

MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

MOC-Floyd Valley

December

2022

Special points of Interest:

- Genuine
- What Is Leader In Me
- Scholastic Book Fair Thank You



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Genuine

I recently read an article on how to establish relationships with middle school-age teens. After all, relationships are what allow us to have a powerful influence on others, and in this case, on young people. A few suggestions were shared in the article, however, the most important was “how” we approached building the relationships. The steady theme was to be genuine in all efforts to connect. Parents and adults were encouraged to be genuine in their communication! For example, as adults, we need to put our cell phones away to talk with kids if we are going to expect them to do the same. The conversation is more genuine when it takes place without any distractions!

Be genuine in your efforts to learn and know what’s “trending” in the life of a middle school student. Ask about social media trends and connections. Pay attention to the different apps available and what they are used for. The use of open-ended questions about friendships, favorite teachers, favorite movies, recent events at school, etc all facilitate conversation; a conversation about them and what is important to them! It is important that these questions are to learn more about what matters to your teenager. Be genuine!! The author of the article was clear in sharing that we need to be careful not to ask these questions in anticipation of a “gotcha” moment that leads to a lecture of “do’s and don’t’s”.

Another suggestion was to involve your teenager in the things that your family plans to do together. What’s for supper? How can we all be part of making supper? The side benefit of doing something like this together is the conversation becomes natural and genuine! Holidays and vacations are other ways to allow your teenager to have a voice. If some parts of holiday travel and/or vacations are non-negotiables, then give them input on other parts...again this makes it genuine! If you are fake or phony...they will see through it!

One last suggestion from the author, don’t take it personally when teenagers don’t want to talk with you. Research tells us that they do crave human connection, they are just progressing through change and don’t always know how to handle the interaction. Stay the course, stay genuine, and be interested in what they are interested in! This will lead to them wanting to spend a bit more time with us... more time to have a great impact on them.

Thank you to all our parents for partnering with us! We greatly appreciate all that you do to have a genuinely positive impact on young people! It is a fun challenge for all of us to keep learning and stretching our ability to connect and relate to our teenage middle school students!



Winter Break ~ Dec. 23, 2022—Jan. 3, 2023
School resumes Jan. 4, 2023



MERRY CHRISTMAS

HAPPY NEW YEAR

What is Leader in Me?

Leader in Me is a program designed to show students how to become the best they can be by being “leaders” of themselves and eventually leaders of others. The program uses the principles in Sean Covey’s *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*.

Based on the principles introduced in the lessons, the *7 Habits* become the hands-on tools students can rely on during their journey through Middle School on into High School and eventually adulthood.

Leadership is the “umbrella” under which character traits, social-emotional skills, and basic life skills that parents, teachers, and the general public are reporting as desired to succeed in the “real world”.

The program is really a journey of “self-discovery” for students and teachers alike! The Seven Habits outlined in Leader in Me include:

1. **Be Proactive**
2. **Begin With the End in Mind**
3. **Put First Things First**
4. **Think Win-Win**
5. **Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood**
6. **Synergize**
7. **Sharpen the Saw**

To kick off the year, the Middle School students started by discussing what leadership may look like and how our paradigms, or perceptions, can influence our choices. Then, the Middle School students began working on **Habit 1: Be Proactive**. Habit 1 focused on “Taking Responsibility for Your Own Life.” The Key Concepts discussed in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade during the lessons for Habit 1 included:

