

# MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

MOC-FV CSD

November

2025

## Special points of interest:

- Dear Families
- PBIS Update
- Leader in Me
- Veterans Day Program



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Dear Families,

As we move into November, I want to take a moment to thank you for your continued support and partnership. The school year is well underway, and while routines are settling in, I know that parenting teens can feel anything but routine. Between school demands, social dynamics, and the ever-evolving digital world, it's a lot to navigate—and you're not alone.

This month, I'd like to share a few thoughts on two topics that are increasingly relevant: **parenting in the age of AI** and **communicating clear expectations with teens**, especially when they push back.

Artificial Intelligence is no longer just a futuristic concept—it's part of our teens' everyday lives. From homework help to social media filters to chatbots that offer advice, AI tools are shaping how students learn, communicate, and make decisions.

As parents, it's important to stay engaged and informed. Here are a few tips to help guide conversations at home:

- **Stay Curious:** Ask your teen how they use AI. Most of you helped your parents with VCRs or setting up their smartphones, now your kids can educate you! What apps or websites do they rely on? What do they think about the accuracy or fairness of these tools?
- **Model Responsible Use:** Share how you use AI in your own life—whether it's for work, shopping, or entertainment—and talk about ethical boundaries.
- **Set Boundaries Together:** Collaborate on guidelines for using AI in schoolwork and social media. Discuss what's appropriate, what's helpful, and what crosses the line. I think about the analogy of driving and AI, that is, we don't drive excessively with our teenagers in the car without our seatbelts on (hopefully). And when it comes time for you to be riding in the passenger seat, you will want your teenager to follow the laws and drive safely with you in the car. The same is true with AI, communicate to your teenager what is right and wrong with AI. Need help with this? Contact me and I will gladly spend some time with you talking about appropriate uses of AI and potential pitfalls of AI.

At school, we're also navigating the role of AI and helping students build digital citizenship. We're committed to creating a learning environment that balances innovation with integrity.

Shifting gears, one of the most common challenges parents face with teens is setting expectations—and sticking to them when met with resistance. You might hear:

- "Everyone else is allowed to..."
- "You don't trust me."
- "This is unfair."

These responses are normal. Teens are testing boundaries and seeking independence. But clear, consistent expectations are essential for their growth and safety.

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Here are a few strategies that can help:

- **Be Consistent:** Teens may not like the rules, but they feel more secure when they know what to expect.
- **Explain the Why:** When teens understand the reasoning behind a rule, they're more likely to respect it—even if they don't agree.
- **Invite Dialogue:** Let them share their perspective. Listening doesn't mean you're giving in—it means you're building trust. It's ok for you to listen, take a break to process what you heard from your teen, and then ask some clarifying questions.

Parenting teens is a journey filled with growth, challenge, and discovery. Thank you for walking this path with us. As we head into the Thanksgiving season, I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve this community and work alongside dedicated staff and families in the educational journey of MOC-FV middle school students.  
GO DUTCH!

Mr. Carlson  
MOC-FV Middle School Principal



## Read All About It ... 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Literature

By: Mrs. TeGrotenhuis

The sixth graders spent some time at the end of the quarter taking inventory of all the books they completed so far. Students reviewed these and chose one to share with their class as a book project. Students explained the plot line of a favorite book while specifically focusing on the conflict of the story and how it related to the main character. All students should come away from the book share day with ideas of books to read for the next quarter.

We finished our book *Among the Hidden* and are in the final stages where we key in on specific literary terms and devices that authors commonly use within literature. We have already taken a comprehension quiz and a vocabulary test over the book, and the students have done well!

We will begin one of my favorite units of study in mid-November which focuses on young heroes. We will learn about Malala, a 15-year-old girl who stood up to a deadly terrorist group in Pakistan and won the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize, and we will also learn about other young people who have faced adversity and positively affected those around them. During this time, students will work on close reading skills, finding the central idea (main idea), and using text evidence.

Students will continue to have the assignment of reading 30 minutes daily. Many students meet our class goal each week, and several students read well beyond our goal! I will be challenging the students to read from different genres second quarter to expose them to different authors and types of books. Please encourage your child in this area, too! Thanks for all you do



## More and More Writing in 6th Grade English

By: Mrs. Jacobsma

We have finished the voice writing unit--the scary story narrative. I LOVE this piece of writing because it ignites hope in so many kids that writing could be a valuable skill for them! They learn, through this unit, that they CAN write and maybe even enjoy it. I am tickled by the conversations with kids who had no idea they could write something entertaining and valuable. This is the piece that opens their eyes!

