

MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

MOC-Floyd Valley

May

2023

Special points of Interest:

- Thoughts on Finishing Well
- Leader in Me
- End of the Year Field Trips



Happy May Day!

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Thoughts on FINISHING WELL

What a fantastic school year we are having! The contributions and efforts of our students, staff, and parents have provided the opportunity for our students to grow academically and personally! This growth does not come without challenges and hard work, thus it deserves recognition and it deserves our best efforts to FINISH WELL.

In my experience, those that do a great job of finishing well are masterful at not forgetting what has gotten them to the point they are. They stay true to who they are and they don't forget what has allowed them to grow. To finish well does not require us to be someone bigger, better, or different than we are. Rather, those that experience a great ending don't forget to think of others, they remain steadfast in identifying the positives, and they give their best but don't try to be superheroes!

As a staff, we had a chance to talk through a few simple approaches to finishing well, and wanted to share a couple of key thoughts with all of you. We believe practicing empathy and consistency allows for caring and productive interactions to happen.

EMPATHY paves the way for us to continue to think of others and find value in others. We recognize that we are working in community with others to experience our best finish! Practicing empathy also provides a bit of a safeguard against thinking only of ourselves.

CONSISTENCY gives others a clear picture of what can they expect from us. This is a key component of quality relationships; casual and professional.

I encourage all of us (students, MS staff, and parents) to finish well. Keep thinking of others and giving them your best and most consistent efforts. Collectively, let's "finish well" a great school year! Parents, thank you for all you do!



May 5 ~ 1:15pm Early Dismissal
May 18 ~ 11:15am Early Dismissal
May 19 ~ No School
May 26 ~ 1:15pm Early Dismissal



Read All About It . . . 6th Grade Reading

By: Mrs. TeGrotenhuis

Our literature classes are currently reading the novel, *Freak the Mighty*, by Rodman Philbrick. One area of focus is character analysis as we observe how characters change throughout the course of a book. Students are also learning many new vocabulary words as they continue to work on developing meaning from context clues. I've been reading this book for several years with sixth graders, and it quickly becomes a favorite as we all enjoy the unique friendship that develops between two completely different characters. We will continue to do a mixture of reading aloud, small group reading, and individual reading while working on specific reading strategies.

Our last activity of the year will be the creation of a brochure "advertising" one of the books the students read this year. These will be used the following school year to entice the new sixth grade students to pick up a new book! I always look forward to seeing which book all of them choose.

Again, students are expected to read 30 minutes daily. Sometimes this becomes more difficult when the weather gets nicer outside! I appreciate those of you who encourage your child to read each day. I have so many students who enjoy a good book, and this certainly makes my job easier. Thanks for all you do to help!



6th Grade Science

By: Mr. Hoebelheinrich (Mr. H)

The 6th graders are wrapping up with reproduction and understanding why asexual reproduction results in offspring with identical genetic information and why sexual reproduction results in offspring with genetic variation.

In our final unit we look at the different systems of the body and how they interact with one another. We started a "Trauma" simulation which takes them through the life of an emergency room. What vitals do nurses take, what tests do they run and why? While going through this process we take time to learn about the different systems of the body.

It's a unique experience for the kids because they learn about the systems and how they interact with one another, but they also get an inside look at different medical procedures that happen in hospitals and how those procedures are linked to different systems of our body. The goal is to determine how the different systems work together to create a live full functioning organism.

Once we are done learning about the different systems and how they interact, we will complete the year with the dissection process of an earthworm, and a fetal pig. The goal of this process is to compare and contrast the different systems of earthworms and pigs, but to also see these organs, tissues, and organ systems found within two different organisms that we learned about in class.

Be on the lookout for an email from me about the upcoming unit. We will be using videos, nursing students and medical "dummies" to practice/learn about a few of these medical procedures that are done. If there is going to be any problem that I should know about your child dealing with these "experiences" please let me know!



The Push to the End--6th Grade English

Page 3

By: Mrs. Jacobsma

The end is quickly approaching, and yet there is so much left to do. The best academic thing you can do for your child right now is to encourage him/her to keep moving forward. As easy as it is to spend evenings outside, the school day will come again tomorrow. In English, we have many items left on our academic list. We begin May with persuasive speeches! The last week of the year will bring self assessments of each student's progress and how they fared on our district's essential learnings. As always, please contact me at the middle school if you have questions.



7th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Vande Kieft

In April the 7th graders continued their exploration of genetics and mutations in the Plants vs. Animals Unit. This unit really allowed the 7th graders to get their hands dirty by planting two variations of corn seeds to observe and compare their growth in relation to environmental factors and genetic characteristics. In order to gain a better understanding of how specialized structures help plants reproduce, the 7th graders investigated the structures of flowers during a lab dissection. By examining these organisms first hand, the students were able to see how environmental factors and other animals play a significant role in the reproduction of plants. To compare the similarities and differences of plants and animals, each Team compared the likelihood of survival in populations when organisms have the ability to adapt to their environment. During our discussion of animal adaptations, the 7th graders participated in a lab that allowed them to put their beaks to the test. In this lab activity, each student used various tools that represented diverse types of bird beaks to attempt to locate and consume different 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. Finally, the 7th graders will analyze the importance of photosynthesis and respiration in an organism's ability to survive and reproduce.

As a conclusion to 7th grade Science, the students will combine everything that they have learned in the Ecosystems Unit. Within this unit of study, each Team will examine populations in various ecosystems and how each organism interacts with others. The 7th graders will also discuss the importance of resource availability by looking at the migration and survival of various species. By referring back to the Plant vs. Animal Unit, the students will investigate how energy flows from the Sun to producers, to various consumers, and finally to decomposers in a food web. The final project for 7th grade and the finale of the Ecosystem Unit will consist of an Ecosystems Project that will allow each student to personalize and construct their own ecosystem to represent everything that they have learned this year in 7th grade Science. To celebrate all of their hard work and success, each Team will enjoy an Ecosystem Extravaganza where we will observe and admire everyone's projects.

I would like to thank you all for the opportunity to work with your children each and every day. It has been a memorable year in 7th grade Science!



7th Grade Math

By: Brady Baker

What a fun year of seventh grade math! We will finish our 7th grade math year learning about volume and surface area.

I want to say thank you for all of your support your son/daughter gave me. I am confident the growth your son/daughter has displayed will carry them forward into 8th grade math. Have a wonderful summer!

7th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Vermeer

It's hard to believe our school year is almost over. In April we finished up our March Madness competition and second period came away with the win. The students were slightly disappointed the challenge didn't involve more basketball, but they did enjoy watching the standings each day.

Our poetry unit has been a new learning opportunity for all. Our focus for this unit is on understanding the meaning of poems and finding a connection to our own lives. In poetry we research Shakespeare and Edgar Allan Poe. We also read many poems from modern writers to find a connection to our lives and world. Our final poetry project is a Tic Tac Toe board of various poems to read and complete an activity over. This gives students the opportunity to read many different poems and work to build a connection to their own lives.

Quarter four book project is an exciting one that requires more work in the creativity skills. For this project students will be taking a book they read and turning it into a children's book. The challenge with this project is sharing only the main plot elements of the story and using vocabulary that a child would understand. The students will have the option for this project to use a website I have or create by hand. Most of the time students choose the website as it is easy to use and allows for a lot of custom creations. Once they have completed this we read the books aloud to the rest of the class to see everyone's creativity.

To wrap up our 7th grade year we are going to be doing a reader's theater. Each student will be assigned a part based on how much reading they would like. The show is based off a TV show, and we will watch that as well. The goal for this is to build reading fluency by reading aloud. Second, we will work on comparing text to the digital screen version. Finally, we will work on the 4C's of communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking.

I am excited to continue to watch them learn and grow in so many ways. Keep up the amazing work!



Leader in Me

As we venture into the end of the school year, the Middle School has moved into **Habit 5: Seek First to Understand, Then to be Understood** based on the idea that we must "Listen to People Sincerely." The lessons in Habit 5 are a great opportunity for the Middle School students to practice using attentive-listening while building good social and communication skills in attempts to appreciate and work effectively with others. Students worked to hone life skills such as the use of body language in communication, how to be an empathetic listener, and the importance of providing appropriate and effective feedback in their interactions with others. The Key Concepts discussed in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade during the lessons for Habit 5 include:

6th Grade Lessons	7th Grade Lessons	8th Grade Lessons
Genuine Listening ~ <i>"The Real Deal"</i>	Genuine Listening ~ <i>"Listen Up"</i>	Genuine Listening ~ <i>"Get Over Yourself"</i>
Listening Skills ~ <i>"I Hear You"</i>	Listen with Your Eyes ~ <i>"Eye See You"</i>	Listen with Your Eyes ~ <i>"The Benefit of a Doubt"</i>
Listening with Ears, Eyes, and Heart ~ <i>"What It Takes"</i>	Listen with Your Heart ~ <i>"R U RLY There?"</i>	Listen with Your Heart ~ <i>"Do I Have to Shake Their Hand?"</i>
Listening Attentively ~ <i>"Just Listen"</i>	Appropriate Feedback ~ <i>"Tell it Like it Is"</i>	Appropriate Feedback ~ <i>"Speaking Up"</i>
Speaking with Confidence ~ <i>"I Have an Idea"</i>	Honesty ~ <i>"Take the Stairs"</i>	Conveying Ideas ~ <i>"Speak Their Language!"</i>

7th Grade English

By: Mrs. Van Regenmorter (Mrs. VR)

Since the last newsletter, students in seventh grade English have begun another project. Students are working with partners to create a book that tells about "The ABC's of 7th grade English." In the book, there is a page for each letter of the alphabet. Students needed to find something that we learned about this year that begins with that letter. On each page, they must display the letter, an explanation that tells what they learned and know about this, and a picture or illustration that represents the item and its explanation. They also will create a front cover, a title page, and a back cover for their books. As I write this newsletter, students are working on the pages. When the pages and covers are done, they will need to put their books together without using staples! Consequently, students will need to find creative ways to bind together the pages of their books. In the past, I've seen students use needles, thread, ribbons, rubber bands, twist ties, key chain rings, and many more items to make a binding. This project gives students a great review of twenty-six things we learned this year, and an opportunity to be creative. I can't wait for their books to be done so I can read all of them!

When the ABC books are completed, students will begin their final unit for the school year, which is the End-of-the-year Self-assessment. For this unit, students complete a final assignment that asks them to assess their schoolwork, tests, writing, and overall performance during seventh grade English. In addition, they will look at some work in their sixth grade portfolios. Students will analyze their growth from sixth grade to seventh grade by responding to essay questions. They will use both their sixth and seventh grade portfolios that contain writings, tests, and projects to help them self-assess and formulate answers to the self-assessment questions. It's always eye-opening for students to see how much they have grown and developed as students, writers, and individuals since sixth grade!

Thank you for reading the Middle School newsletter and for staying informed about what your son or daughter is doing and learning in school. Also, thank you for the privilege of teaching your child this year. At this time of the year, it is very fun and rewarding to see how my students have grown in their abilities and character.



Wieking's World . . . 7th Grade Global Studies

By: Mr. Wieking

The spring time always seems to fly by. Our students have done a wonderful job throughout the school year. So far we have read, researched, and discussed new places, people, and events. Our students have asked good questions, connected ideas, and thought critically about difficult topics. As April ends and May approaches our students explore the issues of migration, population growth, and financial literacy. These are big issues that connect the people of the world and embody the idea of a global citizen. There is little doubt that the world will continue to become more interdependent and our students will play a significant role in shaping the future.

Like always, if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach me at the middle school or by email at bwieking@mocfv.org.

End of the Year Field Trips

May 16 ~ 6th Grade to Big Sioux Recreational Center

May 25 ~ 7th Grade to Sioux Falls

May 24 ~ 8th Grade to Okoboji



8th Grade English

By: Mrs. Oolman

Our Anne Frank unit wrapped up with the writing of an analysis ~ compare / contrast essay. Using a tool called the “writing recipe,” we wrote this piece one paragraph at a time with feedback provided after each paragraph. The growth students made throughout the process was phenomenal. The purpose of the piece was to help students learn how to think critically about movies based on true stories.

Moving forward, we welcomed Guidance Counselors Mrs. Koenig and Mr. DeJong to share with us about HS plans, classes, expectations! Hopefully, your son or daughter included you in a conversation about their future plans! In a few short weeks, the kids will be moving on to the high school!

Next on our agenda in English class, we will focus on two historical fiction novels, *The Help* and *Hidden Figures*. STUDENTS will have a LOT of choice in English class. Please encourage them to choose what is best for THEM!

We will focus on two activities for this unit. One will be a review of how to correctly insert and credit a source using a direct quote to prove a theme is being shown.

Students will get to choose from the following themes:

- a. Social Expectations
- b. Family Expectations
- c. Ambition vs. Fear
- d. Racism
- e. Math as an Equalizer

Finally, students will be creating a short speech to share on an African American who has had an impact on society. There will be a short time to research and then share what is found. This is the culmination of learning how to and giving speeches periodically all year.

We will enjoy a mini-unit on poetry and then the year will wrap up with a few very short units.

A self-evaluation of student growth in writing over the course of three years in the Middle School.

1. Thank you note writing.
2. Formal letter writing introducing oneself to the HS Principal and their freshman teacher.
3. Middle School Memories

The end of the year tends to come RUSHING at us! I want to take this newsletter opportunity to thank you for a few things. One, thank you for sharing the precious gift of your son or daughter with me this year. The group has been a pleasure to work with and has been a joy to watch grow! They have been leaders in many, many ways. Two, thanks for taking a genuine interest in your son or daughter’s education and for partnering with me from home. Your support means a lot and goes a long way as well. And finally, thanks for all the support offered to me personally. This year has been filled with some crazy, unexpected personal curveballs that have affected me. I have appreciated your words of hope, comfort, and your many offers and gifts of assistance (food, rides, meals, gift cards for pizza, etc.) Best wishes for a safe and happy summer and a smooth transition to FRESHMAN year!



May 29



Remember -
our fallen heroes.
They are the reason
that we are free.

8th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Hoogeveen

To make Newton's 3 laws more relevant, we applied the laws to their reality of driving a car. Our labs were tied into learning the laws, testing the laws, and watching videos of how Newton's 3 laws apply to driving a vehicle. Newton's first law of inertia is why we have headrests, seatbelts, and airbags in the car. The second law relates the force of a car to its acceleration and mass. A car full of their friends has more force and takes more to slow down. Newton's 3rd law is known as the action - reaction law. We learned a bit of how cars are designed to help save the passengers with collisions. We looked at how speed can be a big factor when collisions occur. The last portion of this section investigated the if my speed triples, the distance required to stop increases 9x.

April was severe weather safety month, and we began our adventure of learning about how our atmosphere is a battle ground between warm and cold air. We learned about the complex ways water flows through our atmosphere and underground. The 8th graders created a poster to show many different steps to the water cycle and how our Sun is the engine that begins the process. When the air cools all sorts of crazy things happen as water returns to the surface and gravity takes hold to try to return some of it back to the ocean.

