

MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

MOC-FV CSD

December

2019

Special points of interest:

- Hour of Code
- Thank You Chaperones
- Middle School Holiday Concert
- 8th Grade Service Project



Inside this issue:

6th Grade	2-3
7th Grade	4-5
8th Grade	5-7

Thank You Middle School Party Night Chaperones

Thank you to everyone that served as a Chaperone for our MS Party Night on November 8, 2019. The kids had a good time with the various activities and dance. Your help with chaperoning makes this fun night possible for our students. Thanks again!

Middle School Holiday Concert

The Middle School will be hosting its Holiday Concert on Tuesday, December 17 at 7:00pm. This year we will again be hosting this concert at Christ Chapel on the campus of Northwestern College. This change of venue is always a fun experience for our students and should allow us to accommodate family and friends for this wonderful evening. Our Holiday Concert will showcase selections from the band, choir, and orchestra groups.



8th Grade Service Project

The 8th graders will be conducting a canned food drive service project in December. Students will be collecting canned goods, paper products, personal hygiene products and boxed goods to take to the local food pantry in Orange City. Our goal is to help local families in need. All students are invited to participate, not just the 8th graders. Items may be brought to the Middle School and placed in one of the receptacles located throughout the school. Thanks in advance for your help with this project.



Hour of Code

On Wednesday, December 11, our students will be participating in the Hour of Code. During the Hour of Code activity, our school will stop what we are doing and take one hour to learn about computer coding and participate in various activities. Computer Coding is a skill that anyone can learn and is one that is in high demand. This event is an opportunity for students to learn to write code, problem solve, nurture creativity and prepare students for possible careers. In addition to these activities, students are encouraged to access self-directed tutorials on Code.org to keep learning more and more about computer coding. For more information on the Hour of Code, you can visit <http://hourofcode.com/us> and www.code.org.

December 20 ~ 1:15pm Early Dismissal
December 21- January 1 ~ Winter Break
January 2 ~ Classes Resume

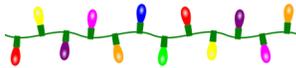
Taking Time to Notice in 6th Grade English

By: Mrs. Jacobsma

We are just finishing up a couple of weeks exploring true authorship. What do real authors do? How do they continue to find new ideas? Where do good ideas come from? We will work in a book called *A Writer's Notebook*. This is mostly in class reading and outside of class thinking and writing. We are talking about slowing down enough to NOTICE the people, things, experiences around them. Too often we speed right through life and miss the details. I'm encouraging the kids to really soak up the experiences they have because life makes great fuel for writing!

We will also examine the development of character in a story--this is useful as a writer but also as a reader! The kids will craft a character sketch and give an introduction speech! So many, many skills packed into these few weeks between holidays!

We will also continue our regular tasks like spelling and day to day editing of language. Please continue to quiz your child about what's going on in school; you might be delightfully surprised with the answers!

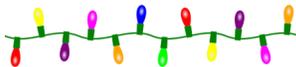


6th Grade Science

By: Mr. H (Hoebelheinrich)

After our Engineering Design Process of building catapults the 6th graders jumped into their first science bundle of the year. This bundle includes a lot of important phenomenon having to deal with the physical science realm! We've discussed the history of the atom and how the model of an atom has changed over the course of history. We jumped into the atomic structure of atoms and how the structure is important for determining many properties of a substance. We discussed that all matter is actually moving except at absolute zero where all movement stops. The 6th graders completed a Phet simulation dealing with how matter moves different and how the space between the particles can be changed depending on other variables such as volume, temperature or pressure. This is important as we looked into how matter can change from one state into another. Lastly, we finished up discussing physical/chemical changes and how no matter what the change is matter is neither created nor destroyed. We had our final chapter test on November 25!

When we got back from Thanksgiving break we jumped into life science. What are the building blocks of all living things? What's the difference between living and nonliving things? How are more cells created? These are questions we will be able to answer in the life science unit.



