

MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

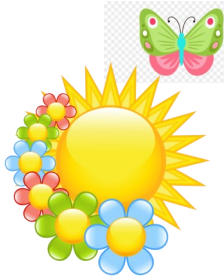
MOC-FV CSD

March

2020

Special points of interest:

- **Finishing the Year off Right**
- **Moped Safety Course Offered**
- **Parent-Teacher Conferences**
- **IASAP Testing**
- **Scholastic Book Fair**



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Finishing the Year off Right

Around this time of year, students begin to get the “Spring Itch” and at times, their academics suffer as a result. There are some things that you can do to help your child fend off the “Spring Itch”.

1. Make sure that your student is in school. Regular school attendance is the #1 school success factor.
2. If your student is ill, or misses school, help them get caught up with their missing assignments. Sometimes, students feel like there is so much to do, that they can't create a plan to get the missing work completed. Help them chunk the work, or create a manageable plan to get the work completed.
3. Encourage your student to study ahead of time for tests and work ahead on projects in their classes. Procrastination can create a sense of panic in students, and as a result stress impacts their ability to do their best, interact with peers and adults, and feel prepared for the upcoming tests and projects.
4. Help your student manage their time while they are at home. Limit games, TV, and time online. Many times these activities, while fun, can end up wasting time that might have been better used reading, doing homework, or studying for tests.
5. Encourage your student to ask for help if they don't understand something. They can ask a teacher, friend, or even you as the parent. If as a parent, you are unsure how to do something (I am thinking specifically of math) you can try finding the answers together. YouTube is a great resource for us parents on how to do Math...just type in the style of problem that you need help with.
6. Continue to check in and connect with your middle schooler. Many of them want to connect with you and share things about their day. Make time to connect with how they are doing academically & socially.

As parents, we can help our students navigate this time of year and help our students have a successful end of the school year.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

The Spring Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled for Thursday, March 19 and Monday, March 23 from 4:00-8:00pm. Your student's STAR teachers will be contacting you to arrange a conference time. We appreciate your efforts in attending and look forward to visiting with you about your child's progress.



It's time to

Spring Ahead

March 8

Daylight Savings Time Begins

ISASP Testing

This Spring, we will once again be taking the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP). These tests will be taken on March 17, 19, 23 and 25. The tests will be administered at the beginning of the school day and students will have whatever time that they need to complete the tests. Please plan on having your student to school on time during these testing days so they will be able to take the tests during the designated testing times. This year we are spreading the tests out, in an attempt to avoid "testing fatigue" and allow students to perform their very best on these tests. The teachers will limit homework during this time in an attempt to allow students to be at their best for these tests. Prior to the tests, teachers will be familiarizing the students to the new tests and will be talking with them about the importance of doing their best. The results of these standardized assessments will be used to not only demonstrate growth for your student in the areas of Reading, Math, Writing, and Science (8th grade only) but will also be used to rate our Middle School. ISASP results are one of the components used on the "School Performance Profile" which ranks our school district and the individual buildings to others across the state. Because of the importance of these tests, we ask that each student do their very best so we can show what kind of a building we have....we appreciate your help with reinforcing this message with your student as well. Once we receive student scores, they will be sent home with your student.

Testing Times

Tuesday, March 17 - 8:12 - 9:35am

Thursday, March 19 - 8:12 - 9:35am

Monday, March 23 - 8:12 - 10:10am

Wednesday, March 25 - 8:12 - 10:40am

Reading Test

Math Test

Science Test (8th Grade Only)

ELA Test



Read All About It . . . 6th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Te Grotenhuis

For the past month, the sixth graders have spent a large amount of class time going through the research process while discovering facts about our cultural heroes. The students have recently turned in their final papers, and I have been busy reading them. Many students did a nice job of piecing together the facts they found and explaining why our culture considers particular people heroes. Students should understand the importance of paraphrasing as well as using citations to give credit to their sources. It was a long process, but the students made great progress!