6th Grade Lessons	7th Grade Lessons	8th Grade Lessons
Freedom to Choose ~ <i>“I Earned” my accomplishments</i>	Initiative ~ <i>“You’re in Charge” of your own choices</i>	Freedom to Choose ~ <i>By “Just Pushing Pause” I control my responses</i>
Initiative ~ <i>“It’s Up To Me” to make changes in my life</i>	Circle of Control vs. Circle of No Control ~ <i>By staying “Calm, Cool, and Collected” I can control how I respond</i>	Proactive and Reactive Language ~ <i>Proactive people have “No (or fewer) Regrets”</i>
Circle of Control ~ <i>Focusing on how I feel about myself is the most important “What About Me?”</i>	Courage Zone vs. Comfort Zone ~ <i>In “The Courage Zone” I discover more about myself</i>	Circle of Control vs. Circle of No Control ~ <i>By “Doing The Right Thing” I control my own life</i>
Choose Your Own Weather ~ <i>By staying “Sunny Side Up” I choose my own actions, attitudes, and moods</i>	Choose Your Own Weather ~ <i>You choose your attitude and “Who Makes You Happy”</i>	Choose Your Own Weather ~ <i>“It’s Up To You” to choose your mood and attitude</i>
Stop and Think ~ <i>Proactive people “Stop, Think, and then Go” forward with their choices</i>	Proactive and Reactive Language ~ <i>With Proactive Language I won’t get “Victimitis”</i>	Transition Person ~ <i>I can “Step Up and Step In” to help someone else</i>

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

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By: Mrs. TeGrotenhuis

One of my goals each year is to encourage students to leave their reading comfort zone by trying a new genre, and that has become our focus this quarter for individual reading. Students are expected to read at least three different genres by December 22; several students have already commented about finding a new type of book they will continue to read! Please continue to encourage your child to read daily and fill out his/her reading log. 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 *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. Many of our students, in turn, share how thankful they are for a school like ours.

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 is always my favorite piece of writing 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 character development in Ebenezer Scrooge. Most students know the storyline of this classic tale, but we will also examine the historical time period during which it was written to gain a better understanding of the author's intent.



6th Grade World History

By: Mr. Nonnemacher

We have started our Ancient Egypt Unit! This is always one of the most enjoyable and interesting units of the school year for us in 6th grade Social Studies. We've already learned a little bit about the pyramids and we got to spend a couple of days taking a virtual "tour" of the desert of Egypt along with the Nile River. The kids have also gained a number of new vocabulary words to add to their arsenal. We will talk about multiple different pharaohs of Egypt. Some were men, some were women. Some were good, some were bad! My expectations for my students during this unit and all units are that they listen and interact in class, stay caught up with their homework, and study when it comes time for studying. If they can consistently do those three things, I firmly believe that each unit should be a successful unit for them. Following our Egyptian unit test, we will spend about a week comparing Ancient Egypt to Modern Egypt. They will use everything they have learned and combine and compare that to what is going on in the country today. They will be researching using Chromebooks, textbooks, and materials from the school and the public library to complete this project. They will need to insert all of their research into a presentation platform such as Google Slides, Prezi, etc... I look forward to seeing what they come up with! As always, we continue to make an effort to make others smile. I continue to challenge each student to write down a "Grateful Comment" on a daily basis, especially as we near the holiday season. Please take some time to ask your son or daughter some of the things they are grateful for! Go Dutch!

6th Grade Science

By: Mr. H(Hoebelheinrich)

The 6th graders are finishing up on their Physical Science units of “What are Atoms” and “Matter on the Move.” Through these two units we talked about where the idea of “atoms” came from, the history of the atom, and the atomic structure of atoms. Right after learning about atoms, and how atoms can join together to form different compounds that make up everything on this Earth, we discussed that these particles are constantly moving, and the speed at which the particles move determines which state they are in. As individuals we can manipulate how these particles move to change the actual state of matter they are in. Following this unit, we will finish up with a short unit about how matter changes. Then we will join into the realm of Earth science where we will discuss “How Earth has changed, and what forces cause Earth to change?”



Growing and Changing in 6th Grade English

By: Mrs. Jacobsma

We are beginning to look at multiple ways writing plays a part in the everyday world of adults. The students will explore some of those styles and purposes in their own writing. This unit is done entirely on their chromebook!

Following the real world writing unit, we will return to grammar and ramp up our writing skills. We will examine the basic structure of good sentences and then reconstruct our writing style with more complex and compound writing! Our next major writing assignment will be a hero essay where we look at what it means to be an everyday sort of hero. We'll choose someone who has made a significant impact on us and interview them. Then we'll create a tribute essay to honor them!