6th Grade World History

By: Mr. Nonnemacher

As I write this update, I am preparing for an extended break with my own family as well as my extended family. This is such a wonderful time of the year for so many of us. I trust that you all can find some time to rest, relax, and recharge in an effort to attack this winter with positive thoughts and ample energy! We are in the midst of our Mesopotamia unit in World History. I think my favorite part of this unit is seeing many of the kid's faces when we start talking about Abraham and Moses as part of this civilization. So many of the kids know those two in a different light, and they never would have thought that individuals such as them would "cross" over into our area of study. During the short week, before Thanksgiving we had a significant vocabulary quiz that the kids have been studying and working on for nearly a full week. After we came back from Thanksgiving break, we had a review day and then took our unit test. Following the test, we dove right into the idea of city-states for our unit project. The kids will be in small groups, and each group will be in charge of developing their very own city-state. As we have learned in this unit, city-states are self-governed, so it will be very interesting to see some of the rules and regulations that the kids come up with for their city-state!

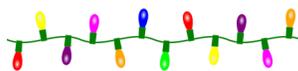
6th Grade Reading . . . Read All About It!

By: Mrs. TeGrotenhuis

We are nearly halfway through the second quarter already! Please continue to encourage your child to read daily and fill out his/her reading log. By the middle of January, your child should have read at least three different types of genre for the second quarter. Thanks for all you do for our students to help them succeed!

During the month of December, the sixth grade literature classes will complete a non-fiction unit about young heroes. We have been reading about one of the youngest Nobel Peace Prize winners, Malala Yousafzai. Malala is a young girl from Pakistan who was shot by a terrorist group for standing up for her belief in the right to be educated. Students have been introduced to vocabulary such as *Taliban*, *oppressive*, *terrorist*, and *refugees*. In addition, we have been working on a variety of non-fiction reading and writing skills including finding the main idea and using text evidence. Students have learned that we often take our own education for granted when we learn about what Malala and her friends have been through simply to learn. Because it is difficult for us to relate to Malala's world, the students will also read short articles and view short videos about other young heroes right here in the United States. These young heroes made an impact in their community and prove that all of us can do things to positively influence others. Near the end of this unit, the students will construct a piece of writing in response to what they have learned about these young heroes. This piece of writing is definitely one of my favorites to read!

As we get closer to Christmas and if time allows, we will read a dramatic version of the story *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. The students will enjoy reading this classic tale out loud in class while we discuss the literary elements of mood and theme as well as develop our recall, inferencing, and drawing conclusion skills.



6th Grade Math

By: Mr. Boersma

The 6th grade students are just beginning my favorite unit of the year, Ratios! It is a very fun unit with many real-life uses so the students find it applicable to the things that they are interested in. Shopping, fishing, sports, music, even video games make use of ratios. I told the kids that if they couldn't find a ratio about their favorite activity, then they weren't thinking hard enough!

There are two questions that keep popping up with parents and students that I'd like to address. The first one is about Study Island. Study Island is a computer program that we use to supplement what we are learning about in class. Each Friday I assign a Study Island topic. I require the students to complete Study Island one of two ways. If they earn a Blue Ribbon (70% or more) they are done. If they don't earn a Blue Ribbon on their first attempt, all they must do is do another session, and they can be finished. To recap, they need one Blue Ribbon or two completed sessions.

The other question that I have had asked to me is about grading. A sixth grader's overall grade is calculated by combining three areas; Quizzes, Tests and Projects, and Daily Work. By far the largest portion of a student's grade comes from their test and project scores (55%). Followed by quizzes (35%) and daily work (10%). If a student wants to make the biggest impact to their grade, they must focus on their test average. Before each test that I've given, I've given the students a study guide outlining the material that will be found on the test. They had the option to take the study guide home and show their parent(s) and earn an extra credit point by having the study guide signed. Parents then had the option to study with their child or not, depending on a variety of factors.

As always, I encourage any questions or concerns, so please don't hesitate to call or email if there is something that I can explain to you. Thank you!

7th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Vande Kieft

Currently, the 7th graders are exploring the vastness of space in our Earth in the Universe Unit. To kick off our exploration, we began with investigating our Big Question, "How can we predict eclipses?" To help us find the answer to this question, the 7th graders have been tracking the phases of the moon each day to analyze its effect on the probability of eclipses as well as tracking the orbit of Mercury. This led to our discussion about the movement of the Earth, Sun, and Moon and its importance to Lunar and Solar Eclipses and the various phases of the Moon. To gain a better understanding of how the movement of the Earth, Sun, and Moon create these phenomenon, we created actual eclipses and moon phases using a 3-D "moon" and light source.

