

MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

MOC-Floyd Valley

November

2023

Special points of Interest:

- November Opportunities
- Leader in Me
- Thank You
- PBIS



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November Opportunities

We shared some of these thoughts as a staff at the middle school and with some tweaking, I believe they are good thoughts for staff, students, parents... ALL of us!

I love the challenge of being GREAT in the moments of GREATEST need!! The late basketball coaching icon, John Wooden, would refer to this as Competitive Greatness – “Being at your best when your best is needed and today your best is needed.”

John Wooden’s stance was not to ask anyone to be someone they are not. Instead, the intent was to take a positive - “be the best version of you” - confident approach to any degree of challenge. As the newness of a school year drifts away we are more familiar with our surroundings and know more people. At times we can start to lose joy due to comparisons. What do my grades look like compared to my friends? I am not as good as my teammate! My classmate or colleague got recognized for this... why not me? Rather than compare, it is important to remember that joy comes from knowing we are giving our best to keep chasing our best! We feed our own motivation by focusing on how we can be better at what we believe to be important.

As our students walk into the second quarter, I encourage them to do so boldly! The best versions of our students are pretty darn awesome! Each one of them is capable of growing each day! I encourage parents and guardians to celebrate the good things you see in your children. Encourage them to thrive through a tough assignment, a rough patch with a friend, being chosen as second chair vs first chair, etc. “Surviving” through tough things equates that we may not have learned something from that tough situation. “Thriving” through tough times carries with it a notion that we are better because of what we go through!

A couple things to consider...Prioritize what “fills your cup.” On the busiest of days/weeks, you may have to schedule these times. Maybe it is just 15 minutes to yourself. Maybe it is connecting with someone you know “fills your cup.” Maybe it is scheduling time to fill someone else’s cup. Maybe it is a phone call with a friend or relative. Maybe it is a workout, a jog, a walk, 30 minutes of a good book. In all of it...“fill your cup” with good things and thoughts AND take steps to do the same for others!



NOVEMBER 5



More and More Writing in 6th Grade English

By: Mrs. Jacobsma

We have finished the voice writing unit--the scary story narrative. I LOVE this piece of writing because it ignites hope in so many kids that writing could be a valuable skill for them! They learn through this unit that they CAN write and maybe even enjoy it. I am tickled by the conversations with kids who had no idea they could write something entertaining and valuable. This is the piece that opens their eyes! Following this writing, we will jump into another writing unit called Real World Writing. Kids will explore many different types of writing that they might encounter in the real world -- everything from emails and business letters to word games and blog posts. As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions at tjacobsma@mocfv.org.



Read All About It ... 6th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. TeGrotenhuis

With the end of the first quarter comes the time for sixth grade students to take inventory of all the books they have completed so far. Students will review these and choose one to share with their class. Students will explain the plot line of a favorite book, specifically focusing on the conflict of the story and how it relates to the main character. This is a great way for all students to get ideas for new books to read!

We are in the final stages of our *Among the Hidden* unit. We have finished the book and will focus on specific literary terms and devices that authors commonly use within literature.

In mid-November, we will begin a non-fiction unit centering around young heroes (one of my favorites!). In addition to learning about Malala, a 15 year-old girl who stood up to a deadly terrorist group in Pakistan and also won the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize, we will also learn about other young people who have faced adversity and positively affected those around them. During this time, students will work on close reading skills, finding the central idea (main idea), and using text evidence.

I would like to encourage the students to continue reading daily! Many students meet our class goal each week, and several students read well beyond our goal. I will be challenging the students to read from different genres second quarter to expose them to different authors and types of books. Please encourage your child in this area, too! Thanks for all you do to help!



6th Grade World History

By: Mr. Nonnemacher

What a great first quarter we had in Sixth Grade World History! Our Egyptian Unit was finished up with a fun cardboard project of building ancient sarcophagus coffin boxes. We have got some very creative minds and hands in 6th grade! The creativity did not stop there. Our next unit was a discussion over the "Fertile Crescent" of Ancient Mesopotamia. We talked about rivers and seas and plateaus. We also discussed what Mesopotamia city-states looked like and how they functioned. Our big project with this unit was to design a city-state of our own. The kids have put such a great effort into their group project, and it's going to be a lot of fun to see the presentations of their work. I'm very proud of their work!



