

# MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

MOC-Floyd Valley

April

2023

**Special points of Interest:**

- Tools to Rejuvenate
- Leader In Me
- Scholastic Book Fair Thank You



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## Tools to Rejuvenate

In the March newsletter, I spoke about “refreshing” ourselves with the onset of spring and I listed the outstanding people at the Middle School and how they provide energy to one another. In sticking with the “think spring” theme, I want to share some tools I found in an article that I read that can get us fired up... adults and students. My hope is that as parents you can use some of the tools below to be fired up about spring, fired up in your profession/space, fired up about parenting, and fired up in your relationships with others.

**Reflect** – Reflect on your emotions, needs, and on gratitude. As you feel tired, stressed, or worn out... think specifically about what you are feeling, hearing, seeing, and thinking. Breathe through it – look for the best in others – take a 2-3 minute walk if possible. Reflect on gratitude by doing a “3 good things today” before you go to bed!

**Reframe** – Become resilient in adversity!

1. Look for opportunity in the challenges.
2. Lean into positive beliefs about yourself.
3. Propel yourself forward by outlining and determining your specific next step forward.

**Refocus** – Set actions (to-do’s) in each of the following areas: Family and Friends, Work/Career, Health and Well-Being, Fun and Leisure. Write these steps down and put them in a spot you look every day.

**Reconnect** – We are at our best when we are in community with others. Make time and prioritize human interactions in your life. Find specific ways to express kindness – it feeds the soul. Sometimes connection is as simple as greeting people by their name. Assume the best of others also nudges our connections to happen.

**Reveal** – Reveal your creative side. Take an end-of-week inventory of what you have done and those that you have connected with. This can reveal the rejuvenation you are feeling!

Spring is a time of growth and newness. Some of it we cannot control (weather!!). However, much of the newness and rejuvenation we can control. I encourage you to reflect-reframe-refocus-reconnect-reveal.

**April 10 ~ Snow Makeup Day**  
Due to the snow day in February, we **WILL** have school on Monday, April 10.



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

By: Mrs. TeGrotenhuis

It's exciting to be at this point of the school year! The students have grown as readers, but our work is not yet finished! One of our reading expectations last quarter was to read an award-winning book. Students have been preparing their presentations about these books. This again involved a small amount of research about the award as well as information about the author. The students will use a google slideshow to share about their book. If you ask, they might share it with you!

After our book presentations, students will complete a short figurative language unit studying devices such as alliteration, onomatopoeia, idioms, similes, and metaphors. Students will identify these within poetry and even get the chance to create their own poems using these devices. This is where I see a lot of creativity in our students!

Our last novel for this school year is *Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick. We will do a combination of reading aloud, small group reading, and individual reading while we continue to develop specific reading skills. One strategy I would like to focus on is questioning. This is an active reading strategy I have demonstrated often. In addition, we will continue to work on vocabulary skills and responding to our reading with support from the text.

For the last quarter of school, students should again be reading 30 minutes daily with a class goal of 80 pages weekly and four books for the quarter. Please continue to encourage your child to read daily; I appreciate your help with this!



## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade World History

By: Mr. Nonnemacher

Ask your child about our current unit, and hopefully they will explain that it is a little different than normal! We are in the midst of our Ancient China unit, and we approach this unit “backwards.” The students will actually be the teachers in this scenario. Last week, we picked topics of all different sorts dealing with ancient Chinese history. In small groups, the kids are in charge of researching their topic, creating a slide show, and a poster. Beginning next week, each group will present what they have learned about their topic to the rest of their class. It has been a lot of fun to see how well the students interact with each other and work together! Winter continues to hang on outside, but soon we will try to beat the cold by learning about the country of Greece! We will explore the geography of Greece and add 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 students really enjoy 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!



## Putting It All Together in 6th Grade English

Page 3

By: Mrs. Jacobsma

Thanks to you and your student for the work you have put in this year. The students' writing has come so far, it amazes me. Take some time to read what they are writing—it might impress you, too. (Ask specifically about the Choose Your Own Adventure story!) These are amazing!

Next we will bounce around in a writing unit focusing on ideas and content. We are talking about the development of writing packed full of details and description. The students research a current issue and begin the intense process of writing a persuasive essay. This will undoubtedly be the longest and most in depth piece of writing for the year. Following the drafting, we will look at how to give a sound oral presentation. The kids will create a final draft of this writing; in addition, they will present the persuasive essay in a speech to their peers.