The focus of our exploration then shifted to what lies beyond the Earth, Sun, and Moon within our own Solar System. The 7th graders read various scientific articles to better understand what lies beyond Earth, our Solar System, the Milky Way Galaxy, and out into the universe. To analyze how small the Earth truly is in comparison to the Sun and the rest of space, each class period created their own Solar System Scale Model. First, they created a scaled version of a feature of the Solar System that they and a partner researched. We then traveled through our Solar System in a Virtual Reality tour using Google Expedition where we were able to view the various aspects of the Universe. As part of our tour we visited the Sun, each planet, and our Moon while small groups presented the unique aspects of each feature of our Solar System that they had researched earlier in the unit.

Finally, the 7th graders ended their journey with a virtual trip to the Grand Canyon to explore the various rock formations and fossils to understand how scientists determine the age of the Earth.



7th Grade English

By: Mrs. VR (Van Regenmorter)

Since the last newsletter, the seventh grade English students have been busy. They have been working very hard to learn the most challenging punctuation mark of our English language, the comma. They did this unit in groups. They needed to make sure they taught each other, learned from each other, and worked together to be successful. After a rough start, they came through! Of course, the true test will be for the rest of the year as they need to use commas correctly in their writing.

After Thanksgiving break, the seventh graders will start the "Personal Narrative Unit." A personal narrative is a true story about an experience that happened to the person who is writing it. We will learn the elements of a good narrative and look at examples of a personal narrative. We will work through the five steps of the writing process and focus on four traits of good writing: voice, content, organization, and conventions. By the end of the unit, students will have a final personal narrative that I'll look forward to reading!

Once again, thank you for taking the time to read the middle school newsletter to stay informed about our school. Each student in our school is a blessing, and I wish you a Merry Christmas!



7th Grade Math

By: Mr. Baker

What a fun start we have had to our year in math! I can't believe how fast it is going and all that is being learned. In math we are learning about equations and inequalities, or better known as pre-algebra concepts. While some people may view algebra and variables as a foreign language, I would like to encourage both students and parents to approach this chapter with a great attitude. Great effort will be necessary in this chapter as we learn new concepts, and I know that a great deal of learning will occur if everyone carries a learning mindset. This may be the most difficult unit we learn during 7th grade, but can also be a fun one. I want to encourage students to finish strong before the Christmas break!

7th Grade Literature

Page 5

By: Mrs. Vermeer

This year is moving quickly and the kids are working very hard. We are deep into our bias unit. This unit is one of the most challenging units the kids will have in 7th grade. I have been so impressed thus far with their determination. Each day the kids come ready to challenge themselves and to grow as readers. Our goal for the bias unit is to be done the second week in December. We will wrap up this unit by typing our research paper demonstrating we can analyze how two authors present their arguments over the same topic. The topics students will get to choose from include: e-sports, vaping, social media, and pollution. From these topics students will find two articles and create a research question and thesis statement based on the topic they have chosen. Currently the students are doing a mini version of this based on two articles about screen time and are having a lot of success with this.

After the bias unit we will do a mini unit on comparing two stories with similar plots from different generations. Both stories are about Christmas and this unit will lead us all the way to Christmas break. During this unit we will look at comparing and contrasting the authors and their ideas. It will also lead to some questioning if one of these authors took some ideas from the other.

When we return from Christmas break we will look at finishing up the quarter with our 2nd quarter book project. This project has the students focus on the creative side. They can do anything that sparks their interest. This project will be presented to the class in art gallery. The students will walk around and discuss the different projects their classmates have created. Reminder for our quarterly reading goal is up to 400 pages or 3-4 books depending on which the student reaches first.



Wieking's World

By: Mr. Wieking

Well, another month has come and gone and the holidays are right around the corner. We just wrapped up our culture unit where we learned about different people and their culture. Our class covered a variety of topics like economy, religion, and government. I was really impressed with the conversations and dialogue our students had about topics that were maybe new to them.

We took some time to discover different types of governments found throughout the world. As our world becomes increasingly interdependent and globalized it's important that our students can recognize and understand government structures. We'll use different current events to help reinforce our learning on this topic.

The next focus for our global studies class will include topics like migration of people and globalization. The area of focus will include North America (primarily USA, Canada, and Mexico) and the connection to the globalized world through trade, work, and technology.

It has been a real pleasure working with your student so far this year. Thank you for being committed to the academic success of your student.



