

# MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

MOC-FV CSD

March

2021

## Special points of interest:

- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Finishing the Year Off Right
- ISAP Testing
- Online Book Fair

## Parent-Teacher Conferences

The Spring Parent-Teacher conferences were originally scheduled for March 23 and 25. However, the district decided that we would do virtual conferences with parents in grades K-8. Traditionally, the students have a “student-led” conference in the Spring where they take the lead and share about how school is going and what goals they have for the remainder of the school year. The Middle School teachers will be trying to hold a “student-led virtual conference” where the students will create something to share with their parents in regards to their learning and goals for the end of the year. Then the teachers will line up a time to meet with parents to review the information that was shared, answer any questions that they might have, and provide any general thoughts about the student’s progress. Teachers will begin contacting parents soon, and are looking to hold these virtual conferences between the dates of March 15 and March 25. Be on the look out for an email from your student’s STAR teacher to get a conference time lined up.



## 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 students 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 students 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.



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## IASAP Testing

This Spring, we will once again be taking the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (IASAP). These tests will be taken during the week of April 12-16, 2021. 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. Since we missed taking these tests last year, it may be difficult to compare scores from their last test (taken 2 school years ago). However, the data that we get from these tests will show us where your student is at right now. 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 (8<sup>th</sup> 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

**Monday, April 12 – 8:12-10:10am**

**Tuesday, April 13 – 8:12-9:35am**

**Wednesday, April 14 – 8:12-9:35am**

**Thursday, April 15 – 8:12-10:40am**

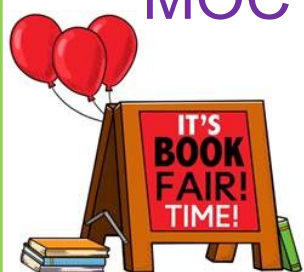
**Science Test (8<sup>th</sup> grade only)**

**Reading Test (All Grades)**

**Math Test (All Grades)**

**ELA Test (All Grades)**

*\*Makeup tests will be administered to students during the remainder of the testing window (April 23)*



## MOC Floyd Valley Middle School Spring Scholastic Online Book Fair! March 15-28, 2021

- Over 6,000 products including award-winners, bestsellers, boxed sets, and more
- All orders ship to your home
- Free shipping on book-only orders over \$25

**Check out our web page at** <https://www.scholastic.com/bf/mocfvms>

Begin shopping online on March 15 and Support Our School Library.



## You Guessed it, More Writing in 6th Grade English

By Mrs. Jacobsma

This month we took on a new writing adventure. We are creating a choose your own adventure story! The kids will put together the final stories and share them with each other and their parents in early March. We collaborated, conferenced and have edited and revised. The results are LOTS of growth in thinking, brain power, and writing skills!

Then we will do a short, interim unit on interviewing and poetry before we dig into the final major writing project of sixth grade: the persuasive research writing and speech.

As always, editing and spelling continue regularly. We are weaving grammar skills into our writing projects. Please ask your child often what they have learned as a writer. I think you'll be surprised!



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

By: Mrs. TeGrotenhuis

The sixth graders have spent a large amount of class time focusing on the research process. They did this while discovering facts about our cultural heroes and have just begun the process with people from the Middle Ages time period. The students have recently turned in their final hero papers, and many of them did a nice job 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.



## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies

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 are now 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 will see pictures, videos, and facts that will make 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 6<sup>th</sup> grade Olympics! Spring is coming and we are just trying to set the positive vibes over here in Room 114!

## 6th Grade Science

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By: Mr. H (Hoebelheinrich)

The 6th graders finished up on their Earth Science Curriculum. Our Big Idea was "How has Earth changed and how does it affect living things." We discussed a lot of unique topics such as plate tectonics, natural disasters & more!

The 6th graders have been working hard on their Life Science curriculum that we started after Earth Science. We discussed what it means to be considered alive. What does a cell look like? What organelles do cells have? How are plant and animal cells different? Similar? We've been using our microscopes to view/identify the major organelles found within a cell. As well as identifying whether we are looking at a plant or animal cell. This was a huge stepping stone for a majority of the 6th graders because a large majority of them haven't had the opportunity to use a microscope.

Next week we will jump into the two different types of reproduction: sexual and asexual reproduction. Once we have a firm understanding of the two different types of reproduction, we will learn about two cell processes: mitosis and meiosis. THEN!!!! To end the year we will start discussing the different systems of the body and how they work together. The kids are preparing for dissection at the end of this unit! They are thrilled to be able to have the opportunity to dissect not only a worm, but also a fetal piglet.



## 7th Grade English

By: Mrs. VR (Van Regenmorter)

As I write this newsletter article, I just completed my lesson plans for the next unit we will begin in 7th grade English. The next unit is writing an argumentative essay. Students will read two articles about a topic. While reading the articles, they will look for evidence that defends both sides of the topic, and after reading the articles, they will take a position about the topic. Next, students will need to defend their position using evidence from the articles that they read.

Students will use prewriting strategies and complete graphic organizers to take their position, make claims, and find evidence in the articles. After prewriting, the 7th graders will then write the rough draft of their argumentative essay. Of course, they will revise and edit their rough drafts and produce a final draft. In April our school will complete the ISASP state testing. For the ISASP, students are required to write various kinds of writing, so during February and March, we will spend time reviewing and writing these kinds of writing in preparation. The argumentative essay is one of those kinds of writing.

