living things, discovering how organisms depend on one another and adapt to their environments.

Meanwhile, in math, students classified 2-D shapes, recognizing how different perspectives can reveal new attributes and patterns. Finally, in art, they drew self-portraits that captured their individuality and creativity. Classmates contributed by writing positive character traits about each student. This collaborative activity not only fostered a supportive classroom environment but also encouraged students to recognize and appreciate the unique strengths in themselves and others.






THE INVESTIGATION STATION - SCIENCE CLASS

Exploring Life Around Us

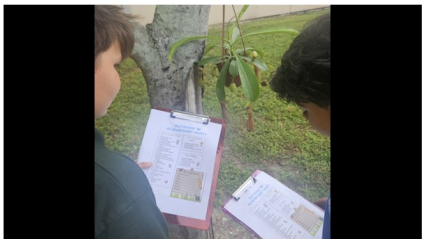


Our young scientists engaged in exciting inquiries connected to the transdisciplinary theme “How the World Works” and the concepts of form, connection, and change.

- Kindergarten and First Grade explored plants and animals, learning how parents and their young share traits. First graders investigated living vs. nonliving things, using their five senses to observe and understand the world—developing thinking and research skills
- Grades 2–5 focused on plant and animal life cycles, deepening their understanding of growth and interdependence. Students practiced communication skills by sharing observations and self-management skills during hands-on activities.

We wrapped up the quarter with an outdoor scavenger hunt in our learning area, where students discovered fascinating species and plant varieties such as Venus flytraps, pitcher plants, lime trees, worms, mushrooms, air plants, root plants, and cacti. This experience encouraged learners to be inquirers, knowledgeable, and caring, while applying research and observation skills in a real-world context.
What a fantastic way to end Quarter 1—learning through curiosity, action, and reflection!












THE CREATIVITY CORNER - ART

Students have been working on a variety of projects focused on texture, shape, perspective and color theory; with art, there is rarely a single focus. They have explored different mediums, from simple crayons to ink, pastels and tempera paint.

Aligned with the IB PYP framework, these projects encourage inquiry-based learning and connect to the transdisciplinary theme **“How We Express Ourselves**.” Students are not only creating art but also exploring how personal expression and cultural influences shape artistic choices. Through these experiences, they develop approaches to learning (ATL) skills such as thinking, communication, and self-management, while reflecting on their creative process.

The school year got off on the right foot again, with all students understanding the “elements of art” in one simple project; “find the texture on the bottom of your shoe.” The “elements of art,” (line, space, shape, form, color, value and texture) were explored using crayons to create designs by

rubbing crayons on paper covering the sole of the shoe. This also teaches children how to correctly way to hold a pastel. This activity ties into the PYP concept of form, as students investigate the characteristics of objects and how they can be represented visually. It also promotes curiosity and observation, key attributes of the IB Learner Profile.

Fifth grade spent four classes working on pastel self-portraits on cardboard, which holds up better than illustration paper. Students studied the portraits of numerous artists for this project including Pablo Picasso, Rembrandt, Vincent Van Gogh and Frida Kahlo. Here, students explore the concept of perspective and connection, considering how artists' cultural and historical contexts influence their work. They also demonstrate research skills by analyzing different styles and applying these insights to their own creations.

Kindergarten and first grade worked at creating circular shapes, sunflowers on cardboard, followed by sunflower hungry caterpillars and finally a pumpkin patch (leading into the fall season). Kindergarten through second grades turned to fall theme by creating scenes that depict what is produced, raised, or grown on a farm. Kindergarten and first grade students watched Peter Reynolds "Ish" story and created "Ish drawings, which is comprised of making lines and seeing where it takes you. These activities connect to the transdisciplinary theme "Sharing the Planet" and the concept of connection, as students learn about nature and agriculture while expressing their ideas artistically. The "Ish" drawings foster creativity and confidence, supporting the IB Learner Profile attribute of being risk-takers.

Second and third graders were inspired by Dutch artist, Larissa Van Der Laan who is also a Glacial Geologist. Her combinations of scientific study and artistic animal representations are inspirational and thoughtfully sensitive. This project exemplifies interdisciplinary learning, linking science and art under the PYP principle of connections. Students see how knowledge from different fields can merge to create meaningful work.

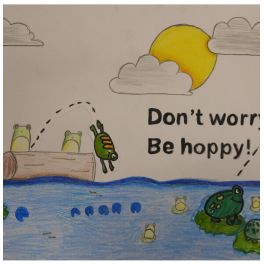
All students made a fingerprint piece of art that had a "theme," and they are currently printing leaves, in honor of the season. These activities encourage reflection and identity exploration, aligning with the PYP concept of who we are.

The NEST Calendar Contest invited elementary students to submit art protecting our local waterways, by being good stewards of the land. As in years past, the calendar contest primarily focused on keeping harsh chemicals out of our yards and waterways. In keeping with this year's theme "Wild and Green starts with me!" students looked at the art of the Florida Highwaymen and learned how to draw trees. Fourth graders created some lovely Florida Highwaymen pastels. This initiative supports the transdisciplinary theme "Sharing the Planet" and the concept of responsibility, as students consider their role in environmental stewardship through art.

It was announced that two former Phillippi Falcons won a spot in the "Rising Stars" category for the upcoming 2026 Embracing Our Differences display. Congratulations to 6th graders Leilani Cornish and Victoria Garcia-Gonzalez for their piece "Don't worry, be hoppy!" Celebrating achievements reinforces the IB Learner Profile attributes of being principled and caring, recognizing efforts that promote inclusion and diversity.