The next atmospheric battle was how our air masses form and the results of when warm and cold air collide. Throw in a little bit of how the ocean affects our atmosphere and things start getting evening crazier. Now set all this in motion as the Earth spins throwing air into different wind belts and ways the air spins in the northern hemisphere as opposed to how it spins in the southern hemisphere. So many different battles occurring at the same time in our atmosphere. Who knew?



Our Corner of History: 8th Grade American History

By: Ms. Van Wyk

The end of the school year is nearly here! This past April, students have spent their time exploring the presidencies of Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and Jackson. Most recently, we have investigated the question of "Andrew Jackson: hero or villain?" and evaluated his legacy and role in Jacksonian democracy, the bank of the United States, and the Trail of Tears. My goal is for students to see historical figures less as a name on the pages of their textbook and more as dynamic, yet complicated people. We will continue to take this concept and apply it toward other figures as we progress through the Civil War.

At the end of the year, 8th graders will be watching the film Glory to wrap up our last unit over the Civil War. Glory is a 1989 movie about the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, the first all-African-American volunteer company to fight in the Civil War. The movie offers an unforgettable history lesson about soldiers who transcended the racism and ignorance of their time to display dignity, courage, and valor when given the opportunity to prove their worth. In portraying the realistic obstacles that these soldiers faced, the film does contain some scenes of wartime violence, thematic material, and racially-charged language. To prepare students for viewing the movie, I will be spending some time in class to introduce the film and explain some of the more intense things they will see; along with my expectations for handling such scenes with maturity. I do believe Glory is a highly valuable teaching tool for learning about the Civil War and encourage its viewing. Feel free to contact me with any questions prior to viewing the film and thank you for supporting your student's education!



8th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Der Wilt

8th grade Literature students are currently reading their black history novels and engaging one another in meaningful conversations. Students provided input and chose individuals they would like to collaborate with and were placed into book clubs. Once the book clubs were formed, each group chose from one of the novels below to read.

- ◆ *Copper Sun* by Sharon M. Draper
- ◆ *Chains* by Laurie Halse Anderson
- ◆ *Elijah of Buxton* by Christopher Paul Curtis
- ◆ *Fire from the Rock* by Sharon M. Draper
- ◆ *Lions of Little Rock* by Kristine Levine
- ◆ *The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963* by Christopher Paul Curtis
- ◆ *Turning 15 On the Road to Freedom* by Lynda Blackmon Lowery

Through this unit we are focusing on how to read and think about historical fiction. Students are identifying and learning new vocabulary found in their book, while documenting important passages on their VIP log. These logs guide them in conversations about their book. Also, students are learning to orient themselves to a historical fiction text, aligning the events of the novel to historical events, and learning how the characters respond to trouble and adversity. We use the following questions to help guide their reading:

1. **What's the character's backstory?**
2. **What do moments of trouble reveal about the person?**
3. **What's new for the character?**
4. **The character could have . . . but they . . . This show that . . .**
5. **What is the historical conflict?**
6. **What role does the protagonist play in it?**
7. **What's happening that's new?**
8. **What's the backstory of the conflict?**

At the conclusion of the novel, each student will write a book response in the form of a reflection by answering our essential question, "How does a representative of positive influence display courage among 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

I am enjoying watching students show an enjoyment for their reading and engaging one another in their book clubs with rich conversation. I look forward to reading their responses and seeing their final projects.



May 26 ~ 1:15pm Early Dismissal

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
Benchmark/Diagnostic Testing						
14 Mother's Day	15	16	17	18 Bump Up Day 11:15am Dismissal	19 No School	20
					Tulip Festival	
21	22	23	24	25	26 End Of 4 th Qrt. End Exploratory Cycle 7	27
28 2:00pm Commencement	29 Memorial Day	30 Teacher In-Service 9:30 MS BSB&SB @Alton	31 Teacher In-Service	June 1 Half Day Teacher In-Service		
Summer Break						