Following this writing, we will return to a few more tools of the writing trade and then jump into another writing unit called Real World Writing. Kids will explore many different types of writing that they might encounter in the real world -- everything from emails and business letters to word games and blog posts.

As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. at [tjacobsma@mocfv.org](mailto:tjacobsma@mocfv.org)

## 6th Grade Social Studies

By: Mr. Nonnemacher

Our sixth graders have been diving deep into the world of ancient Greece! In the past few weeks, we learned about how Greek civilization shaped the world we live in today through its governments, cities, and innovations. Students explored the major types of Greek government—including monarchy, oligarchy, tyranny, and democracy—and compared them to our modern systems, specifically the government of Iowa. They also examined what life was like in Athens and Sparta, discovering how these two city-states differed in culture, values, and daily life.



To bring history to life, our class worked on an exciting cross-curricular project with Mr. H's science class. Students became ancient architects by building Greek structures out of pasta! This hands-on challenge allowed them to apply what they learned about Greek architecture while using creativity and problem-solving skills to guard against catapult attacks from science classes. It was such a fun project, and they did so well with it!

The energy and enthusiasm in our classroom have been incredible throughout this unit. I am so proud of the students' teamwork, craftsmanship, and curiosity about the ancient world. Be sure to ask your student which building they constructed and how it held up!



## 6th Grade Science

By: Mr. Hoebelheinrich

We're off to a great start with our first physical science unit of the fall. Students have been diving into "Matter & It's Interactions", learning about....

- What makes up all matter?
- What are atoms, and what are they made of?
- How can just over 100 elements from the periodic table create everything we see in the world today?
- How can we "visualize" these atoms combining together to form molecules?

### What's Coming Next:

Once we wrap up our atomic structure models, we'll move into the next phase of sixth grade physical science which is.....

- MS-PS1-4: Thermal Energy and Particle Motion — Students will explore how energy affects the movement of particles in solids, liquids, and gases through labs and simulations.
- MS-PS1-2: Chemical Properties and Reactions — We'll investigate how substances interact and react to form new materials. Students will learn to identify chemical vs. physical changes and understand how new properties can signal a reaction has occurred.
- MS-PS1-5: Conservation of Atoms in Reactions — To finish the unit, we'll connect everything by studying how atoms are rearranged (not created or destroyed) in chemical reactions — demonstrating the Law of Conservation of Matter. Thank you for your continued support and partnership in helping your student grow as a scientist. We're excited for what's ahead!



## 7th Grade Literature

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By: Mrs. Hughes

In seventh grade literature, students have been diving into a collection of short stories that explore big questions about life and character. Our current focus has been on **gathering text evidence to support a claim** — a key skill in both reading and writing.

Students are learning how to form a clear **thesis statement** (their “claim”) and back it up with **strong evidence and reasoning** from the stories we read together. For example, when exploring essential questions like *“Can people really change?”* or *“What can one generation learn from another?”*, *students look closely at characters’ actions, dialogue, and growth to support their ideas.*

We’ve also practiced discussing and writing about our interpretations using sentence frames and graphic organizers that help students explain *how their evidence supports their claims.*



## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade English

Mrs. VR (Van Regenmorter)

During the first quarter in English class, seventh graders have done the following units: The Listening Unit, Simple & Compound Sentences, and Writing Emails. After learning strategies that we can use to be good listeners, we started with simple and compound sentences. The sentence is the basis for all writing, so it is a logical place to begin. Everything we do in seventh grade English connects to improving our writing. Students worked to make sure they could find subjects and verbs and how to check if a sentence is complete. They worked hard with much repetition, so they can use simple and compound sentences correctly in writing. In the future we will learn about the complex sentence. The goal is that students are able to use a variety of sentences correctly in their writing. Varying the kinds of sentences in writing creates fluency, which makes writing flow and enjoyable to read.

We ended the first quarter with a short unit about writing emails. Writing emails is a real-world form of writing and communication. Today’s students often need to write emails. For example, in the past month, I have received nearly 40 emails from students. Unfortunately, many of them are not communicating correctly or effectively in their emails, so we learned how to write an email that communicates effectively and reflects positively on them, the sender. We looked at positive and negative examples and practiced writing correct and effective emails. This unit is a “sign of the times” that we are a society which relies heavily on technology for communication.

I can’t believe that we are already heading into the second quarter of the school year. The first quarter flew by! Thank you for taking the time to read the middle school newsletter. By reading our newsletter, you stay informed, and it gives you opportunities to talk with your son or daughter about school and what they are learning.



## 7th Grade Global Studies

By: Mr. Wieking

The start of the school year always seems to go quickly. We set a good foundation during the first quarter about topics and ideas we will cover in greater detail throughout the school year. During the past month, we have learned about and discussed our culture and the influences of religion, economy, and government on individuals and groups.