7th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Vermeer

7th graders are working hard in their research unit. At the end of October, they selected a topic and were matched with a partner that choose the same topic and have been diving into researching their topic. Topic options they could select from where: climate change, plastic pollution, social media, technology effects, and vaping. In their research they are looking at presenting information about the topic they choose. As they gather their information, they are working towards the goal of presenting the information in the form of a TEDTalk. This TEDTalk will be short in length and will include a slideshow that they will also create to help inform their audience about their topic. The 7th graders are doing well with their research and are learning a lot about their topics and their other classmates' topics. Within our unit there are some smaller projects the students also will complete one of those being an infographic. This infographic is small poster that is sharing eye catching information to get someone to read more. All 7th graders have done an awesome job! Our research and recording our TEDTalk will take us to the second week of December.

After our TEDTalk and research we change pace, and we will be reading different short stories and poems about Christmas. One set of short stories we will compare the similarities and differences and decide if one author copied ideas from the other. The second set of short stories and poems will be completed like a Tic-Tac-Toe game where they will need to read and complete some questions about three options on the board. These activities give the students an opportunity to read a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts and build on their reading skills.



Wieking's World

By: Mr. Wieking

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Another month has come and gone and the holidays are right around the corner. As we finished up our unit covering human rights, we transitioned to a new region of the world to study. Many of the countries we learned about while covering human rights were from the sub-Saharan Africa region. During the month of December we will be taking a closer look into this part of the world.

Sub-Saharan Africa is quickly playing a larger role in the globalized world. Their populations are growing quickly, their resources are in more demand, and governments around the world are investing in infrastructure throughout the region. It is likely that this region of the world will continue to grow in its significance.

We will take the time to learn more about the physical geography of the region in order to identify valuable resources like oil, cobalt, and diamonds. We will also try to make the connection between resources, trade, scarcity, and competition.

Finally, as we wrap up our unit on Sub-Saharan Africa, we'll take a closer look into the global issue of food supply. As we learn about our global food supply we'll examine how the countries of the world are working together in order to produce enough food for all people and adequately distribute the food to all who need it.

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.



7th Grade English

By: Mrs. VR (Van Regenmorter)

As we entered the second quarter, seventh grade students did a unit about writing emails. Writing emails is a real-world form of writing and communication, and today's students often need to write emails. Students learned how to write correctly structured emails that communicate effectively and reflect positively on them, the sender.

In between Thanksgiving and Christmas, we will begin our next unit, "Writing A Personal Narrative." 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. My plan is to have students complete their rough drafts before Christmas break, and when we return from break, they will revise, edit, and produce the final draft. By the end of the unit, students will have a final personal narrative that I hope they are proud of writing and that I'll look forward to reading!

Once again, I thank you for taking the time to read the middle school newsletter. By reading our newsletter, you stay informed, and it also gives you opportunities to talk with your son or daughter about school and what they are learning. Each student in our school is a blessing, and I am thankful for the opportunity to spend each day with each one.



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 is one of the most difficult units 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 Science

By: Mrs. Vande Kieft

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 7th 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 December we will take a closer look at magnetic and electrical force and the effect that changes in mass and distance can have on their respective fields. We will also examine how magnetic and electrical force can be attractive and repulsive by using those reactions to complete a series of magnetic and electrical lab challenges. In our Magno-Car Challenge we will find out who can create the fastest and most agile design to drive their Magno-Car without ever touching it. While taking a closer look at electricity, we will be turning on a light bulb without a light fixture and attempting to create a magnet using electricity. Finally, the 7th graders will consider questions including what causes magnetism, why does static electricity tend to happen in the winter, how can electricity help to make a magnet.



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 in Europe.

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 pros and cons 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 selective breeding 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.



Our Corner of History

By: Ms. Van Wyk

In our latest unit for 8th grade History, we were fortunate to have the opportunity to commemorate Veterans Day. Each student was asked to interview a veteran and ask them questions about their service. Furthermore, they individually researched topics connected to the military, including various memorials (Korean War Memorial, Vietnam War Memorial, etc.), wars (World War II, The War in Afghanistan, etc.), and the stories of several Medal of Honor recipients (Desmond Doss, Sylvester Antolak, etc.). Following their research, eighth graders presented their findings to the rest of the class in a speech ranging from 2 to 5 minutes.