8th Grade Pre-Algebra & Algebra 1

By: Mr. Mow

In Algebra 1, we have been working hard on learning how to apply linear equations and learning the fundamentals of how bivariate relationships work. Most are now figuring out how to really pay attention and learn the major concepts instead of simply trying to copy what I do. Keep reminding your student if they are struggling understanding, to please ask questions and I will gladly help!

In Pre-Algebra, we are just finishing up our unit on simplifying expressions and solving equations. Up next will be linear equations. This will be a challenging unit, so please encourage your son/daughter to ask questions if they need to!

8th Grade English

By: Mrs. Oolman

So, what have we been up to in English class? Students are reviewing KU Sentence writing strategies and refining their knowledge of compound, complex, and compound-complex sentence construction. This unit will prove invaluable as students continue to write for English and other content area classes.

In addition to learning how to write different sentence “formulas”, students are gaining strength and confidence in utilizing punctuation accurately in their more sophisticated writing. We enjoyed constructing preposition poems while learning about the role of prepositions in sentence structures. Following preposition poems, I asked students to read two articles on problems kids face in school and then write an essay sharing specific facts and details from the articles. Students “built” their own essay writing “map” out of 3 x 5 cards and blue painting tape. This tool can help them write almost anything!

As we near the end of our KU writing instruction and practice, a final test will be given in the form of a writing assignment. Students will use a photo of their own to make inferences and create a “truism” about their photo choice. Once this is done, they will write a 10-sentence piece (using the sentence formulas they’ve learned) to share their truism. I loved reading this piece last year, and I’m sure to enjoy it again!

Following this, students will be writing what’s called a Me Collection. Choice, once again, will be important in this project. Don’t be surprised if they ask you to read their piece. Take an interest and take some time to listen to them share what makes them who they are!

As always, I am thankful to be employed at MOC-Floyd Valley. Hope you have much to be grateful for as well.



8th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Hoogeveen

Here are a couple of questions we have attempted to answer in 8th grade Science:

“How do we track the changes of organisms over time?”

Last month we uncovered information about fossils. We compared ancient fossils to modern animals which helps us track changes over time.

Earlier in November, the students explored how organisms in a short time can change quickly when their environment changes. Three examples were given. First, bird beaks in the Galapagos Islands changed when their food source changed because of a drought then a few years later a flood. Second, Pocket mice of the Sonoran Desert (Arizona) changed color from white to black when volcanic basalt invaded the area. Lastly, dark Peppered moths began to occur more often when pollution from burning coal affected the environment.

How are humans changing genetics and what impact is this having?

Currently, the 8th grade science classes are synthesizing information about how technologies have influenced the inheritance of desired traits in organisms. The first step was to understand the history behind biotechnology and why we continue to practice different forms of this. Next, we focused on different forms of selective breeding, their desired outcomes, and the possible negatives associated with them. The new gene-editing technology being done to keep some pigs small was the third topic of discussion. Cloning was successful in 1996 with sheep. Recently, the Chinese have cloned monkeys in hopes of doing research to cure Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s Disease. We talked about some pros and cons of cloning a pet. Did you know that most of the bananas we eat are cloned? We investigated what a GMO was and how that relates to some of the different foods we enjoy such as Clementine oranges and Honeycrisp apples. Our last topic of discussion was the reality of editing the human genome for medical purposes and possibly creating enhancements for babies.

Next up—Waves. We will be delving into sound waves in December with many different hands-on activities to learn about waves and how sound waves work for us.

8th Grade Literature

By: Mr. Boone

Page 7

The 8th grade literature is finishing The Outsiders unit by writing a thematic essay. Over the past two weeks, we have discussed how characters have troubles, which reveals a motif, and finally creates a theme for the novel. I have been impressed with the students' hard work and excellent thinking throughout the lessons. In the thematic essay, students will need to demonstrate their ability to identify a theme, write a thesis statement, and incorporate textual evidence by using direct quotes effectively. Please ask your child about the motif, theme, and textual evidence they have chosen for their essay. We will conclude the unit with a fun Breakout activity using the book for clues. A Breakout is similar to the popular Escape Rooms and challenges students to use problem solving and teamwork skills.

Following The Outsiders unit, the 8th grade will begin the Holocaust unit shared between the English and literature classes. The 8th grade English class will focus on reading *The Diary of Anne Frank* play, viewing *The Diary of Anne Frank* movie, and writing two essays tied to the play and movie. In literature, students will read a historical fiction on the Holocaust, identify a topic, research the topic, and present all they have learned to their class. Students will need to identify a unit goal to provide a foundation for their research and a purpose for presenting their information to the class. The goals for the unit are below.

