

MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

MOC-Floyd Valley

February

2023

Special points of Interest:

- February Blues
- Leader in Me



Inside this issue:

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

February Blues

February in the Midwest can be a trying time for people mentally and physically. The key piece of that is “can be.” I had a basketball coach (just a few years ago) that would make us mindful of avoiding the “February Blues.” The excitement of the new season had worn off and the routine of practices and games was blocking the view of tournament time just around the corner. More important than making us aware was the intentionality that followed. In small, yet purposeful, ways practices looked and felt different, conversations were different, scouting reports were tweaked, and our focus was narrowed to today.



The point in bouncing back many years to a basketball experience is to share that although winter months and February, specifically, can be challenging for people mentally, both adults and students, we should take action! In what ways can our intentions fight off the “blues”? Things like exercise, eating healthy, and staying socially connected with others are absolutely important. The magic in these items, and others, is how we do them and how we commit to them!!! Be creative with exercise, inside and outside the house. Include your kids in preparing and planning healthy meals. Again, the biggest “knockout punch” to fighting these blues is how you commit to what you choose to commit to. Consider making your commitments short-term. Commit two days at a time, one week at a time, one day at a time, etc.! I encourage you not to “just get through February.” Instead, MAKE something great of today. Train a “GET TO” mindset as parents and as students. Last, move the focus to your “teammates” and how you can make their day extraordinary. Our families, co-workers, neighbors, community members, school staff, church staff, etc are all some of our “teammates” that we can serve. What a great way to fight off the blues... it feels good to do good!

MOC-FV Middle School is excited to GET TO serve our students and families, what a special privilege! We thank you for partnering with us as we give our best so that others can experience their best!



February 20 ~ Snow Makeup Day
Due to the snow day in January, we will have school on Monday, February 20.

Leader in Me

In November and December, we moved into **Habit 2: Begin With the End in Mind** focused on "Defining Your Own Mission and Goals in Life." Lesson 1 was centered on the Key Concept that Mental Creation Precedes Physical Creation and encouraged students to be OK with discovering their own talents and strengths even though they will likely differ from their peers (just at a time in their lives when it seems very important to all be alike). It also encouraged students to think ahead, set goals, and commit to meeting those goals using their own talents. The Key Concepts discussed in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade during the lessons for Habit 2 included:

6th Grade Lessons	7th Grade Lessons	8th Grade Lessons
Mental Creation Precedes Physical Creation ~ "The Crystal Ball"	Mental Creation Precedes Physical Creation ~ "Life's Blueprint"	Mental Creation Precedes Physical Creation ~ "Super Strength"
Choices and Consequences ~ "One Leads to the Other"	Principle-Centered Living ~ "Rock Solid"	Principle-Centered Living ~ "On Cloud 9"
Personal Mission Statement ~ "Strong Roots"	Personal Mission Statement ~ "The End Game"	Personal Mission Statement ~ "Make Your Mark"
Goal Setting ~ "Our Legacy"	Goal Setting ~ "What's a WIG?"	Goal Setting ~ "Keep it Real"
Goal Tracking ~ "Keeping Score"	Goal Tracking ~ "Stay Focused"	Goal Tracking ~ "Read the Meter"

After returning from break in January, we have moved into **Habit 3: Put First Things First**. Habit 3 is based on the idea that we must "Prioritize, and Do the Most Important Things First." The various lessons during Habit 3 center on the importance of planning ahead, focusing on our priorities, and striving for organization as its Key Concepts.



READ ALL ABOUT IT . . . 6TH GRADE LITERATURE

By: Mrs. TeGrotenhuis

The sixth graders are embarking on a research project for literature class! After learning about heroes of Greek mythology and comparing those heroes to our cultural heroes, the students have begun exploring the heroic traits of their own cultural hero. This will result in a research paper and will be the first time our students have gone through ALL stages of a research paper including the researching, note-taking, paraphrasing, organizing into different categories, drafting, editing, revising, publishing, and developing a works cited page. Yes, many steps are involved, and students will receive daily points for use of class time. Mrs. DeZeeuw, our media specialist, will show students available resources and help guide them while researching. I always look forward to reading about the heroes of my students!