I am looking forward to the coming weeks ahead, when we will take on some real-world global issues like human rights and globalization. These big ideas are often seen and heard on the evening news, but are not always shared at a grade level appropriate for our students.

I anticipate our students will have plenty of questions, insights, and new learning opportunities. Our goal is to provide our students with a new understanding of global issues and to promote an awareness of different ideas they could encounter as they become more involved citizens.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at [bwieking@mocfv.org](mailto:bwieking@mocfv.org)

## 7th Grade Math

By Mr. Baker

In math we are continuing to learn new math skills each day. I feel like the pace has ramped up quite a bit. Recently we just finished up unit two on proportional relationships. This new curriculum has been fun, but certainly is requiring students to think differently than they have in the past. Although students like how the curriculum is designed to not have homework, it does put a premium on listening and being an active participant to do well on quizzes and tests.

I want to also thank you for all your support, encouragement, and assistance you have provided your son or daughter during the first quarter of school. Overall, the students have done a great job so far this quarter, and I look forward to working with each of them the rest of the year. The material will continue to get more difficult, so encouraging your son or daughter through some upcoming frustrating moments will benefit them greatly. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.



## 7<sup>th</sup> grade Science

By: Mrs. Vande Kieft

Why do two objects fall and hit the ground at the same time? What do magnets have to do with my earbuds? How does electricity make my hair stand up when I rub it with a balloon? The seventh graders are currently working to answer these questions and many more during our Forces and Interactions Unit where we are busy trying to answer our Big Question of "How do objects interact at a distance?" Through our investigations, the students will explore how gravity, magnetism, and electricity work and can influence other objects without physically touching.

In November each class will be focusing our attention on gravitational force and how the strength of gravity is affected by mass and distance. We will also explore how the mass of various planets impacts both the gravitational force and the change in weight we would experience if we were to travel to each planet. During our work together, the seventh graders will investigate questions such as what causes two objects to land at the same time if they have different amounts of mass, what is the difference between mass and weight, and what is the importance of inertia in gravitational attraction.



## 8th Grade Math

By: Mr. Mouw

The first quarter has been a good start to the year in eighth grade math. We have been dealing with exponents and all of the rules that go with powers. That has led us into scientific notation and trying to deepen our understanding of what powers of 10 and a base 10 number system really mean. We have moved from that into the Pythagorean Theorem. Most weeks we will have a quiz on Friday, so if you want to know how to help your student, you can always help them prepare for those quizzes as they are a large part of each student's grade. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out.



### Veterans Day Program

The Middle School will host the Veterans Day program. The program will be Tuesday, November 11, 2025 at 10:15am in the Middle School New Gym. The public is welcome to attend.



## 8th Grade Literature

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By: Mrs. Hoppe

Currently, in eighth grade Literature, we are reading *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton. Throughout the book, we will analyze characters using five key-elements of character analysis - traits, motivation, conflict, point of view, and relationships. Students will create a body biography project where they will choose a character to analyze and create while providing details of the figure in twelve different categories. They will practice identifying textual evidence, paraphrasing, and citing.

Also, we are focusing on how characters reveal themes. After each chapter, students get excerpts of the chapter. In groups, they identify how these excerpts support the five “big ideas” in the book. Our five big ideas in the novel are divided communities, empathy, preserving childhood innocence, self-sacrifice and honor, and individual identity. These are challenging tasks for students, yet I am impressed how they have analyzed the literature and are continually improving. At the end of the book, they will use these organizers to write a thematic essay on the novel.

After finishing the book, we will watch the movie and write a final essay. I believe that watching the movie is a terrific way for students to compare the visual images of a film to those they created in their mind while reading the book.

Finally, I want to continue stressing the importance of independent reading. Practicing and learning to enjoy reading is essential to improved reading rate, accuracy, and comprehension. I want to encourage parents to engage their children in conversation about *The Outsiders* or an independent reading book.



## Our Corner of History

By: Mrs. Phelan

In eighth grade American History, we have just finished studying the first groups of European settlers who came to North America. We have learned about where they settled and more importantly why they chose to migrate to America. Students discovered that settlers came for many different reasons: to freely practice their faith, to seek riches, to obtain glory, etc. Our current unit will now examine the origins of the 13 colonies and the formation of a uniquely “American” identity.

In our Document Based Question project, students had the opportunity to read the direct words of the earliest settlers. Taking the role of detectives looking for evidence, the eighth graders studied the documents for clues about the relationship between Europeans and Native Americans. Their goal was to make claims supported by evidence/examples from this variety of primary sources. To present their findings, students got into groups and recorded video essays reporting what they had learned.