For some, it is a big challenge speaking publicly in front of their peers, and I am glad that they had the opportunity to work on this important life skill in a positive environment rooted in a growth mindset. It is also my hope that these students came to better appreciate the role of service in the armed forces and the cost of the freedoms we enjoy in the United States. If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to ask your student to share about their projects from this unit!

Looking ahead, we are moving into our unit on the War for Independence which begins with an in-depth look at America's "break up letter," the Declaration of Independence. When teaching students about the major events and battles of this period, I allow students to "Choose their Own Adventure" in the shoes of an American soldier. As they see where their choices take them, students will journal about their "firsthand experiences" in the Revolutionary War.

At the end of this unit, we will be viewing a school-appropriate version of *The Patriot*, to see what the combat experiences of the time were like. The film has been edited from the original to omit R-Rated elements such as language and gore, yet there will still be intense moments depicting warfare. Before viewing the movie, we will spend some time preparing for these thematic elements. If you have any questions or concerns before viewing, please don't hesitate to get in touch.



8th Grade English

By: Mrs. Oolman

As we head into December, we are finishing up our "Troublesome Words" unit, a unit that deals with words that are commonly confused or misused. The students have done a great job coming up with clues to help us all remember which word to use! Additionally, presentation skills are growing. Students are becoming better speakers, using better vocabulary, rehearsing more, and generally developing their skills as speakers. I believe that this will be a lifelong skill to utilize!

Moving forward into December, we will work on our KU Sentence Writing Strategies. Much of this will be a review of sentence structure and formulas while also introducing new formulas and structures. I always enjoy this solid instruction and what our students take away from it as writers. This, too, serves them well long into their future.



Thanks for Supporting the Book Fair

Howdy, Partners! Thank you so much for your support of the Scholastic Middle School Book Fair "Saddle Up and Read" at this fall's parent-teacher conferences! Because of your interest in books and enthusiasm for reading, the goal set for our fair was exceeded. Thanks for encouraging and celebrating reading!



8th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Van Der Wilt

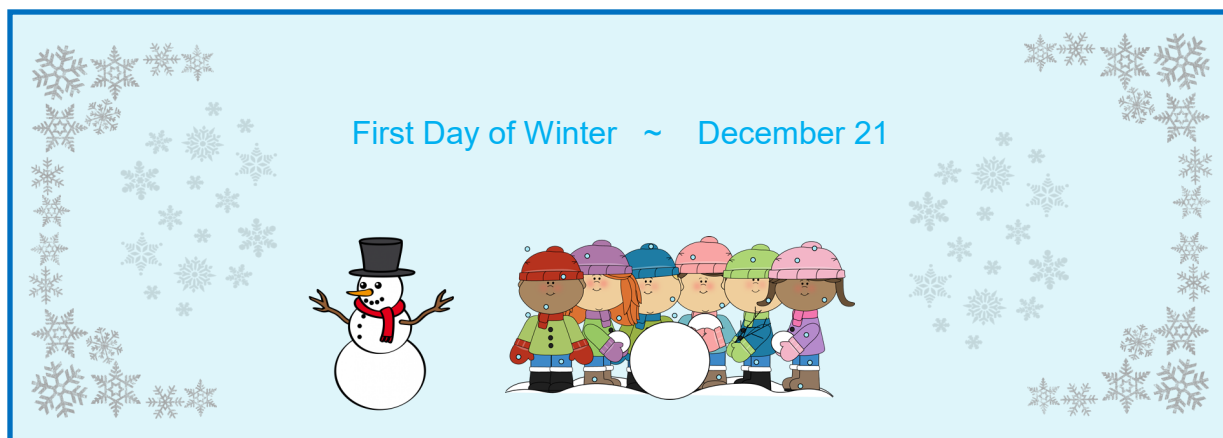
The 8th grade Literature class is finishing *The Outsiders* unit by creating a final assessment of their choice. Their choices were between a thematic essay and a Body Biography. Over the past two weeks, we have discussed how characters are vehicles of theme. We have learned that characters are complex and have troubles, which reveal motifs, and how motifs reveal themes. From our work together, we created a list of five big ideas in the book, which include divided communities, empathy, individual identity, self-sacrifice and honor, and preserving childhood innocence. In a thematic essay, each student will demonstrate their ability to identify a theme, write a thesis statement, and incorporate textual evidence by using direct quotes effectively. The body biography is quite similar to the essay, but allows them an opportunity to display the theme through a character of their choice in a visual way. I have been impressed with the students' hard work and excellent thinking throughout the book and look forward to their final products! We concluded the unit by watching *The Outsiders* and identifying the similarities and differences between the book and movie.