Students have also created new reading goals for the third quarter. One of my expectations is for all students to read an award-winning book, so please remind your child about this throughout the quarter. We recently completed a book project using the online website, padlet.com. Students were able to "tour" our classroom and visit everyone's padlet page. Many of our students were incredibly creative. I encourage you to ask your child about it! Additionally, I ask that you please keep encouraging your child to read daily. This tends to be a busy time of year with extra-curricular activities. Setting a time aside each day to read and complete other homework is a great idea!



6th Grade Math

By: Mr. Boersma

The sixth grade students recently completed our ratios unit. This unit consisted of two chapters. The first chapter was entitled Ratios, Rates, and Unit Rates. The second was all about percentages, fractions, and decimals. As a class they performed very well on these tests.

Our next unit is Expressions and Equations. This chapter lays the foundation for algebra classes. We teach about mathematical rules like order of operations and different mathematical properties. Also, we will be solving some very basic one and two step equations. It's a fun unit for many students because it really feels like we are doing so advanced math.

Thank you to those of you who have been helping your son or daughter with their homework, studying for math tests, and encouraging them to do their best work. Please believe me when I say that I understand how it can be difficult to help your child with math that feels very different from when we were in school. Your help is incredibly important for many students.



Lots of Creativity Flowing in 6th Grade English

By: Mrs. Jacobsma

February brings exciting times in English. We are putting all of our writing and thinking skills to the test as we create a choose your own adventure story. The development of this story is quite a task as it will have a grand total of EIGHT different endings. It will showcase the kids' writing skills in ways they can't even imagine. Stay tuned as the plot develops and look for the links to your child's story coming near the end of February. We will also continue with spelling, editing, and grammar. Smaller discussions and quizzes will help the students catalog and refine what they know about their language. These next couple months are my favorite time of the year. We know each other well enough to relax and take some educational risks. We have built enough confidence in ourselves to try new things. Thanks for sharing your child with me.



7th Grade English

By: Mrs. VR (Van Regenmorter)

Before Christmas break, the 7th grade students wrote rough drafts of personal narratives, which is a true story about an experience that happened to the person who is writing it. Before writing their personal narratives, we talked about the elements of a good narrative and four traits of good writing: voice, content, organization, and conventions. Since returning from break, students have been focusing on revising their personal narratives. Revising means that a writer works to improve the content, details, and description of their writing. To do this, the 7th graders read three other classmates' stories and helped those classmates find where the content (information) needed improvement. When peer revising was completed, students looked at the suggestions for improvement from their classmates and went to work improving the content, details, and description in their personal narratives. Often, students believe that revising and editing happen at the same time, but these are two different steps that should be completed separately. Consequently, after students made revising improvements to their stories, they had a rough draft #2, which then needed editing. Editing means that a writer corrects conventions in the writing. Conventions is the term used for capitalization, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, language use, paragraph use, etc. Once again, students helped each other find these errors, and they corrected the conventions in their stories. Once all these steps were completed, the students produced their final personal narrative to hand in. By the time you read this newsletter, I'm sure I'll be in the middle of reading some neat stories about my students!

Once again, thank you for reading the middle school newsletter and staying informed. Being informed gives you a chance to communicate with your son or daughter about what's happening in school. Until next time . . .

Wieking's World

By: Mr. Wieking

We have finished our units about sub-Saharan Africa and Food Supply. We discussed the challenges that exist in our societies and the factors that contribute to them. I am reminded each class period of the curious nature of our students and their compassionate attitudes. We are wrapping up our unit on Food Supply with a project. Students will take a hands-on approach to the project by generating their own questions they would like to research and answer.

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 population growth and globalization. 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. I know we are all looking forward to longer days and warmer weather. This can really be a challenging part of the school year without much of a break from school. Thank you for your continued efforts to encourage your student and carry on with helpful study and learning habits.



7th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Vermeer

Third Quarter and Second Semester are here! Our class novel will be our focus for Quarter 3 and will take up most of the quarter. We will still have our reading goal, quarterly book project and some progress monitoring testing along the way as well.

Our class novel is *The City of Ember*. We will spend most of 3rd quarter reading our novel, understanding dystopian literature and the characteristics of this genre. Throughout this unit we will analyze the novel and compare it to the book they are reading on their own which is also dystopian. This unit is a challenge because the genre isn't as commonly read by students as others. However, by the end, many students find the genre to be one they enjoy reading. Different projects we will be completing with this unit include comparing our book to our history and present day, analyzing why dystopian has become so popular in recent years, learning about how authors come up with their stories and what movie producers do to make these books come to life. The dystopian book students are reading on their own will count towards their quarterly reading goals and their genre log list they have been working on all school year.

Since it is a new quarter this means a new quarter goal. Quarter 3 goal is 600 pages or 4-6 books. We will continue to do a quarterly book project and we will be trying something new. We are going to pick partners or groups of three and conduct book reader interviews. This allows students to practice interviewing skills and to share their book with others. As the interviewer, the students will learn what questions get the best responses and the most information. There will be a rubric to come with specifics for this project as well.

Finally, we are testing out a new vocabulary program called Membean. This program is an individual vocabulary practice program, that gives the student vocabulary words and practices that are at their current level. As the student progresses, it continues to adjust to their individual needs. Class time is being provided each work for students to work on the program; however, they will need to spend some time on their own as well.

I am very excited for this new quarter, new challenges, and the excitement for our class novel and dystopian literature.



7th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Vande Kieft

Page 5

After returning from break, the 7th graders concluded our investigations into electricity and magnetism to answer our Big Question: "How do objects interact from a distance?" During the final days of the unit, the 7th graders considered the following questions: what causes magnetism, why does static electricity tend to happen in the winter, what is the difference between static and current electricity, and how can electricity help to create an electromagnet?

Why do I have blue eyes? Why do you have brown hair? Can you roll your tongue? The 7th graders will be investigating the answers to these questions in February along with our Big Question: "Why do offspring with the same parents look different?" during science class as part of the Genetics and Heredity Unit. Each team will be exploring various traits that they have inherited from their parents and comparing those traits with their teammates. During this unit, we will be conducting investigations to isolate DNA from various fruits, determining the importance of DNA in expressing who we are, and predicting the probability of various genotypes and phenotypes for potential offspring. Within the unit on genetics, we will also be looking at the occurrence of mutations and its effects on different organisms. Students will gain a better understanding of the common mutations that they may have or find around them in nature while determining if those mutations pose a potential harmful, beneficial, or neutral effect. Finally, we will explore the new area of science, epigenetics, to see how much the environment plays a factor in the genetics and growth of various organisms.



7th Grade Math

By: Mr. Baker

In 7th grade math, we just finished up a chapter on proportions and similarity. During this chapter the students worked with unit rates, scale drawings, and similar figures. Soon the students will be working on a scale model project in which they choose an item to either enlarge or reduce in size. The students have to draw a quick sketch of their object, a scale drawing with an appropriate scale, and actually construct the object they drew a scale model of. The students have handouts with all the information regarding this project, and I look forward to seeing some very interesting models on display in the classroom and in the hallways. The students seem to enjoy the change of pace from our "normal" class periods.



8th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Van Der Wilt

The 8th grade Literature students have chosen and are beginning to research their Holocaust topics. The Holocaust unit is in conjunction with Mrs. Oolman's class, as they study and read the play, *The Diary of Anne Frank*. In Literature, students are learning the research and note-taking process by identifying an essential question, writing guiding questions for their research, and identifying central ideas and supporting details. Once the research is completed, students will prepare a presentation on their topic. Students will be required to rehearse multiple times in front of peers, parents, or siblings. These short presentations are essential incremental steps in creating effective communication skills and workplace readiness skills. Please take a moment to ask your child about their topic and encourage them to rehearse in front of you prior to their presentation. Following the presentations, we will spend a week making connections to the Holocaust and present-day forms of genocide. I have enjoyed watching and helping students through the research process, and I look forward to watching their presentations.



8th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Hoogeveen

In December and early January, we focused our attention on how sound works for us. Students explored echolocation, sound waves, and musical instrument vibrations translated to wave formation on an oscilloscope. We touched on how sound affects our ears. Eighth graders learned details about the “quietest place on Earth” which is a sound booth in Minneapolis. We did a wide variety of labs on how the energy from sound waves can move through different mediums as well as how and why waves move through materials. Using springs, we created standing waves and tuning forks show us how sound waves can move objects. To wrap up the sound unit, students completed research on a wide range of topics dealing with sound waves. Some of the topics included: hearing waves, cochlear implants, sound in space, how animals react to sound, sonic weapons, sound barrier, music vs intelligence, CDs, 8 track tapes, cassettes, LP records, and so much more!

In late January, we will shift our attention to focus on how the electromagnetic spectrum works for us. First, we will explore what the electromagnetic spectrum (EM) is. Then we will investigate how the EM waves are different than sound waves but that they still use the terms frequency and wavelength.

In our Mirror Lab, students trace reflective patterns, completed a light maze, tried to write words using a mirror, and compared concave mirrors to convex and plane mirrors. The last component we will apply is how these mirrors are used in the world around us.

We will delve into 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, fiber optic cable, different shaped lenses, and much more. After exploring the characteristics of refracting light waves, we want to make connections of how the electromagnetic spectrum is used by students in the world beyond the classroom. The students are doing a fantastic job of increasing their awareness of their attention to detail and asking great, thought-provoking questions!



Our Corner of History

By: Ms. Van Wyk

Welcome back for second semester, everyone! It's always good to be back in the classroom and re-connect with students after a long break. The eighth graders have been studying how the colonies united to form a new nation following their victory over the British. Students examined the many challenges that the young country faced and are beginning to realize that forging one new nation out of 13 independent colonies is a very tricky business.

Our focus will soon be shifting from the creation of the Constitution to the words of the document itself. We will be looking at how it spells out the rights of every U.S. citizen and establishes the plan for how the U.S. government will function. Understanding what the Constitution says and how it works is crucial to a healthy democracy! Also, I will be reviewing, civil discourse in this unit for students to apply and practice. This skill is especially important in the age of social media where inflammatory comments and personal attacks seem to attract more attention than active listening and reasoned debate. Don't be surprised if students come home with questions because this unit usually results in generating thought-provoking discussions!



February 14



8th Grade English

By: Mrs. Oolman

Page 7

Have you asked your son or daughter about their personal goals? Their academic goals? Their “WORD” of the year on their locker! Upon our return from winter break, we spent some time reviewing growth mindset and setting goals. We will continue to check back on “ourselves” with our goals and our “word” for the year to see how we are doing!

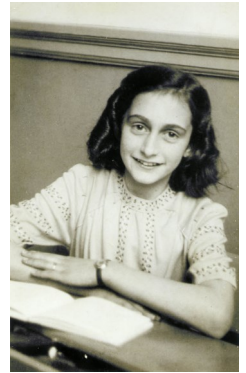
Following goal setting, we resumed our sentence writing unit with complex sentence formulas and compound - complex sentence formulas! I’m definitely impressed with the kids’ ability to master these new sentence formations.

Additionally, our curriculum team has been doing some work with both spelling and vocabulary. This work has led me to try doing spelling pretests differently to see if it improves our success rate on final tests. Ask your son or daughter about our new method and what they think of it. Feel free to email me their thoughts....best information is straight from the source!

Who was Anne Frank?