With two tests and a group project under our belt, students have also been practicing important work skills like time management, executive functioning and organization, assignment prioritization, using study tools, and written expression of big ideas. Coming up in November, students will begin inquiry projects that will explore topics related to Veterans’ Day. These projects usually foster some great conversations about the sacrifices made by service members on behalf of our country and I encourage you to check in with your students as we get closer to the holiday for an opportunity to hear about what they have been researching!



## 8th Grade Science

By: Mr. Nieuwsma

We are halfway through fall now! Both eighth graders and myself are getting into the groove of school and are getting busier than ever. The workload for all their classes are starting to pile on so I encourage you to help and support them by making sure they get their assignments done on time.

In science, eighth graders built rubber band powered cars and tested them. They researched different designs on the internet and did their best to replicate those same cars. We had outstanding results and it was fun and exciting to see how complex these cars can be! Eighth graders showed how to collaborate with their peers and how to solve problems in excellent ways.

I have enjoyed seeing what eighth graders are involved in ranging from athletics to musical talents. I encourage them to keep doing their best in both school and extracurricular activities.



## 8th Grade English

By: Mrs. Oolman

This fall has been fun watching the students grow as readers, writers, speakers and listeners. We have spent time learning how to prepare for a speech (specifically what our note cards should look like and exactly how long a person should rehearse or practice before feeling truly prepared to present)! The scores were very good on the presentations! And, individual goals have been set for growth in the area of “public speaking”. Questions to ask your son or daughter include the following:

1. Who did you introduce to your classmates?
2. What is something new you learned about a classmate?
3. What goal did you set for yourself for your next speech?

After learning speaking skills, we also reviewed some basic “language skills” we need to know. This is information that “scaffolds” or holds up our writing and speaking in English. We began by reviewing the use of quotation marks and underlining in our writing. For our next topics, we will tackle the eleven punctuation marks (period, colon, semi-colon, question mark, exclamation mark, parentheses, quotation marks, hyphen, comma, apostrophe, and ellipsis). Following those, we will study the eight parts of speech (nouns, verbs, pronouns, adverbs, adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections). After some practice time, tests will be given. Tests need to be passed with a C or above, or retakes will be given until mastery is reached. Students are learning that it’s best to “just do it right the first time.”

Just before learning how to answer a landline telephone, take and leave messages, and place an order on the phone, we had to say goodbye to our student teacher, Mrs. Weaver. She was wonderful, and the students loved her. Selfishly, however, I am very ready to teach my classes again!

Our next units will be short writing units. Both are new this year and focus on writing details succinctly. One is writing an argument in ten sentences. And the second is a request from the kids to write a personal narrative. I look forward to reading both of these.

Additionally, we will be learning some new sentence structures using the KU Writing Model. We will review simple and compound sentences and then move on to learning complex and compound-complex sentences. Love watching the kids grow as writers, too.



## Leader in Me

In October and November, the Middle School students moved into **Habit 2: Begin With the End in Mind** focused on “Defining Your Own Mission and Goals in Life.” Habit 2 began at a pivotal time of the year as we finish the 1st Quarter and enter into the 2nd Quarter. Throughout Habit 2, students were encouraged to recognize their strengths and talents, think ahead to their futures, set goals, and commit to meeting those goals using their own talents. Habit 2: **Begin With the End in Mind** focused on key concepts such as:

- Mental Creation Precedes Physical Creation
- Principle-Centered Living
- Creating a Personal Mission Statement
- Goal Setting
- Goal Tracking



## PBIS Update

Hopefully, you have heard about some of the fun that PBIS brings to the Middle School to help celebrate a safe, positive, and welcoming learning environment for all students. When students are recognized for meeting the three expectations of the Middle School: Doing Your Best, Doing What's Right, and Treating Others How You Want to be Treated, they receive a Dutch ticket. Students then have the opportunity to turn their ticket into the Weekly, Monthly, or Activity drawing boxes outside of the Office where they have the chance to be drawn for various prizes. Each ticket is also counted toward a STAR and grade level total to be used for monthly ticket challenges. At the end of each month, the Middle School celebrates the positive impact that students have made throughout the month by having a PBIS Assembly where everyone gathers in the gym. Individual students who have turned their Dutch tickets in are drawn and recognized for their choices, efforts, and contributions to the positive culture of the Middle School. Each monthly PBIS Assembly ends with an activity where students are able to enjoy a friendly individual and/or grade level competition. The month of November's assembly is infamous for our annual “Turkey Bowling.”