We have begun studying the genre of legends, specifically those that take place in the Middle Ages time period. In order to understand the Feudal System more clearly, each student has been assigned a character from the Middle Ages time period, and they will research what life would have been like for that character (peasant, noble, knight, etc.). With the information they gather, students will create a poem that incorporates facts about their character. This has been another opportunity for students to work on their paraphrasing skills and organize the facts they found in a more creative way.

Toward the end of March, we will begin work on our third quarter book project. We will once again go through the research process as we research the author of an award-winning book as well as the award itself. Most of the work for this project will be completed during class time, and it will be important for students to make wise use of class time provided.

Please continue to encourage your son/daughter to reach our class reading goal of 80 pages weekly. Thank you for your continued support of this at home.

Moped Safety Class

We will be hosting a Moped Safety Course for any interested students on Friday, March 6. The cost for the course will be \$45 and this course will be taught by Mr. Neil Bracker. Information sheets can be found in the Middle School Office.

Lots of Writing in Sixth Grade English

Page 3

By: Mrs. Jacobsma

The sixth graders are spending the next week in a writing project with our personal heroes. We are taking a good, long look at what it takes to be a hero. The kids have learned a little about interviewing, written their own interview questions, and conducted an interview. We are learning about narrative, free verse poetry, and we'll write one! Then, we'll present these amazing people to our peers. There are sure to be some fascinating things!

We kick off March with a quick look at the rules of capitalization and how that little change in our writing makes everything more readable! That will lead us to the final writing unit of the year (how can that be possible?). This unit takes us a full two months! The persuasive research unit will be the most extensive research project the kids have undertaken as students yet! We will focus on contemporary social issues, finding information to help us understand the issues and what's being done to help solve the problems. We will present this information in both a written paper and oral presentation to the class.

That will bring us crashing in to the end of the year where we touch on descriptive writing with adjectives and adverbs and end with a self-evaluation of each student's progress.



6th Grade World History

By: Mr. Nonnemacher

The winter is long, and the cold is real, but we are trying to beat the cold by learning about the country of Greece! We have been exploring the geography of Greece and adding some bucket list "trips of a lifetime" ideas! Greece is such a unique country. There are hundreds of islands, dozens of crystal clear harbors and bays, and a 4-mile canal that turned Peloponnese into an island about 140 years ago. We've seen pictures, videos, and facts that are making the social studies room feel more like a tropical destination! (Oh how we wish...) Many of the kids are very excited for this unit, as we will also talk about ancient Greek mythology and tie the ancient Olympics to the modern-day Olympics as well as our very own 6th grade Olympics! Spring is coming and we are just trying to set the positive vibes over here in Room 114!



Wieking's World—Global Studies

By: Mr. Wieking

We have finished our unit in Central America and the Caribbean. Within this unit we have spent some time discussing the contemporary world issue of standard of living and the inequalities that exist in our societies. I am reminded each class period at the curious nature of our students and their compassionate attitudes. These topics aren't always easy to discuss or to research, but our students handle this with understanding, maturity, and a desire to know more. I was reminded more than once about all the wonderful things our community does for others who experience situations that are more difficult than our own.

Our next unit takes us to parts of Asia. We'll examine ancient cultural traditions, new world conflicts, and challenging trends in global issues like food supply and population growth. I look forward to guiding our students through these real world issues that are becoming increasingly more and more relevant.

Thank you for all you do to help ensure the success of our students. know we are all looking forward to longer days, warmer weather, and spring activities. We typically see a bit a "spring fever" in the middle school. I'd sure appreciate your help encouraging our students to finish the school year strong! Thank You.



7th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Vande Kieft

In March the 7th graders will be focusing their energy on the thrills and excitement of various slides, roller coasters, and other amusement park rides. The 7th graders began investigating our new Big Question: "How does energy effect the thrill of an amusement park ride?" This question got us wondering what really causes the speed, adrenaline rush, and exhilaration that we feel while on the tallest water slide or fastest roller coaster. During this unit, the 7th graders have been presented with a problem that they are responsible for solving. This problem requires small groups to plan, design, create, and test a roller coaster prototype for the most thrilling new coaster to (hypothetically) be presented at the Tulip Festival. Each group must use what we have learned about forms of energy, energy transfers, forces, motion, and types of interactions to design their own roller coaster. Each group's roller coaster design will undergo multiple tests and potential redesigns to construct a new roller coaster with the greatest amount of Kinetic Energy. It will be a wild ride with ups, downs, twists, and turns to create the best roller coaster design!