Lastly, Art club is open for interested third through fifth graders and will continue until Spring break, to be followed up with a ceramics club. Students created Kieth Haring figures and have moved on

to fine watercolors. Interested students can pick up a form in the art room.
Art club provides opportunities for student agency, a core PYP principle, allowing learners to pursue personal interests and extend their skills beyond the classroom.









MAKING MELODIES IN MUSIC

Making Music Through Inquiry and Expression



Our music classes are off to a fantastic start, connecting to the transdisciplinary theme **"How We Express Ourselves"** as students explore how sound and rhythm communicate ideas and emotions. Students have been using their voices in creative ways, talking, whispering, and singing, while learning to keep a steady beat and recognize rhythm patterns. These activities develop self-management and thinking skills as part of the Approaches to Learning (ATL) framework. We are also preparing for our Winter Concert, and students have been moving to different kinds of music, showing the IB Learner Profile attributes of being balanced and risk-takers.

Our fifth graders enjoyed a field trip to the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall for a performance by the Sarasota Orchestra, connecting their classroom learning to real-world experiences and demonstrating the knowledgeable and open-minded profiles. Each class begins by watching and listening to performances from a variety of cultures, encouraging students to share what they hear, see, think, and wonder—a perfect example of being inquirers and communicators. We end with quiet listening time, giving students a chance to reflect, another key IB Learner Profile attribute.

For Hispanic Heritage Month, we celebrated cultural diversity by listening to composers such as Julian Carrillo, Francisco Tárrega, and Joaquín Rodrigo, fostering appreciation and respect for different perspectives.

The year is off to a great start, and we look forward to more opportunities for students to express themselves through music while developing essential skills and attributes that will serve them beyond the classroom.

"Sing"cerely,
Mrs. Shenning







HOLA! FROM SPANISH CLASS



We are working with a new program to help us organize our Spanish learning called DinoLingo. It is related to DuoLingo but designed for younger learners. Our focus during Quarter 1 was the alphabet, greetings, and animals! Please ask your kids to greet you in Spanish – and be ready to answer with *"muy bien – ¿y tú?"* You have probably heard some of the songs like *"Hola, hola, ¿cómo estás?"*, the alphabet song, and our numbers 1–10.

Class is organized into stations where students interact with 5–10 new vocabulary words or phrases each session. After five classes, we have a large review combining all the new language from the quarter. Our last class of the quarter is dedicated to learning about countries and culture, which connects to the transdisciplinary theme **"Where We Are in Place and Time**." This past quarter, students chose the Bahamas and explored games kids play there, comparing them to games we play in Florida. This inquiry supports the concept of connection and encourages students to be open-minded, appreciating similarities and differences across cultures.

I have also been working with grades 2–5 on Spanish reading skills. We have been sounding out words and reading small books, which develops communication skills and fosters the Learner Profile attribute of being communicators. Throughout these activities, students demonstrate risk-taking by trying new words and phrases, and reflective thinking as they review and consolidate their learning. They also show curiosity, an essential part of being inquirers, when exploring cultural traditions and language patterns.

How can you support at home?

- Encourage your students to keep practicing and trying.
- Read a Spanish book, or a book about culture.
- Try practicing a different holiday or tradition from another country.
- Cook a meal that is unknown or different to you.

- Read a book in another language or written by someone not from the United States.

These suggestions align with the PYP goal of developing internationally minded learners who understand that understand the world around them.

Have fun learning!!







MOVERS & SHAKERS @ P.E.

Soaring Like Falcons in Physical Education!

To say it's been an eventful school year already would be an understatement—we have truly soared like Falcons! Our physical education program is not just about movement; it's about inquiry, reflection, and growth, aligned with the IB PYP philosophy.

Exploring Energy and Motion

We began the year with a dynamic Volleyball unit, where students investigated the concepts of energy, force, and velocity—connecting to the transdisciplinary theme "How the World Works." Through hands-on play and discussion, learners demonstrated the Thinker and Inquirer profiles, asking questions about how movement and physics intersect.

Paddle Sports and Golf Adventures

Next came paddle sports, followed by an exciting Golf unit that included chipping, putting, and even a 12-hole course! These activities encouraged self-management skills and the concept of form, as students explored the structure and technique behind each sport. Our transition to Disc Golf was a blast, reinforcing risk-taking and balanced living—key attributes of the IB Learner Profile.

Personal Space and Boundaries

Our younger learners joined in with putting and Frisbee throwing after engaging in lessons about personal space and boundaries, connecting to the unit "Who We Are." We often remind students: *"Boundaries let us know where to go and where not to go."* These discussions nurture caring and principled behaviors, essential for safe and respectful play.

Jump for a Cause

Next up: Jump Ropes as we prepare for our service-learning event, "Jump for a Cause." This initiative supports Ronald McDonald House and Nate's Honor Animal Rescue, linking to the theme "Sharing the Planet" and the concept of responsibility. Students embody the Caring and Open-Minded profiles as they learn that fitness can make a positive impact on the world.

Beyond the Gym

We encourage families to keep the momentum going—ride a bike, climb a tree, or take your dog for a walk! Remember, fitness should be fun, and when we move, we grow as balanced, reflective learners.

Thank you for your continued support in physical education. It is both an honor and a privilege to be part of your child's learning journey.

Your Physical Education Team,
Coaches Jacobs, Mixon, and Shreve



Holly Staley
Holly is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters