

MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

MOC-Floyd Valley

March

2024

Special points of Interest:

- We Are Better Together
- PBIS Update
- Leader in Me



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We Are Better Together

The influential people in my life and my personal and professional experiences have taught me that we are all better when we are part of a team (a.k.a. “we are better together”). Those teams come in the form of families, husband/wife, colleagues, athletic teams, classrooms, and others. Jon Gordon is an author that I have enjoyed for many years. His books have always offered something inspiring and practical. I have felt I could take something learned and apply it to help others without too much manipulating of the content. His book *The Hard Hat* is a true story about a college lacrosse player. The book offers 21 ways to be a great teammate. Whatever team(s) you are part of, it is important to know you matter! And that/those team(s) is/are better because of you, and you are better because of it/them. In that spirit, here are a few of the 21 ways from Gordon’s book that I have found to be compelling and a driving motivation for me.

Sweat More! How you do anything is how you do everything. You are constantly in control of your efforts!

WD > WS (Well Done > Well Said)! Encouraging or challenging words are great to hear from a leader. Those words will hold more power and influence when respect has been earned through actions.

Don’t Complain! If you are complaining it is impossible to be grateful and steer people with positive energy!

Moral Authority is established through Respect! Show your teammates respect based on who they are not what they do.

Give All & Expect Nothing! Give all you have! Be an energy fountain, not an energy vampire!

Build Trust through Communication! You have to know people to be able to influence them!

Show you Care! Care about others. Care about their effort. Care about their influence. What is your caring trademark? What is it you do to let others know you care?

There are so many ways for all of us to be great teammates AND to continue to grow as valuable teammates. I encourage you to know and believe that you are a teammate that matters! You need your team(s) and they need you! We are better together!

MS Parent—Teacher Conferences

Monday, March 11 ~ 4:00 pm—8:00pm

Tuesday, March 12 ~ 4:00 pm—8:00pm

No School

Friday, March 15

(Teacher Comp. Day)



MARCH 17

Lots of Writing in Sixth Grade English

By: Mrs. Jacobsma

The sixth graders are spending the next few weeks crafting their Choose Your Own Adventure stories. This is the turning point for most all of my students. Though they still may not love writing or plan to be a professional author as an adult, the completion of these stories instills the confidence and skills necessary to manage their own writing. It is a fantastic and amazing change. Please ask to see these masterpieces; your children are producing incredible work!

We will close out March and kick off the final writing unit of the year (how can that be possible?). This unit takes us nearly a full two months! The persuasive research unit will be the most extensive research project the kids have undertaken as students yet! We will focus on contemporary social issues, finding information to help us understand the issues and what's being done to help solve the problems. We will present this information in both a written paper and oral presentation to the class. That will bring us crashing in to the end of the year where we will end with a self-evaluation of each student's progress.



Read All About It . . . 6th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. TeGrotenhuis

In literature class, the sixth graders have most recently studied the genre of legends – specifically, those that take place in the Middle Ages. Each student was randomly assigned a character from the Middle Ages, and students gathered information about what life might have been like for that person (peasant, noble, knight, etc.). Students then created a poem incorporating facts about their character. This gave the students a creative opportunity to develop their paraphrasing skills and organize the facts they found.

During the third quarter, students were instructed to read an award-winning book. At the beginning of March, students will begin working on their third quarter book projects. They will once again go through the research process while researching the author of an award-winning book as well as the award itself. Most of the work for this project will be completed during class time, and it will be important for students to make wise use of provided class time.

After completion of the book project, we will tackle figurative language. Students will learn different types of figurative language (personification, onomatopoeia, etc.), identify it within literature, and create short pieces of writing while using figurative language.

Please continue to encourage your son/daughter to reach our class reading goal of 80 pages weekly. Thank you for your continued support of this at home.



6th Grade World History

By: Mr. Nonnemacher

Thank you for taking the time to read through our happenings in the sixth grade social studies classroom! We are halfway through our Ancient India Unit in class. Ancient India is a fascinating unit for a lot of the kids, complete with discussions about karma, reincarnation, and one of our most interesting class activities to date, the Caste System Simulation. With this activity, the kids were split into 5 different “social levels” that are reflective of how Ancient Indians used to be separated. We had priests, warriors, merchants, servants, and untouchables. We will also talk about the significance and the difference in us only doing it for one class period compared to people in India living their entire lives in a certain caste. It is my hope that after this activity was completed, your child wanted you to hear all about what their experience was like! The school year continues to go so fast, and sixth grade continues to be a very enjoyable experience for both me and the kids! I cherish the opportunities to connect with over 100 kids daily, and I look forward to this next month!

7th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Vermeer

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Most of the third quarter has been spent reading our class novel, *The City of Ember*. This novel is dystopian which is considered complex text, so we have spent time learning different reading skills to help build our understanding of complex text. The students have a great job working to understand and build their reading skills. Some of the skills we have learned are how characters are made and are different archetypes. Characters can also be multiple archetypes as they are complex just like humans. Students learned about power in dystopian novels by what it is, who has it, and how people respond to power. Another skill students learned was connecting stories to their own lives whether on a personal level, local or global level our text is meant to connect to our lives.

To wrap up this unit we will be watching the movie and looking at how the use of cinematic features changes how we view the movie and how it changes the images we created when we read the book ourselves. The movie will take us about a week to watch and then we will conclude by writing about the cinematic features.

IASAP testing is coming so to help students prepare we are taking part in a March Madness activity. In this activity students will read different passages and answer questions like the questions that will be on IASAP. To keep things interesting each class will be competing against the other classes for the highest average score.

With only one quarter to go for the school year we wrap up the year with our poetry unit, writing a children's book, and completing a reader's theater.

I am very impressed with the work seventh graders have been doing this year. Keep up the great work and keep pushing yourselves!



7th Grade Math

By: Mr. Baker

We just finished up our fifth unit of the year. This curriculum continues to call for us to communicate "the why" behind the math. Being able to communicate the reason for your solution is being asked of each student every day. As we look ahead to unit six we will dive into equations, expressions, and inequalities. It is the longest chapter of the year, so we will not be taking our next test until late March or early April. This can be the time of year when students can wear out a bit, so any encouragement to keep persevering would be great!



Get Ready to Stomp, Chomp & Read at the Dino-mite Book Fair!

When: March 11 through March 14

Where: Middle School Library

The book fair will be open during the school day and during P-T Conferences. Included in the book fair will be . . .

Award winning titles

Popular teen and young adult fiction

Reference, science, and nature books

Value books

Cookbooks

Posters, erasers, and bookmarks

You can preview the fair online at <https://www.scholastic.com/bf/MOCFVMS> beginning on Friday, March 8.

We look forward to seeing you! Thanks in advance for supporting the book fair!



7th Grade Global Studies

By: Mr. Wieking

The seventh graders are finishing up their unit covering South Asia. It was interesting to learn about the role ancient civilizations have had on parts of our world. We also learned about the role that contemporary people, like Mahatma Gandhi and Iowa native Norman Borlaug have had on regions of the world. Our studies focused primarily on the country of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. We researched global issues like rapid urbanization, poverty, and environmental challenges. Our students did a good job thinking about complex issues that do not have a single simple solution. They asked good questions and thought about the issues from multiple perspectives.

Coming up next the seventh grade social studies students will focus their attention on the global issue of globalization. We will learn about how our world is becoming more and more interconnected. It is not too difficult to find real-world examples of our globally connected world. From diseases, trade, and conflict it seems nearly impossible to escape the impact other nations have on our own country. Our focus will be on finding the benefits and recognizing the consequences of a globalized world.

Looking forward to warmer weather!



7th Grade English

Mrs. VR (Van Regenmorter)

The seventh grade English students have been working in February and early March practicing three kinds of writing to prepare for what they will be expected to write during the ISASP state testing that will be March 18-21. We have written application letters, argumentative essays, and currently we are working on compare/contrast essays. Earlier in the year, we wrote personal narratives, so we also practiced narrative writing. I am very pleased with how well students have used time provided in class to complete prewrites, write the pieces of writing, and do revising and editing. They have been working hard! Knowing how to write these 4 kinds of writing will be beneficial during the upcoming ISASP.

I always like to end my newsletter articles in the same way by saying thank you for reading the middle school newsletter and staying informed. When you are informed, you can more easily communicate with your son or daughter about what's happening in school. And when you communicate with your children about what they are doing in school, it sends a message to them that what they do in school is important. Therefore, I truly do thank you for taking the time to read what's happening in the middle school. Until next month.....