Be looking for the continuation of spelling. There will also be some more writing for parents to help revise and edit. Relish a little in the advancement of your student's writing. It is delightful.



## 7th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Vande Kieft

Spring is here, and that got students wondering about a few things. How are plants and animals similar? How different are they really? Does the Venus Flytrap just trap flies, or does it actually eat them? The 7th graders kicked off spring and the Plants versus Animals unit by planting two genetic variations of corn to examine the differences and similarities of the two species as they grow in the window ledge. The two variations of corn seeds will serve as the phenomenon for our new unit where we are busy trying to answer our Big Question of "What is important to allow plants and animals to grow and reproduce?" During the course of this unit, we will be examining the similarities and differences in both plant structure, animal adaptations, and plant and animal behavior in attempts to survive, grow, and reproduce.

To start our exploration, we will examine plant reproductive structures in different kinds of flowers by dissecting them. Then, we will discuss various plant and animal adaptations that ensure individual and specific specie success such as pollination, seed dispersal, camouflage, mimicry, and many others. To better understand how important animal adaptations are in terms of natural selection, the students will compare the likelihood of survival in populations when organisms have the ability to adapt to their environment. During our discussion of animal adaptations, the 7<sup>th</sup> graders will participate in another lab that allows them to put their beaks to the test. In this lab activity, each student will use various tools that represent different types of bird beaks to attempt to locate and consume diverse food items to experience the importance of adaptations in relation to survival. Our investigation of adaptations will lead us into an investigation of how animal behavior plays an important role in reproduction and survival.

The Plants versus Animals unit will conclude with an in depth look at the importance of photosynthesis and cellular respiration in a plant and animals ability to grow. At this point, the two variations of corn will provide the 7<sup>th</sup> graders with a firsthand look at the necessity of photosynthesis to a plant's survival. Finally, we will make a direct comparison of the cycling of matter in both photosynthesis and cellular respiration.



## 7th Grade Math

By: Mr. Baker

The school year has gone extremely fast, and it's hard to believe that we are in the final quarter of the school year. In April the students will have the opportunity to design a game that would have a theoretical probability of winning. Then we will get everyone into the gym and play each other's games. This will not only be fun for the students, but interesting to see if their experimental probability matches up with their theoretical probability.

I look forward to a fun finish to the school year, and I thank you for your continued efforts in helping your child along with homework completion and for holding them accountable. This seventh grade class has been a fun group to work with. We will finish out the year learning about volume and surface area of three dimensional objects. It will entail a little memorization of formulas, but should be a fun last unit. We will then review everything we have learned so far this year and touch on a few topics from different chapters we have not gotten to.



## 7th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Vermeer

Quarter four is here! We have lots of new things to cover in this last quarter together and the students are ready for some new challenges. We are wrapping up our dystopian novel, *The City of Ember*. This is a long and challenging unit for students however they are doing great. They are receptive to learning new things and trying to read new things. As we wrap up this unit we will complete a final test, watch the movie, and complete a breakout room.

With a new quarter comes new reading goals. Quarter four goal is 700 pages or 4-6 books. Quarter four is an exciting one for book projects as well. This quarter students will be challenged to take any book they have read in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and turn it into a children's book. We will be using a website called Story Jumper to complete this project as it has many options for editing and creating. This project will also be presented in front of their peers during class time.

In April we will begin working on our poetry unit. Another challenging unit as most students do not care for poetry. However, we look at building our understanding of poems and their techniques. We don't spend any time writing our own poem but rather finding poems that can relate to us. We will read a variety of poems including some from Edgar Allan Poe and Shakespeare. We will also spend a lot of time in this unit working in groups to build our understanding of poems and working at seeing another person's point of view. Our poetry unit will take us through the end of April and will conclude with a poetry tic-tac-toe project. In this project students will read various poems and answer and complete a variety of activities with the poems.

March Madness Reading Practicing will be starting soon to help us prepare for ISASP. In this short bellringer unit students will be exposed to a variety of text and then will answer questions about the text. The students will be competing against the other literature classes for the highest average class score. The goal is building our reading comprehension and give students the opportunity to encounter a variety of texts similar to what the ISASP testing will offer them.



### **“Paws for Reading” Book Fair was a Howling Success!**

Bow-WOW and me-WOW! Thank you so much for your support of our middle school book fair! Thank you for encouraging and celebrating reading! More “tails” will be arriving soon for our middle school students!