Following *The Outsiders* unit, the 8th grade will begin with an introduction to the Holocaust. The 8th grade English and Literature classes share the Holocaust unit. The 8th grade English class will focus on reading *The Diary of Anne Frank* play and critically viewing *The Diary of Anne Frank* movie. In Literature, students will learn to use a variety of mediums to conduct research, so they are prepared to identify a Holocaust 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.

Please continue to encourage your child to independently read each day. Now that we are finished with our class novel, we will get back into our Take Time for Ten independent reading habit each day. Independently reading daily is a key component to your child's improvement and success 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!



December 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<p>1 4:15pm BB-B vsSioux Center 7th (H) 8th(A)</p> <p>Makerspace</p>	<p>2 1:15pm Early Dismissal</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>5 Qrt. 2 6 Week Grade Check 4:15pm BB-B vsSheldon 7th(H) 8th(A)</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8 Hour of Code Activity 4:15pm BB-B vsRock Valley 7th(A) 8th(H)</p>	<p>9 1:15pm Early Dismissal</p>	<p>10</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>12 4:15pm BB-B vsLeMars 7th(A) 8th(H) 5:00pm School Board Meeting</p>	<p>13 End Exploratory Cycle 3 MS Holiday Concert @NWC Christ Chapel</p>	<p>14 Begin Exploratory Cycle 4</p>	<p>15 4:15pm BB-B vsSergeant Bluff-Luton 7th(H) 8th(A)</p>	<p>16 1:15pm Early Dismissal</p>	<p>17</p>
<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21 Winter Begins</p>	<p>22 End 2nd Qtr./1st Sem.</p>	<p>23 No School</p> <p>Winter Break</p>	<p>24</p>
<p>25 Christmas Day</p>	<p>26 No School</p>	<p>27 No School</p>	<p>28 No School</p>	<p>29 No School</p>	<p>30 No School</p>	<p>31 Winter Break</p>

January 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 New Year's Day	2 No School	3 No School	4 School Resumes Qtr. 3/ Semester 2 Begins MS Wrestling Practice Begins	5	6 1:15pm Early Dismissal	7
Winter Break						
8	9	10	11	12 4:15pm GBB vsSioux Center 7 th (H) 8 th (A)	13 1:15pm Early Dismissal	14
15	16 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Strong Foundation Honor 6 th gr. Honor Band@ SC East 4:00pm GBB vsSergeant Bluff Luton 7 th (H) 4:15pm 8 th (A)	17 4:15pm GBB vs Spencer 7 th (A) 8 th (H)	18	19	20 1:15pm Early Dismissal 4:15 WR:MS @ MOC-FV	21
	Fast Testing					
22	23 4:15pm GBB vsLeMars 7 th (H) 8 th (A) 4:15pm WR:MS @Rock Valley	24	25 Qtr. 3 -3 Week grade check	26 4:15pm WR:MS @Hinton	27 End Exploratory Cycle 4 1:15pm Early Dismissal	28
29	30 Begin Exploratory Cycle 5 4:15pm GBB vsSpirit Lake 7 th (A) 8 th (H) 4:45pm WR:MS @West Lyon	31				