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No School - Easter Break - March 28-31

7th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Vande Kieft

In March the seventh graders will be focusing their energy on the thrills and excitement of various slides, roller coasters, and other amusement park rides. The seventh graders will begin examining our new Big Question: "How does energy effect the thrill of an amusement park ride?" This question will lead us to investigating what really causes the speed, adrenaline rush, and exhilaration that we feel while on the tallest water slide or fastest roller coaster. During this unit, the seventh graders will be presented with a problem that they are responsible for solving. This problem will require small groups to plan, design, create, and test a roller coaster prototype for the most thrilling new coaster to (hypothetically) be presented at the Tulip Festival. Each group will use what we have learned about forms of energy, energy transfers, forces, motion, and types of interactions to design their own roller coaster. Each group's roller coaster design will undergo multiple tests and potential redesigns to construct a new roller coaster with the greatest amount of Kinetic Energy. It will be a wild ride with ups, downs, twists, and turns to understand the importance of energy and energy transfers!

At the end of March and start of spring, the seventh graders will begin the Plants vs. Animals unit where we will explore the various similarities and differences between these two organisms. We will even test out our green thumbs to see how well we can grow two different variations of corn plants in the window ledge. Hopefully, the sunny days of spring will be here by then to help us out!



Leader in Me

During the month of March, the focus of the Leader in Me lessons have shifted to **Learning to Lead Others** with *Habit 4 – Think Win-Win*. Students will focus on their own ability to build and inspire trust with their peers along with modeling positive behavior for others with their own actions. Within their investigations around character and integrity, students will be introduced to the Four Cores of Credibility which include: Integrity, Intent, Capabilities, and Results.

Focus: Learning to Lead Others

- Building Trust with Emotional Bank Accounts
- Importance of Character and Credibility



Leader in Me – MRA Survey

The focus of Leader in Me is to teach students 21st-century leadership and life skills while also creating a culture of student empowerment based on the idea that every child can be a leader. Our school will be conducting a survey to learn more about key areas of strength and areas of needed growth in our school. In order for us to have a holistic picture of what is going on in our school, we are asking staff members, students, and parents/guardians to participate in the MRA Survey, and we hope to get feedback from every household. The parent/guardian MRA survey takes about 12 minutes to complete and will ask questions about your child and about his or her experience in our school. Please consider completing the survey emailed to you by Mr. Yaw to help us to better serve our students and the community.



March 10



8th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Hoogeveen

We just finished investigating 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, a fiber optic strand, rainbow glasses, different shaped lenses, and much more. We then applied our knowledge to the Hubble Telescope, the new James Webb telescope, plus how our eyes work. We formulated a hypothesis as to which lens would solve either near-sightedness or far-sightedness. The students are doing a fantastic job of increasing their awareness of their attention to detail and asking great, thought-provoking questions!

In our most recent adventures, we will be creating synthetic gel worms from an algae product and a product made from limestone. We are comparing how our gel worms would compare to a natural fruit source. This is leading up to our research project where the students compare a synthetic product in their life to a natural alternative then evaluate which one is better and why. It will be interesting to see what the students discover about our synthetic world.

Along with our current unit, we are sharpening our skills by reviewing many different topics in preparation for our ISASP tests coming up in March. Students are showing great problem-solving strategies in figuring out the possible correct answers. Plus, their tenacity of giving their best has been amazing! Great job, 8th graders!!



8th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Hoppe

The eighth grade class is wrapping up their Holocaust unit. We will begin presentations next week. This unit challenged our students in the research process - identifying credible and accurate sources, note-taking, citing, preparing an oral presentation within a time limit, and creating engaging visuals. Not only did the unit equip our students with valuable skills, but it also challenged them to answer four difficult big idea questions.

1. *What are the dangers of remaining silent, apathetic, and indifferent when others are oppressed?*
2. *What are the roles and responsibilities of individuals, organizations, and nations when confronted with civil rights violations?*
3. *What is the role of government in protecting the natural rights of its citizens?*
4. *Why does democracy need to be appreciated, nurtured, and protected?*
5. *What are the origins and consequences of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping?*

While students present their Holocaust topics, they will be reading one of a variety of quality literary texts on the Holocaust. As they read their chosen novel, they will engage in conversations about the book. At the conclusion of their novel, they will answer the essential question, "How does the use of story affect your understanding of the Holocaust? Compare and contrast what you read in your novel to what you learned in your research about the Holocaust." Finally, I look forward to listening to the student presentations. It has been a blessing to watch each student grow as writers and speakers.



8th Grade English

By: Mrs. Oolman

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Students have been working hard to learn the story of *Anne Frank* by taking notes during the background information Google Slide Show. Next on our agenda was reading the play version of *Anne's Story*. Following the reading of the play, we will be viewing the movie version.

This version of the movie offers a look into Anne's life before and AFTER her hiding in the Secret Annex for over two years. The story does include some hard things to view, given that they depict some of the cruelty inflicted by the Nazi Regime and the end of Anne's life at Bergen Belson camp. The viewing of this is scheduled for Feb. 27-28.

Some of you may wonder why we look at three different forms of Anne Frank's story. Here are the Common Core State Standards we meet:

- * *Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (print or digital text, video, play, or multi-media) to present a topic or idea.*
- * *Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script (or, in this case, the TRUTH), evaluating the choices made by the director.*

These two standards are designed to help our students become critical thinkers when exposed to media.

Next, 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 analyzed 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 was 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.

To this end, students will be looking at another "movie based on a true story" of their choice to find out the "truth"!



Our Corner of History: 8th Grade American History

By: Mrs. Phelan

In eighth grade American History, students just wrapped up their unit on the Constitution and did a great job digging into the principles of our government, the rights we enjoy as U.S. citizens, and the roles all three branches of government play in our country. To put our Constitutional awareness to the test, we ended the unit by participating in a Supreme Court simulation, where students served in the role of petitioners, respondents, or even justices in a fictional case surrounding the First Amendment. We even got a brief Iowa history lesson by studying the precedent case of *Tinker v. Des Moines*!

Our plan is to take those civil discourse skills we practiced last unit with us as we move on to some of the challenges and problems facing the young United States: the emergence of the first political parties. Beginning first with George Washington's Farewell Address, we will examine the question of "If Washington warned us about political parties, then why did the U.S. create them?" Then, Students will begin analyzing the beliefs of the first political parties through issues such as "Should the United States have a stronger national or state government? Should the average citizen weigh in on national decision-making or should those decisions rest in the hands of the nation's best and brightest?" Students will ponder these themes and more as we continue to examine the early politics of American history.

March 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1:15pm Early Dismissal	
3	4	5 7-8:30pm 7-12 gr. Jazz Band Night	6	7	8 6 th gr. Bowling 1:15pm Early Dismissal End 3 rd Qrt.	9
10 Daylight Saving Time Begins	11 Start 4 th Qrt. 4-8pm P-T Conferences	12 4-8pm P-T Conferences	13	14	15 No School - Teacher Comp. Day	16
17 St. Patrick's Day	18 MS Track Begins 6:30pm 2024 8 th gr DC/NYC meeting @MS	19 Spring Begins 7-8:30pm Middle School Concert	20	21	22 1:15pm Early Dismissal	23
ISASP Testing				DC/NYC Trip		
24	25	26	27	28 No School -Spring Break	29 Good Friday No School-Spring Break	30
DC/NYC Trip						
31 Easter						

April 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 No School - Spring Break	2 8 th gr Hearing Tests	3	4	5 1:15pm Early Dismissal	6
7	8	9 4:15pm MS Soccer @ West Lyon 5:15pm-Boys	10	11 2:30pm-4:00pm Pizza Ranch Fundraiser Pick-up-Old Gym	12 1:15pm Early Dismissal 8 th gr. Career Day @ NCC	13
Makerspace						
14	15	16 5 th -7 th gr Honor Choir @ Sioux Center 4:30pm MS Track @ Northwestern College 4:15pm MS Soccer vs Sioux Center 5:15pm-Boys	17 Book bash @ Sioux City	18	19 1:15pm Early Dismissal	20
21	22 Earth Day	23 4:15pm MS Track @ Sheldon 4:15pm MS Soccer vs West Lyon 5:15pm-Boys	24	25 4:30pm MS Track @ MOC-FV	26 Arbor Day 1:15pm Early Dismissal 4:15pm MS Soccer vs Sheldon 5:30pm-Boys	27
28	29 4:00pm MS Track @ LeMars	30 4:30pm MS Track @ Central Lyon 4:15pm MS Soccer vs Sioux Center 5:15pm-Boys				