## 8th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Hoogeveen

In late February and early March, the 8th grade science students researched how a synthetic material was made. This involved what natural were needed to create the product and how those natural ingredients were extracted from their natural surroundings. Next, they investigated how the natural materials were processed into their new synthetic material. Thirdly, they were to find a natural alternative that came close to accomplishing the same desired result as their synthetic material. Several combinations were Kevlar vs ancient armor, fiberglass insulation vs wool insulation, margarine vs butter, lifesaver mints vs essential oils--to name just a few. Finally, they made a presentation to their classmates as to what they found.

Now we have shifted gears and are trying to figure out how driving a car, basketball, hockey, simple tricks, and so much more can be explained by Newton's Three Laws of Motion. We have just begun this process and are currently striving to understand how Newton's 1st law of inertia is why we need seatbelts and headrests in the car.

Coming up next, we will be exploring our adverse weather patterns in late April and early May.



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

By: Mrs. Oolman

### Primary Source Tools

The goal of this unit is for you to understand the troubles and injustices that coincided with the civil rights movement of the 1960s and to apply the themes of *The Help* OR *Hidden Figures* and the time period to your own life.

**Part 1:** Read ONE of five articles that shares background information about important people and events from the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Then, using the JIGSAW method, share what you learn and learn from your peers in mini-group presentations. Topics: Martin Luther King, Jr., Jim Crow, Medgar Evers, Langston Hughes, and Brown vs. Board of Education

**Part 2:** Choose a movie to view:

*The Help* by Kathryn Stockett

*Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly

(Historical Fiction Novel)

((Non-fiction biography)



**Part 3:** Choose a theme! Theme is not a moral or lesson; it is a generalization or truth about life or human nature that is better understood from the text/film.

#### **The Help:**

Racism

Social Expectations

Ambition Vs Fear

Family Expectations

#### **Hidden Figures:**

Racism

Social Expectations

Ambition Vs Fear

Math as an Equalizer

**Part 4:** Choose one of four themes to which YOU feel personally connected.

**Part 7:** Write a one-page personal narrative essay featuring your theme of choice!



ISASP Testing

April 11 ~ April 14



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

By: Mrs. Van Der Wilt

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade class is currently in the middle of a Holocaust novel that they were able to select to read. Mrs. DeZeeuw joined us for a day to share five different book talks, one for each book available to the students. During this time, students are completing a number of comprehension activities and working together with their group members to complete the readings and activities provided. It has been lots of fun observing them and listening to conversations that come from reading their books

At the completion of our Holocaust novels, we will be entering our Black History unit. At the beginning of the unit, students will select one of the following novels:

- *Turning 15 on the Road to Freedom* by Lynda Blackmon Lowery
- *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* by Christopher Paul Curtis
- *Fire From the Rock* by Sharon M. Draper
- *The Lions of Little Rock* by Kristin Levine
- *Elijah of Buxton* by Christopher Paul Curtis
- *Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson
- *Copper Sun* by Sharon M. Draper
- *Nightjohn* by Gary Paulsen

While students read their book, they will learn how to read historical fiction by learning how to fill in a backstory, analyze how characters respond to trouble, and how to read outside the text to build background knowledge by analyzing primary documents. Students will discuss the novel in their book club, identify important vocabulary and write a response to our essential question, "How does an agent of positive influence demonstrate courage amid adversity?" Students will choose one of the quotes below, or identify one of their own, and explain how the ideas of courage relate to a character in their book. Students will provide textual evidence from the book, along with examples from their own life.

*"He who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life."* ~ Robert Frost

*"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."* ~ Nelson Mandela

*"Courage is the ability to do the right thing, all the time, no matter how painful or uncomfortable it might be."* ~ Tony Dungy

Students will conclude the unit working together in their book clubs to promote their book as if they were a publishing company. Activities include creating a new edition of book cover or thumbnail for a video, book trailer, story board, and press release for the novel. If you have any questions concerning the novels or the unit, please let me know. I always have extra copies of the novels available if you would like to read the novel of their choice along with them.



April 28



Plant A Tree

# Our Corner of History

By: Ms. Van Wyk

In 8th grade American History, students have been learning about the nation's rocky first years as a young country. They examined the advice given by our first president, George Washington in his Farewell Address, and contrasted his suggestions with the direction our country has since taken. In connection with this topic, our class examined the origins of the first political parties and the challenges that come with opposing factions: including some very early challenges to our young Constitution!