At the end of March and start of spring, the 7th graders will begin the Plants vs. Animals unit where we will explore the various similarities and differences between these two organisms. We will even test out our green thumbs to see how well we can grow two different variations of corn plants in the window ledge. Hopefully, the sunny days of spring will be here by then to help us out!



7th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Vermeer

We are Midway through 3rd quarter and we will be wrapping up our reading of *The Giver*, however we won't be quite done with the unit. A permission slip will be sent home in the coming weeks in regards to viewing the movie. The permission slip will need to be signed and returned before the student will be able to watch the movie. More information will be provided in the letter. Our goal for reading the book and watching the movie is to compare how the cinematic features of the movie alter how we think and feel about the movie. We have also had the opportunity to listen to the audiobook of *The Giver* and will be able to compare how the sounds in this altered our thinking of the book as well.

The new task of reading a dystopian novel on their own was brought on as a challenge to the students. The overall challenge was a success. The students were able to expand past their typical genre of reading and find something different that they did enjoy. The students were able to connect their dystopian novel to *The Giver* and they were able to build a stronger understanding of the complex text. It was exciting to see that many of the students went back to the library in hopes of finding a second book if it was part of a series or another book by that author. Overall between reading the class novel and their own dystopian novel the students were able to take complex text and make meaning of it.

As we wrap up the 3rd quarter I want to remind everyone of the 3rd quarter reading goal of 400 pages and our upcoming new book project. This project will have students focusing on using technology to present their book. Their book is any book they have read this year and it will also be presented in front of the class. This presentation will be completed the week of conferences and make it on the 3rd quarter grade.

I'm very impressed at everything these students have been able to do this year and I am excited to see them continually stepping up to challenges and embracing them. Keep up the awesome job!

Spring Time March 20



7th Grade English

By: Mrs. VR (Van Regenmorter)

The seventh grade English students started third quarter reviewing and learning about punctuation marks and their correct use in writing—commas, semi-colons, colons, quotation marks, underlining (italics), and apostrophes. It was a difficult unit, but they made it through. Now I'm looking for the seventh graders to use this punctuation correctly in their own writing.

As I write this newsletter article, seventh grade English students have completed a short study of compound-complex sentences. We looked at their structure, sentence formulas, and of course, how to correctly write them and use them in our writing. I continually emphasize to the seventh graders that what we do in English class relates to improving their writing.

As I look ahead, during the last week of February, we will spend a couple days practicing for the ISASP state testing, which will occur March, 16-19 in the middle school. Then we will begin the next unit entitled, "Autobiographical Projects and Presentations." It sounds rather impressive, doesn't it? During this unit, students create a project about themselves that they present to their classmates. Students use the internet-based program called Kizoa to create the presentations. In Kizoa, students create collages that are put into a presentation. Kizoa is a great program with many neat features that allow them to personalize their presentation and make it creative. After the Kizoa collages and presentations are ready, the next step is for students to prepare their oral presentations. They complete an outline to guide them while they speak, and during presentations, students need to demonstrate eye contact, voice clarity and volume, appropriate posture, etc. These presentations assess a public speaking standard in the Iowa Core Curriculum.