# Happy Thanksgiving

## November 27

### Thankful, Grateful, Blessed

November 26 ~ 1:15pm dismissal

November 27 & 28 ~ No School



# November 2025

| Sun                               | Mon                                                                                                                        | Tue                                                                                                                                             | Wed                                | Thu                                                                                | Fri                                                                                                     | Sat                                            |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
|                                   |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                 |                                    |                                                                                    |                                                                                                         | 1                                              |
| 2<br>Daylight Saving<br>Time Ends | 3                                                                                                                          | 4<br>Election Day<br><br>8am-4pm<br>NWICDA 7-8<br>Treble/Bass<br>Festival @<br>LeMars<br><br>4:00-8:00pm P/T<br>Conferences                     | 5                                  | 6                                                                                  | 7<br>No School-P/T<br>Conferences<br>Comp Day                                                           | 8<br>8am-4pm Jr. High<br>Honor Band<br>Concert |
| 9                                 | 10                                                                                                                         | 11<br>Veterans Day<br><br>4:15pm BBB vs<br>Spencer 8 <sup>th</sup> (H)<br>7 <sup>th</sup> (A)                                                   | 12                                 | 13<br>4:15pm G<br>Wrestling @<br>Sioux Center                                      | 14<br>1:15pm Early<br>Dismissal                                                                         | 15                                             |
| Makerspace                        |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                 |                                    |                                                                                    |                                                                                                         |                                                |
| 16                                | 17<br>4:00 BBB vs<br>Sergeant Bluff<br>8 <sup>th</sup> (H) 7 <sup>th</sup> (A)<br><br>4:15pm G<br>Wrestling @ West<br>Lyon | 18<br>End Exploratory<br>Cycle 2<br><br>Qrt. 2 3 wk gr.<br>Chk.<br><br>4:15pm BBB vs<br>Sioux Center<br>8 <sup>th</sup> (H) 7 <sup>th</sup> (A) | 19<br>Start Exploratory<br>Cycle 3 | 20<br>Opus Honor Choir<br>Festival @ Ames<br><br>4:15pm G<br>Wrestling @<br>MOC-FV | 21<br>1:15pm Early<br>Dismissal<br><br>7:00-9:00pm MS<br>Party Night<br><br>Iowa Jr. Honor<br>Orchestra | 22                                             |
| 23                                | 24<br>4:15pm BBB vs<br>West Lyon 8 <sup>th</sup> (A)<br>7 <sup>th</sup> (H)                                                | 25<br>4:15pm BBB vs<br>Central Lyon<br>8 <sup>th</sup> (A) 7 <sup>th</sup> (H)                                                                  | 26<br>1:15pm Early<br>Dismissal    | 27<br>Thanksgiving<br><br>No School                                                | 28<br>No School                                                                                         | 29                                             |
| Thanksgiving Break                |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                 |                                    |                                                                                    |                                                                                                         |                                                |
| 30                                |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                 |                                    |                                                                                    |                                                                                                         |                                                |

# December 2025

| Sun                                                                                      | Mon                                 | Tue                                     | Wed             | Thu                                              | Fri                          | Sat |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----|
|                                                                                          | 1<br>No School - Thanksgiving break | 2<br>4:15pm BBB vs LeMars 7th(H) 8th(A) | 3               | 4<br>4:15pm BBB vs Sioux Center 7th(H) 8th(A)    | 5<br>1:15pm Early Dismissal  | 6   |
| 7<br>4:15pm G Wrestling @Sergeant Bluff-Luton<br><br>4:15pm BBB vs Sheldon 7th(H) 8th(A) | 8                                   | 9<br>Qrt. 2 6 wk gr. Chk                | 10              | 11<br>7:00pm MS Holiday Concert                  | 12<br>1:15pm Early Dismissal | 13  |
| 14<br>4:15pm BBB vs LeMars 7th(A) 8th(H)                                                 | 15                                  | 16                                      | 17              | 18<br>4:15pm BBB vs Sergeant Bluff 7th(A) 8th(H) | 19<br>1:15pm Early Dismissal | 20  |
| Makerspace                                                                               |                                     |                                         |                 |                                                  |                              |     |
| 21<br>Winter Begins                                                                      | 22                                  | 23<br>1:15pm Early Dismissal            | 24<br>No School | 25<br>Christmas Day<br><br>No School             | 26<br>No School              | 27  |
| Winter Break                                                                             |                                     |                                         |                 |                                                  |                              |     |
| 28<br>No School                                                                          | 29<br>No School                     | 30<br>No School                         | 31<br>No School |                                                  |                              |     |
| Winter Break                                                                             |                                     |                                         |                 |                                                  |                              |     |