Moving forward, we will be learning about the start of American history post-Revolutionary War. Presidents such as Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe have significantly shaped the role and power of the United States government. Whether it's expanding out west through the Louisiana Purchase, boldly demanding that Europe stay out of the Western Hemisphere, or making compromises to put a band-aid over the issue of slavery, at this point in history, America is changing and growing drastically. As we continue forward for this final quarter, we will look at the unresolved issue of slavery and how it ultimately reaches a boiling point in American politics.



## Leader in Me

In March and the beginning of April the Middle School moved into **Habit 4: Think Win-Win** centered on "Have an Everyone-Can-Win Attitude." The lessons in Habit 4 concentrated on recognizing that everyone has unique talents and abilities, and that we must be open-minded when working collaboratively with others. Students worked to hone life skills such as being nonjudgemental, considering the viewpoints of others, and being flexible in peer interactions. The Key Concepts discussed in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade during the lessons for Habit 4 included:

6th Grade Lessons	7th Grade Lessons	8th Grade Lessons
<b>Win-Win Thinking</b> ~ <i>"A Winning Attitude"</i>	<b>Mutual Benefit</b> ~ <i>"Gold Medal"</i>	<b>Mutual Benefit</b> ~ <i>"The Winning Hand"</i>
<b>Courage &amp; Consideration</b> ~ <i>"To Win or Not to Win"</i>	<b>Win-Win Attitude</b> ~ <i>"It Only Takes One"</i>	<b>Win-Win Attitude</b> ~ <i>"Owning Up"</i>
<b>Lose-Win Attitude</b> ~ <i>"Measuring Up"</i>	<b>Courage &amp; Consideration</b> ~ <i>"Do You Really Mean It?"</i>	<b>Courage &amp; Consideration</b> ~ <i>"Set Up to Win"</i>
<b>Relationship Bank Account</b> ~ <i>"The Nagging Truth"</i>	<b>Relationship Bank Account</b> ~ <i>"Banking 101"</i>	<b>Managing Conflict</b> ~ <i>"Winning at Home"</i>
<b>Mutual Benefit</b> ~ <i>"Just For You"</i>	<b>Win-Lose</b> ~ <i>"When Nobody Wins"</i>	<b>Relationship Bank Account</b> ~ <i>"Thanks a Lot!"</i>

Later in April, we will move into **Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood.** Habit 5 is based on the idea that we must "Listen to People Sincerely." The various lessons during Habit 5 focus on using attentive-listening skills while building good social and communication skills in attempts to appreciate and work effectively with others.



# April 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin-left: auto;">DC/NYC Trip</div>
2	3 Qrt. 4 3 Week Grade Check	4	5	6 My Choice	7 No School	8
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #d3d3d3; padding: 5px; width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;">Makerspace</div>				<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #ff00ff; padding: 5px; width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;">Spring Break</div>	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #add8e6; padding: 5px; width: 60%; margin: 0 auto;">DC/NYC Trip</div>						
9 Easter	10 Snow Make-up Day	11	12 8:30pm-1:30pm Book Bash Competition @ Sioux City	13 My Choice	14	15
<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #ff00ff; padding: 5px; width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;">Spring Break</div>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #d3d3d3; padding: 5px; width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;">ISASP Testing</div>				
16	17	18 5 <sup>th</sup> - 7 <sup>th</sup> Honor Choir @Sioux Center  4:15pm MS Track @Moc-fv	19	20 My Choice  End Exploratory Cycle 6	21 Start Exploratory Cycle 7  7:00pm MS Party Night	22 Earth Day
23	24 Qrt. 4 6 Week Gr. Check	25 4:15pm MS Track@Sheldon	26	27 My Choice  4:15pm MS Track@Sioux Center	28 Arbor Day	29 Jr-Sr Prom
30						



# May 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 4:15pm TR:MS @Central Lyon	3	4 4:00pm TR:MS @LeMars	5 Cinco De Mayo  1:15pm Early Dismissal  4:15pm TR:MS @Sheldon	6
7	8 MS BSB & SB Practice Starts	9 MS Choir & Orchestra Concert @ MS	10	11	12	13
14 Mother's Day	15	16	17	18 11:15am Dismissal	19 No School	20
					Tulip Festival	
21	22	23	24	25	26 End Of 4 <sup>th</sup> Qrt.	27
28 2:00pm Commencement	29 Memorial Day	30 9:30 MS:BSB&SB @Alton	31			
Summer Break						