This time my newsletter article is rather short, but once again, it updates you on what is happening in 7th grade English classes. 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.....





## 7th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Vande Kieft

In March the 7<sup>th</sup> graders will be focusing their energy on the thrills and excitement of various slides, roller coasters, and other amusement park rides. The 7<sup>th</sup> graders will begin examining our new Big Question: "How does energy effect the thrill of an amusement park ride?" This question will lead us to investigating what really causes the speed, adrenaline rush, and exhilaration that we feel while on the tallest water slide or fastest roller coaster. It will be a wild ride with ups, downs, twists, and turns to understand the importance of energy and energy transfers!

At the end of March and start of spring, the 7<sup>th</sup> 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 on the window ledge. Hopefully, the sunny days of spring will be here by then to help us out!



## 7th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Vermeer

3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter and 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester are almost over! We are still working on reading our class novel. We are over halfway through and growing so much as readers.

Our class novel is *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. It is a Newbery Medal book meaning it has distinguished honors that its writing has contributed to American literature for children. The book falls under the genre of dystopian literature or science fiction. This book is chosen based on its complexity and ability to challenge the readers thinking. In order to make the most sense of this book we have been studying reading characteristics that specifically apply to dystopian literature. These items can also apply to other genres with a few minor changes. One area we have spent a great deal of time studying is how the book connects to our personal lives, our community, and our world. The students are discovering that authors of these novels have a purpose behind their text, something inspired them to write.

Reminder of quarter 3 reading goal is 700 pages or 4-6 books. Many students have already reached this goal which is awesome! Our quarterly book project is coming up having a focus on technology. The students will be given a rubric at the beginning of March to explain what the criteria is. Things we will be focusing on is analyzing characters in our story, connecting the text to our world in some way, and what the theme of the story is. They will be given class time to complete the project, but some work may have to be done outside of class. This project will be presented during class to have students begin working on speaking in front of people.

Looking ahead, after *The Giver* we will spend some time working through vocabulary and a couple short stories. We will also be completing our mini unit called March Reading Madness. In this short unit students will be presented different short stories to read in class and complete a comprehension assignment over. Each class section is competing against one another to be the winner of our March Madness tournament.

The students are doing a great job and I look forward to seeing how much they have learned by the end of this quarter! Keep up the awesome job!



## 8th Grade Science

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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. Student 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. Our goal was to evaluate which is better—analog or digital.

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: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade American History

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 to review all that we’ve been learning in American History!



## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math

By Mr. Mouw

After that incredible cold spell, it sure is nice that things have warmed up a bit! Slowly but surely, spring is coming. In Pre-Algebra, we are starting to get more into the Geometry side of mathematics. We have been spending quite a bit of time on the Pythagorean Theorem lately.

In Algebra 1, we have been dealing a lot with exponents and Exponential Functions. We have started to see a little bit of a drop of in people getting their homework done on time, so please encourage your child to keep pushing hard on their daily work. Thanks!

## 8<sup>th</sup> 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 four difficult big idea 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?
4. What are the origins and consequences of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping?

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.



## 8<sup>th</sup> 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 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4 7:00am My Choice	5 1:15pm Early Dismissal Professional Development	6
7	8 End Exploratory Cycle 5  3:30pm-9:00pm MS Solo Performance Night	9 Begin Exploratory Cycle 6	10	11 7:00am My Choice	12 End 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter.  1:15pm Early Dismissal Professional Development	13
14 Daylight Saving Time Begins	15 Start 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter.  7:00pm Middle School Concert	16	17 St. Patrick's Day  Qrt. 3 Grades due in the office.	18 7:00am My Choice	19 1:15pm Early Dismissal Professional Development  Qrt. 3 Report Cards Go Home	20 Spring Begins
21	22	23	24	25 7:00am My Choice	26 1:15pm Early Dismissal Professional Development	27
28	29	30	31			



# April 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 No School	2 Good Friday No School	3
				Spring Break		
4 Easter	5 No School Teacher Comp Day	6 Qrt. 4 3 Week Grade Checks	7	8 7:00am My Choice	9 1:15pm Early Dismissal	10 PLUS Carnival@ Hospers Elementary  7:30pm Jazz Band Dance @HS Old Gym
	Spring Break					
11	12	13	14 5 <sup>th</sup> ,6 <sup>th</sup> ,7 <sup>th</sup> gr. Honor Choir @ Storm Lake	15 7:00am My Choice  End Cycle 6 Exploratory	16 1:15pm Early Dismissal  Start Cycle 7 Exploratory	17
	ISAP Testing					
18	19	20 4:30pm TR: MS @MOC-Floyd Valley NWC Track	21	22 Earth Day  7:00am My Choice	23 1:15pm Early Dismissal	24
25	26	27 4:30pm TR: MS @Sheldon High School  Qrt. 4 6 Week Grade Checks	28	29 7:00am My Choice  4:30pm TR: MS @Sioux Center High School	30 Arbor Day  1:15pm Early Dismissal Professional Development  Jr-Sr Prom	