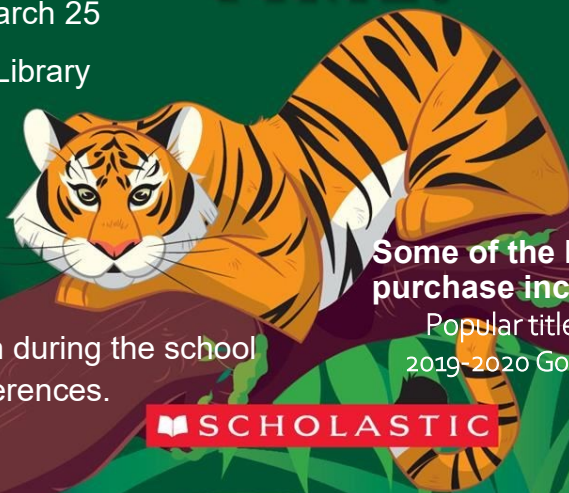
I always seem to end my newsletter articles in the same manner by saying thank you for reading the middle school newsletter and staying informed. When you are informed, you can more easily communicate with your son or daughter about what's happening in school. And when you communicate with your child about what they are doing in school, it sends a message to them that what they do in school is important. Therefore, I truly do thank you for taking the time to read what's happening in the middle school. Until next month.....

IT'S SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR TIME!

When: Thursday, March 19
through Wednesday, March 25

Where: Middle School Library

It's a Jungle Out
There – Read to
Survive!



Some of the books that will be available for purchase include . . .

Popular titles for teen and young adult readers
2019-2020 Goldfinch Nominees and Children's Choice

Nominees

Special Value books

Cook Books

The book fair will be open during the school day and during P-T Conferences.

 SCHOLASTIC

7th Grade Math

By: Mr. Baker

In 7th grade math we have just finished up a chapter dealing with different percent concepts. The students worked through a lot of real-life application situations including percent of change, tips, sales tax, discounts, and interest. Maybe your son/daughter can now pay for the check.

For the month of March students will be working with probability. We will complete the month by creating games where probability is a necessary skill to performing well on their game. We will also take an afternoon for the students to play their games with other peers in the seventh grade. It should be a lot of fun. Any questions, please let me know.



8th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Hoogeveen

We just finished investigating how the visible light portion of the electromagnetic spectrum is reflected, transmitted, or refracted through different media. Our labs consist of refracting light through water, convex lenses, telescopes, a fiber optic strand, rainbow glasses, different shaped lenses, and much more. We then applied our knowledge to the Hubble Telescope plus how our eyes work. We formulated a hypothesis as to which lens would solve either near-sightedness or far-sightedness. The students are doing a fantastic job of increasing their awareness of their attention to detail and asking great, thought-provoking questions!

Anyone who works in electronics or signal processing should be familiar with the two main categories of devices: analog and digital. But what makes something analog? How does it differ from digital? For that matter, what makes something digital? We spent just a few days exploring the type of waves that carry analog and digital signals and some of their basic similarities / differences. Students had a great time learning about some of the older technologies. (For some of us these are not old .) These included cassette tapes, 8 track tapes, laser discs, filmstrips, the movie reels, VHS tapes, the “real” floppy discs, the smaller hard floppy disc, and more. The students were intrigued by how some of these older forms worked and how they were used in the classroom.

In our most recent adventure, we created synthetic gel worms from an algae product and limestone. We are comparing how our gel worms would compare to a natural fruit source. This is leading up to our research project where the students compare a synthetic product in their life to a natural alternative then evaluate which one is better and why. It will be interesting to see what the students discover about our synthetic world.



Our Corner of History—8th Grade American History Class

By: Ms. Van Wyk

In 8th grade American History, students just wrapped up their unit on the Constitution and did a great job digging into the principles of our government, the rights we enjoy as U.S. citizens, and the roles all three branches of government play in our country. We are now moving on to some of the challenges and problems facing the young United States. The emergence of the first political parties has created conflict within the United States. Students will be analyzing the beliefs of each political party in issues such as “Should the United States have a stronger national or state government? Should the average citizen weigh in on national decision-making or should those decisions rest in the hands of the nation’s best and brightest?” These questions will be explored as we continue to examine the early politics of American history.

Overall, we have been seeing many connections between history and our present world. I’d encourage you to ask about and discuss these connections with your students! It’s a great way

8th Grade Literature

By: Mr. Boone

The 8th grade class is wrapping up their final Holocaust presentations. This unit challenged our students in the research process – identifying credible and accurate sources, note-taking, citing, preparing an oral presentation within a time limit, and creating engaging visuals. Not only did this unit equip our students with valuable skills, this unit challenged our students to answer three difficult essential questions.:

1. What are the dangers of remaining silent, apathetic, and indifferent when others are oppressed?
2. What are the roles and responsibilities of individuals, organizations, and nations when confronted with civil rights violations? What is the role of government in protecting the natural rights of its citizens?
3. Why does democracy need to be appreciated, nurtured, and protected?