Unit Goals

1. Develop an understanding of the causes and effects of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping.
2. Explore the dangers of remaining silent, apathetic, and indifferent in the face of oppression of others.
3. Think about the use and abuse of power and the roles and responsibilities of individuals, organizations, and nations when confronted with civil rights violations.
4. Develop an appreciation for democracy. Democracy needs to be appreciated, nurtured, and protected.

The 8th graders will begin the unit with a Holocaust brainstorm – gathering previous knowledge and asking questions they would like answered about the Holocaust. Next, students will build background knowledge of the Holocaust by reading a series of articles and viewing videos from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website. Another important component to introducing the Holocaust is to learn through stories. Students will select an independent reading book on the Holocaust and provide a book talk after reading the novel. As students read their novel, I will be reading excerpts from *Night* by Elie Wiesel. We will be focusing on Notice and Note Signposts – clues in the text that help readers comprehend and think about the book at a deeper level. These activities provide students a strong foundation to the events leading to, during, and after the Holocaust.

Please continue encouraging your child to independently read. Independent reading on a daily basis is a key component to your child's improvement as a reader. Thank you for encouraging and setting aside time each day for your child to read. If you are looking for Christmas gift ideas for your child, giving them books is always a great option.



Our Corner of History

By: Ms. Van Wyk

In 8th grade history, we have just begun our unit on the War for Independence which we will begin with unpacking the Declaration of Independence. Prior to this, we were fortunate to have the opportunity to help prepare for Veteran's Day at our school. Each student had to interview a veteran --a loved one, a family friend, the spouse of someone who served, etc.—and ask several questions about what it was like to serve in the U.S. military. Each student also did some individual research about topics connected to the military, including various memorials, wars, and the stories of several Medal of Honor recipients. Following their research, each student had the opportunity to share their findings with the rest of the class through a brief presentation. It is my hope that as a result of our classwork, these students came to better appreciate the cost of the freedoms we enjoy in the United States.

December 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 4:15pm BBB vs CL 8 th (A) CL Activities Center 7 th (H)	3 4:15pm BBB vs Le Mars 7 th (H) 8 th (A)	4	5 7:00am My Choice 4:15pm BB: B/8th Vs Sioux Center 7 th (H) 8 th (A)	6 1:15pm Early Dismissal	7
8	9 Qtr. 2 6 wk grade check 4:15pm BBB vs Sheldon 8 th (A) 7 th (H)	10	11 Hour of Code Activity	12 7:00am My Choice 4:15pm BBB vs Rock Valley 7 th (A) 8 th (H)	13	14
Makerspace						
9	16 4:15pm BBB vs Le Mars 8 th (H) 7 th (A)	17 7:00pm MS Holiday Concert @NWC Christ Chapel	18	19 7:00am My Choice 4:00pm BBB vs Sergeant Bluff-Luton 7 th (H) 4:15pm 8 th (A)	20 1:15pm Early Dismissal	21
10	23	24	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28
No School						
29	30	31				
No School						

January 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 New Year's Day No School	2 School Resumes MS GBB Practice Begins MS Wrestling Practice Begins	3	4
5	6	7	8	9 7:00am My Choice	10 End of 1 st Semester (End 2 nd Quarter.)	11 IBL GBB Tournament
Maker Space						
12	13 No School- Professional Development	14 Begin 2 nd Semester (Begin 3 rd Quarter) Instructional Rounds @ MS	15	16 7:00am My Choice 4:15pm MS GBB vs Sioux Center 7th(H) 8 th (A)	17 6 th Grade Ice Fishing Activity	18 IBL BBB Tournament
19	20 Strong Foundation Honor 6 th Grade Honor Band, SC East NWI Honor Choir @ Dordt College 4:00pm GBB vs Sergeant Bluff-Luton 7 th (H) 4:15pm 8 th (A)	21	22	23 7:00am My Choice NWI MS & HS Honor Orchestra @ Dordt College	24 1:15pm Early Dismissal MS Wrestling @ MOC-Floyd Valley MS	25
26	27 4:15pm GBB vs Boydan-Hull 8 th (H) 7 th (A) 4:15pm MS Wrestling @ Rock Valley	28	29	30 7:00am My Choice 4:15pm MS Wrestling @ Sibley-Ocheydan HS	31	