Imagine you are 13 years old (about the age of your son or daughter now) and are literally being “hunted” by a group of police officers because of your religious beliefs or cultural heritage. This is the story of Anne Frank, a young German girl who flees Germany with her family in hopes of finding safety in Amsterdam.

Anne Frank was 13 years old when she received a diary from her father for her birthday. A few weeks later, she and her family were forced into hiding by Adolf Hitler and the Nazis as part of a plan to destroy Jews during World War II. While Anne did not live to see her diary published, she did dream of becoming a famous author one day. Her dream came true when her father, Otto Frank, the only survivor of the eight who hid in Amsterdam for over two years, did indeed publish her diary in 1947. Since then, her diary has been published in over 65 different languages and millions of copies have been sold.



As part of our study on the Holocaust and Anne Frank, 8th graders will use her story in several formats to discover the answer to a couple larger questions.

1. When do movie makers and play producers have a responsibility to tell the truth about one’s story in the work that they do?
2. When do WE as consumers of media (TV, movies, and play productions) have a responsibility to seek the truth ourselves?

To be specific, students will learn the truth about what Anne Frank endured and how she lived from a series of Google slides and background information notes given in class. Next, students will read the play version of her story and find contrasting information to the truth. Finally, students will view the movie version of her story and once again find contrasting details to the truth. To stay true to the inhumane ways the Nazis treated the Jews, there are some “hard to view scenes” in the movie. Students may easily refrain from watching those parts should they wish to. Finally, students will assess WHY these changes are made. A culminating essay will conclude the unit.

Students will next be working hard to learn the story of Anne Frank by taking notes during the background information Google Slide Shows, viewing the movie, and reading the play. Students will use a form called the “Writing Recipe” 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 will analyze 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 will be 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 information is a huge skill to take into the “real world” and adulthood. This is always one of my favorite units for the content knowledge kids gain in Anne Frank’s story as well as in writing.

February 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 Groundhog Day 4:15pm WR:MS @MOC-Floyd Valley Middle School	3 1:15pm Early Dismissal	4
5	6 4:15pm GBB vsRock Valley 8 th (H) 7 th (A)	7 End Exploratory Cycle 4	8 Begin Exploratory Cycle 5 Morningside Jazz Fest	9 4:00pm GBB vsSergeant Bluff-Luton 7 th (A) 8 th (H)	10	11
Makerspace						
12	13 Qrt. 3 6 Week Grade check 4:15pm GBB vsSheldon 7 th (A) 8 th (H)	14 Valentine's Day 4:15pm WR:MS @LeMars	15	16 Qrt. 3 6 Week Gr. Check. 4:15pm GBB vsSioux Center 7 th (A) 8 th (H)	17	18
19	20 President's Day Jazz Festival 7 th / 8 th Gr. 4:15pm WR:MS @Sheldon	21 4:15pm GBB vsCherokee 7 th (H) 8 th (A)	22 Ash Wednesday	23 4:15pm GBB vsLeMars 7 th (A) 8 th (H) 4:15pm WR:MS @Sheldon	24	25
26	27 Augustana Jazz Fest-8 th gr. 4:00pm-8:00pm MS Solo Performance Night (Orchestra &Band)	28				

March 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3 1:15pm Early Dismissal	4
5	6	7 HS & MS Jazz Concert @HS Auditorium	8 MS Track Practice Starts	9 End 3 rd Qtr. MOC-FV MS Jazz Festival @ MS	10 Start 4 th Qtr.	11
12 Daylight Saving Time Begins	13	14 End Exploratory Cycle 5 7:00pm MS Concert-Choir, Band, Orchestra	15 Begin Exploratory Cycle 6	16 4:00pm-8:00pm Parent-Teacher Conferences	17 St. Patrick's Day 8 th Gr. Morningside Jazz Festival	18
19	20 Spring Begins	21 4:00pm-8:00pm Parent-Teacher Conferences	22	23	24 No School - Teacher Comp Day	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	