6th Grade Math

By: Mr. Boersma

Parents of Sixth Grade Math Students,

The sixth grade students have recently completed our Geometry unit and are getting involved in our Ratios unit. I appreciate everyone's patience as I am currently teaching out of a new curriculum. The first unit took about twice as long as I would have liked. I am making an effort to speed up the process to try to get through more lessons each quarter. For an old teacher like me, learning new tricks takes a while.

There are a few items I wanted you to explain to you and hopefully answer any questions.

Study Island: This is an online platform that I utilize to expand our math knowledge. Each Study Island assignment comes with a lesson to teach the students and some game or practice sessions to allow the students opportunities to practice skills. Each session is 10 questions and students must get a 70% or higher to pass (earn a blue ribbon). This is the only homework they should be doing outside of class.

Cooldowns: These are a quick 1-3 questions "quiz" designed for me to check an individual skill. Cooldowns are worth 10% of their overall grade and can be retaken once if a perfect score is not achieved on the first attempt.

Quizzes: These are more major assessments, usually in the middle of the unit over a variety of topics. Quizzes make up 30% of the overall grade. Quizzes can also be retaken one time.

Tests/End of Unit Summative Assessments: The final and most major part of a student's grade. The summative assessment should measure the amount of material mastered from the entire unit. This makes up 60% of the overall math grade. Typically, after the test, students will inspect and correct their mistakes for ½ credit. Retakes available upon parent request.

If you have any questions about these or any other concerns, please feel free to contact me at jboersma@mocfv.org or by phone at 712-756-4128.



7th Grade English

By: Mrs. VR (Van Regenmorter)

The seventh graders have been busy in English class. During first quarter we did the following units: Listening Unit, Capitalization, Simple & Compound Sentences. After learning strategies to be good listeners, we started with simple and compound sentences. Students worked hard to make sure they know how to find subjects and verbs and how to check if a sentence is complete. They worked hard with much repetition, so they can use different kinds of sentences in writing. They have written some paragraphs in which they focused on correct sentence structure and using a variety of the kinds of sentences we learned about. Varying the kinds of sentences in writing creates fluency, which makes writing flow and enjoyable to read.

As we enter the second quarter, we will move on to a short unit about writing emails. Writing emails is a real-world form of writing and communication. Today's students often need to write emails. For example, in the past month, I have received nearly 50 emails from students. Unfortunately, many of them are not communicating correctly or effectively in their emails, so we are going to learn how to write an email that communicates effectively and reflects positively on them, the sender. We will look at positive and negative examples and practice writing correct and effective emails. This unit is a "sign of the times" that we are a society which relies heavily on technology for communication.

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.



7th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Vermeer

Seventh graders are having a great start to the year. I am beyond impressed with the number of pages read in this 1st Quarter. Many of the students surpassed the Quarter 1 goal. Congrats seventh graders on a fantastic quarter of reading! In the first quarter we also completed both signposts' units, three short story units, and wrote our first paper all about truth.

For Quarter 2 we will spend a majority of the time on our research unit. This unit is a challenging unit as this is one of the first times students learn about researching, finding reliable sources, and presenting information through different medians. Students have selected a topic to research. The next couple weeks we will spend time analyzing sources and recording notes. We will have a mini project halfway through the unit. Students will create an infographic with their partner showcasing information they have found and presenting it in an eye-catching way. At the end of the unit students will be working on their own organizing their notes and creating a slideshow to accompany their TEDTalk. Students will be recording their presentation and their slideshows sharing everything they have learned on their topic. The TEDTalk is a fun and nervous time for many students as this is one of the first times they have recorded themselves individually for school.

Our TEDTalk takes us typically to the last week of November. To wrap up our year we will be reading two different Christmas stories and comparing the two stories. Students will also spend time reading different short stories and poems all about winter in the form of a Tic Tac Toe board. These activities give the students an opportunity to read a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts and build on their reading skills and learn a little bit more about winter.

I am excited to see what this seventh grade crew will accomplish in Quarter 2 after seeing the amazing things they did in Quarter 1! Keep up the fantastic work seventh graders!



7th Grade Math

By: Mr. Baker

In math we are continuing to learn new math skills each day. I feel like the pace has ramped up quite a bit. Recently we just finished up unit two on proportional relationships. This new curriculum has been fun, but certainly is requiring students to think differently than they have in the past. Although students like how the curriculum is designed to not have homework, it does put a premium on listening and being an active participant to do well on quizzes and tests.

I want to also thank you for all the support, encouragement, and assistance you have provided your son or daughter during the first quarter of school. Overall, the students have done a great job so far this quarter, and I look forward to working with each of them the rest of the year. The material will continue to get more difficult, so encouraging your son or daughter through some upcoming frustrating moments will benefit them greatly. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank You!

Thanks for celebrating s'more fun at our recent book fair! We appreciate your support of reading!



November 23



Wieking's World 7th Grade Global Studies

By: Mr. Wieking

It is hard to believe that the first quarter has already passed! It seems like time is flying by, but I suppose that happens when you are having fun. During the past month we have learned about and discussed our culture and the influences of religion, economy, and government. I am looking forward to the coming weeks ahead when we will take on some real world global issues like human rights and globalization. These big ideas are often seen and heard on the evening news but not always shared at a grade level appropriate for our students.

I anticipate our students will have plenty of questions, insights, and new learning opportunities. The goal is to provide our students with new understanding into global issues and to promote an awareness of different ideas they could encounter as they become more involved citizens.

If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact me at bwieking@mocfv.org.



7th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Vande Kieft

Why do two objects fall and hit the ground at the same time? 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 seventh 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 November each class will be focusing our attention on gravitational force and how the strength of gravity is affected by mass and distance. We will also explore how the mass of various planets impacts both the gravitational force and the change in weight we would experience if we were to travel to each planet. During our work together, the seventh graders will investigate questions such as what causes two objects to land at the same time if they have different amounts of mass, what is the difference between mass and weight, and what is the importance of inertia in gravitational attraction.



Our Corner of History

By: Mrs. Phelan

In 8th grade American History, we have just finished studying the first groups of European settlers who came to North America. We have learned about where they settled and more importantly why they chose to migrate to America. Students discovered that settlers came for many different reasons: to spread their faith, to seek riches, to obtain glory, etc. In our Document Based Question assignment, students had the opportunity to read the direct words of the earliest settlers. Taking the role of detectives looking for evidence, the eighth graders studied the documents for clues about the relationship between Europeans and Native Americans. To present their findings, students got into groups and recorded video essays reporting what they had learned.

With two tests and a group project under our belt, students have also been practicing important work skills like time management, assignment prioritization, using study tools, and written expression of big ideas. Coming up in November, students will begin inquiry projects that will explore topics related to Veterans Day. These projects usually foster some great conversations about the sacrifices made by service members on behalf of our country and I encourage you to check in your students as we get closer to the holiday for an opportunity to hear what they have been researching!

8th Grade English

By: Mrs. Oolman

Our current unit is referred to as “registers.” This unit shows students that we often use correct words when speaking, but when tasked with writing those same words we can tend to make mistakes. So, we will be learning about word choice and homonyms and homophones by researching them, creating slideshows, and giving presentations on words like heir and air; to, too, and two; aisle and I’ll; accept and except. Rather than doing “worksheets” to learn the information, we will be working on some group projects and presentations! Two tests on the words we learn will wrap up the unit. One test will be a matching test ~ words and definitions. The second test will be an application of knowledge test. Can students identify mistakes in writing and correct them?

Prior to this unit on “troublesome words,” students engaged in a mini-unit on using a telephone. We learned how to place calls, how to answer calls, how to take messages, what needs to be written down when taking a message. The hardest part for students, I believe, was knowing what to say or how to speak when something new or unexpected happens. We are ALL so used to texting that we are becoming a little unfamiliar with “talking” on a phone! The kids learned a lot! Next time you order take out, ask your son or daughter to do it. It is great practice and a follow-up of real-life skills. Additionally, students completed a mini-unit on using quotation marks and underlining.

The upcoming unit is one of my FAVORITES! Students will learn what “color” they are, what sort of a “mindset” they have, how to utilize “grit,” what direction” they are, and what kind of “personality” they have. This Learning Styles unit assists students in knowing more about themselves as learners, valuing gifts in all people, and understanding how others perceive them. To end the unit, students will be “tasked” to choose their own assignment. In other words, they will be asked to share what they learned in a way that works for them! This will be my third year ending the unit in this manner, and I am super excited to see what students create to show what they know! This assignment may find kids in the middle of “productive struggle”! Ask your son or daughter about what they are learning! You will be amazed! Finally, ask them what the sign on their locker states.

Following this unit, we will review some basic “language skills” we need to know. This is information that “scaffolds” or holds up our writing and speaking in English. We will review the eight parts of speech (nouns, verbs, pronouns, adverbs, adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections). Once those are mastered, we will tackle the ten punctuation marks (period, colon, semi-colon, question mark, exclamation mark, parentheses, quotation marks, hyphen, comma, and apostrophe). After some practice time, tests will be given. Tests need to be passed with a C or above, or retakes will be given.

It’s been a ton of fun watching your son or daughter engage in reading, writing, speaking, and listening this first quarter!



Leader in Me

During the month of October, the focus of the Leader in Me lessons have been on Learning and Leadership where students have been encouraged to reflect on their own mindset, learning styles, and personal challenges. As a result, the concept of self-advocacy and its importance in being able to lead your own learning was discussed along with the benefits of student-led learning where we take the opportunity to teach each other.

Focus: Learning and Leadership

- Importance of a Growth Mindset
- Student Ownership of Learning
- Self-advocacy
- Student-led Learning ~ “I Learn...” turns into “We Learn” with Collaboration

8th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Hoogeveen

In middle school, we are using the Next Generation Science Standards as organized by Iowa Core as our curriculum. We will not be using a textbook but rather using multiple resources to guide us through our different topics. Much of what we will be using will be accessible through Google Classroom and the Internet.

“How have natural processes and human activities changed Earth’s climate?”

The eighth graders just finished up exploring our changing climate. We used NASA’s websites that have been tracking a variety climate-related topics. We noticed several trends that have been occurring since the Industrial Revolution of the 1950s. First, of all the greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide has experienced the most change. Second, globally, the northern hemisphere’s temperature has risen the most. Third, our glaciers are melting at a very fast past causing sea levels to rise, and that our natural “air conditioning” may be gone and very difficult to replace. We researched natural causes of CO2 emissions to see if they have significantly caused changes. Lastly, we explored options that each and every one of us can do to reduce our impact. After all, small steps make big changes.

“How do we track the changes of organisms over time?”

We are just delving into fossil formation, how fossils become exposed, what clues fossils give us about the past, and how fossils are similar and yet diverse. We will explore how fossils show that animals change due to a variety of reasons, such as devastating destruction of habitat, extinction of prey, plate tectonics, and more.

In November, the 8th grade science classes will be synthesizing information about how technologies have influenced the inheritance of desired traits in a variety of different organisms.

A vast majority of the students are completing their homework on time. A Big THANK YOU to all the students!! I feel homework is a vital part of classroom instruction and reinforcement. I am very appreciative of parents encouraging your son / daughter to be proactive in their learning.



8th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Jill Hoppe

Currently, in eight grade Literature, we are reading *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton. Throughout the book, we will analyze characters using five key-elements of character analysis - traits, motivation, conflict, point of view, and relationships. Students will create a body biography project where they will choose a character to analyze and create a life-sized image while providing details of the figure in twelve different categories. They will practice identifying textual evidence, paraphrasing, and citing.

Also, we are focusing on how characters reveal themes. After each chapter, students get excerpts of the chapter. In groups, they identify how these excerpts support the five “big ideas” in the book. Our five big ideas in the novel are divided communities, empathy, preserving childhood innocence, self-sacrifice and honor, and individual identity. These are challenging tasks for students, yet I am impressed how they have analyzed the literature and are continually improving. At the end of the book, they will use these organizers to write a thematic essay on the novel.

After finishing the book, we will watch the movie and write a final essay. I believe that watching the movie is a terrific way for students to compare the visual images of a film to those they created in their mind while reading the book.

Finally, I want to continue stressing the importance of independent reading. Practicing and learning to enjoy reading is essential to improved reading rate, accuracy, and comprehension. I want to encourage parents to engage their children in conversation about *The Outsiders* or an independent reading book.

November 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3 No School - Teacher Comp Day	4
5 Daylight Savings Time Ends	6	7 NWICDA 7-8 Treble/Bass Festival at Storm Lake 4:15pm BBB vs Spencer 7 th (A) 8 th (H)	8	9	10 Veterans Day 1:12pm Early Dismissal 4:15pm MS G Wrestling @ Sioux Center 7:00-10:00pm MS Party Night	11
12	13 Qrt. 2 3 Wk Grade Check 4:00pm BBB vs Sergeant Bluff-Luton 7 th (A) 8 th (H)	14 4:15pm BBB vs Sioux Center 7 th (A) 8 th (H)	15 End Exploratory Cycle 2	16 Start Exploratory Cycle 3 Opus Honor Choir Festival in Ames 4:15pm Girls Wrestling @ Central Lyon	17 1:12pm Early Dismissal Iowa JH Honor Orchestra in Ames	18
19	20 5:00pm Girls Wrestling @ West Lyon 4:15 BBB vs West Lyon 7 th (H) 8 th (A)	21 6 th Gr Skating Trip 7 th & 8 th gr. Bowling	22 No School	23 Thanksgiving No School	24 No School	25
26	27 4:15pm BBB vs Central Lyon 7 th (H) 8 th (A)	28 4:15pm BBB vs LeMars 7 th (H) 8 th (A)	29	30 4:15pm BBB vs Sioux Center 7 th (H) 8 th (A)		

December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 1:12pm Early Dismissal	2
3	4 Qrt. 2 6 Wk Gr. Chk 4:15pm BBB vs Sheldon 7 th (H) 8 th (A)	5	6	7 4:15pm BBB vs Rock Valley 7 th (A) 8 th (H)	8 1:12pm Early Dismissal	9
10	11	12 4:15pm Girls Wrestling @ Rock Valley 7:00pm MS Holiday Concert	13	14 4:00pm BBB vs Sergeant Bluff 7 th (H) 8 th (A)	15 1:12pm Early Dismissal	16
17	18	19 4:15pm JH Girls Wrestling @ Spirit Lake	20	21	22 End 2 nd Qrt. 1:12pm Early Dismissal	23
24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26 No School	27 No School	28 No School	29 No School	30
31						

Why we use PBIS:

- Establishes a predictable and positive learning environment
- Increases students' commitment to school
- Increases instructional time
- Reduces problem behavior and office referrals
- Discipline that is instructional and positively reinforced
- Consistent response to problem behaviors



**With PBIS,
teachers
will...**

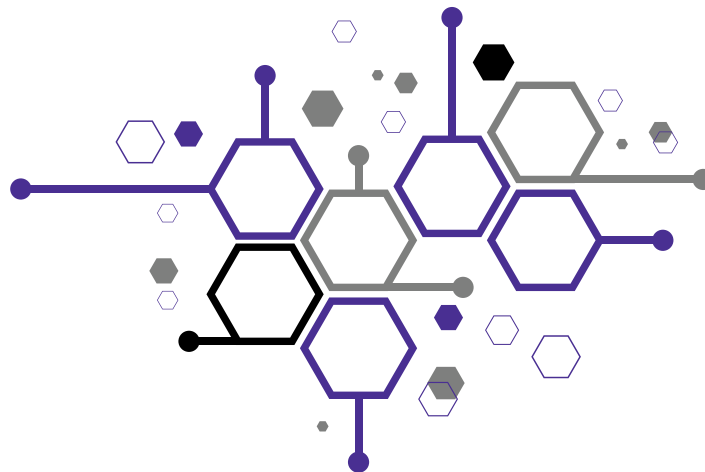
- teach expectations and look for them
- acknowledge positive behaviors and reinforce them
- address problem behaviors as needed
- celebrate our students



MOC-Floyd Valley Middle School PBIS



Creating a positive,
predictable, equitable, and
safe learning environment



What is PBIS?

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a tiered framework for supporting students' behavioral, academic, social, emotional, and mental health



EXPECTATIONS

- 1. Do Your Best**
- 2. Do What's Right**
- 3. Treat Others How You Want to Be Treated**

(Full matrix is on the back of student planners)

Student Misbehaviors

If a student does not follow our behavioral expectations, they will receive a minor.



Minors

- Minors are reminders of the school expectations - getting one is OK, as long as the behavior changes
- Teachers will communicate with the students that they are receiving a minor
- Minors are documented online
- If a student receives three minors for the same type of misbehavior in the same class, they will receive an office referral
- If a student receives five minors for different types of behaviors in the same class, they will receive an office referral

REWARD SYSTEM

Teachers hand out Dutch tickets when they notice students exhibiting our behavioral expectations. Students turn in the tickets to be in a drawing for a weekly prize, monthly prize, or participation in a monthly activity at our assembly.



We use a reward system in order to ...

- reinforce positive behaviors
- provide an opportunity to recognize students for good choices
- create a positive climate