Next, the 8th grade literature class will begin a poetry unit by reading the book *Love that Dog* by Sharon Creech. *Love that Dog* is comical journal between Jack and his teacher, Miss Stretchberry, about writing poetry. The students will be embarking on a similar journey as Jack, as they will be reading and writing a variety of poems shared between my classroom and Mrs. Oolman's classroom. During this unit students will identify a poem they enjoy, read the poem aloud to the class and share the meaning of the poem. I have always been impressed with the students' ability to think deeply about the poems they have read and to use their creativity to write poems.

Finally, we continue to work on vocabulary and independent reading. Your child is assigned vocabulary words each week focusing on a specific root and learning different prefixes and suffixes. We are continually using a fantastic resource, Vocabulary.com, to help learn words in context and with a deeper understanding. Please ask your child to have them show you this great resource and feel free to set up your own account.



8th Grade English

By: Mrs. Oolman

Students have been working hard to construct a compare / contrast essay on Anne Frank--- the play and movie versions. This skill is an important one where I ask students to use their knowledge of a subject and to critically view a similar plot line / story. Specifically, students analyzed the purposes of telling Anne's story in a play or movie format, what motives a director may have in making changes to her true story, and which one, the play or the movie, was most like the true story of Anne Frank. This was a great chance to share with students how media forms of all kinds tend to distort the truth to share what sells or to share whatever "platform" that media is promoting. Critical thinking and viewing and taking in of information is a huge skill to take into the "real world" and adulthood.

Our next unit is one of my favorites... POETRY! We will be reading and "comprehending" what the authors are trying to tell us. We'll be studying figurative language and vocabulary. We'll be reading the works of several famous poets (Robert Frost is my favorite!) and, students will be WRITING poetry, too. We'll be working collaboratively with Mr. Boone's literature class. The goals of the poetry unit are as follows:

- a. Read and comprehend this type of literature
- b. Write creatively



March 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3 Bond Vote Instructional Rounds @ Elementary	4	5 7:00am My Choice	6 1:15pm Early Dismissal	7
Makerspace						
8 Daylight Savings Time Begins	9	10 Exploratory Cycle 5 Ends	11 Exploratory Cycle 6 Begins MS Track Practice Begins	12 7:00am My Choice 7:00pm Mass Band Concert (Grades 6-12) @HS New Gym	13	14
15	16 7:00pm MS Choir & Orcehstra Concert	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19 Qtr. 3 Ends 7:00am My Choice 4:00pm-8:00pm Parent-Teacher Conferences	20 Spring Begins Begin Quarter. 4 1:15pm Early Dismissal	21
ISASP Testing						
22	23 4:00pm-8:00pm Parent-Teacher Conferences	24 Qtr. 3 Grades Due in the office Jazz Band Concert	25	26 Qtr. 3 Report Cards Go Home With Students	27 No School Teacher Comp Day	28
ISASP Testing						
29	30 6:30pm FFA Banquet @ HS New Gym	31				

April 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
				7:00am My Choice		
					DC/NY Trip	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
				7:00am My Choice MS Book Bash	No School Good Friday	
	Makerspace					
	DC/NY Trip					
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Easter	No School	Qrt. 4 3 week Grade Check 5th, 6th, 7th grade Honor Choir, St. Lake		7:00am My Choice	Exploratory Cycle 6 Ends MS Party Night	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	Exploratory Cycle 7 Begins	4:30pm TR: MS @MOC-Floyd Valley NWC Track	Earth Day	7:00am My Choice	Arbor Day Jr./Sr. Prom 1:15pm Early Dismissal Professional Development	
				Drake Relays		
26	27	28	29	30		
		4:30pm TR: MS @Sheldon High School		7:00am My Choice 4:30pm TR: MS @Sioux Center High School		