

MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

MOC-Floyd Valley

April

2024

Special points of Interest:

- Finishing Well
- Leader in Me
- PBIS
- Scholastic Book Fair Thank You



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Wildly Important Goal - Finishing Well

One of the WIGs (Wildly Important Goal) of MOC-FV School district is to have classrooms where the learning is collaborative and innovative. Learning episodes where students are engaging with one another in active and higher-order thinking to not only gain new knowledge but to also make connections to current knowledge by asking reflective questions. We also have a desire for students to keep learning how they best learn.

The last two months of the school year are a perfect time to practice the life skill of finishing well! Whether it is school, work, or fostering relationships it is important to finish well. From how we finish a work day to how we finish a conversation with a friend, finishing well is important and impactful!

Teachers over the years have learned about and possibly used an approach with students called KWL. What do I **K**now? What do I **W**ant to know? What have I **L**earned? This was to help inform the teacher and “set the stage” for learning that was about to take place and it was meant to have students own their learning and be active learners! Eric Sheneringer is an innovative thought leader in education and his book, *Disruptive Thinking*, would have us add to the KWL with a few other items that are designed to create what he calls “sticky learning”. Just as you would think, the goal is to get things to “stick” and create a competency to act with the knowledge that is gained.

I share the following from Sheneringer’s book to help students finish well this year AND to own their life-long learning. Students can ask themselves these questions to help create their own “sticky” learning.

K – What do I Know? Why is it important that I Know this?

W – What do I Want to know? Why do I Want to know this?

H - How do I find out?

L – What have I Learned? How will I use what I have Learned?

A – What Action will I take and why?

Q – What Questions do I have? How will I answer these or what assistance do I need?

I encourage you to “finish well” ALL that you do! I hope your Easter Holiday was a blessing!

The Dino-mite Book Fair Roared with Good Reads

Thank you so much for your support of the spring middle school book fair! We appreciate you encouraging and celebrating reading with your child! More “dino-mite” reads will be arriving soon for our middle school students!



Read All About It . . . 6th Grade Reading

By: Mrs. TeGrotenhuis

Students recently completed their slideshow presentations for the award-winning books they read during the third quarter. It is exciting to see all the great books students have read! We only have one quarter left of school, and I am thrilled by the reading growth I have seen this year. 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!

We are at the beginning of 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 much creativity in our students!

We will finish out the school year with a favorite book of many of my former students, *Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick. We will complete a combination of reading aloud, small group reading, and individual reading while we continue to develop specific reading skills. One strategy on which we will focus 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. I am looking forward to seeing how the kids respond to this book about the strength of friendship and becoming a modern-day knight!



Putting It All Together in 6 h Grade English

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 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 some more writing for parents to help revise and edit. Relish a little in the advancement of your student's writing. It is delightful.



6th 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, drawing and coloring a big poster, and drafting up a handout for their classmates. 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! I am always so encouraged by the creativity, the sharing of jobs, and the individual skill sets that show up during this project. Following each group's presentation, the big posters go up on the walls above our lockers, so everyone who travels our hallway is able to take a "tour" of our Ancient China units! Spring is coming and we are just trying to set the positive vibes over here in Room 114!

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 seventh graders kicked offspring and the Plants versus Animals unit by planting carrot and pea seeds to watch as they grow in the window ledge. The 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 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 seventh 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 seventh 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.



Weiking's World 7th Grade Global Studies

By: Mr. Wieking

What a year it has been! We are all hopeful that the warm spring weather will return! It doesn't seem like that long ago that we started our global adventure. We are currently wrapping up a brief unit on globalization. We have enjoyed identifying different examples that demonstrate how our world is becoming more and more interconnected. Soon we will begin working our way through Central America and the Caribbean Islands. We will begin to study issues facing our world like population growth, standard of living, and movement of people.

This is especially interesting given our current circumstances. As our world continues to be globally connected, it is important for our students to understand how events in one part of the world can directly affect us. I look forward to working with our students in an effort to help them understand the world around them.

The year seems much too short to travel and learn about our wonderful world! My encouragement to the students is to stay diligent and focused as the end of the year quickly approaches. Overall, the hope and goal is that our students leave global studies class with a greater and better understanding of our world

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

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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 unit by viewing cinematic features in the movie and writing a paper about them. We will also be testing our skills through a breakout room. In the breakout room we will focus on critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration.

The new quarter reading goal is 600 pages or four to six books. This quarter tends to go by fast, so we have decreased the pages. We will also be completing a book project for this quarter. For this book project we will turn a book read in seventh grade into a picture book. Students will have the opportunity to use a computer program or create with paper the book. After completion we will present the books in class to our classmates.

We start our poetry unit in April. This unit can be challenging for students as most don't care for poetry. Our goal for the unit is to build our understanding of poems and poetry techniques. We don't spend too much time writing our own poems but rather finding poems that relate to ourselves. We will also cover a variety of well-known poetry writers including Edgar Allan Poe and Shakespeare. Through the unit we spend a great deal of time working in groups and building on the skills of communication and collaboration.

March Madness Reading has ended as this was our tool in preparation for the ISASP and fifth period came away as our tournament champions. Great job to all seventh graders and their work in preparing for ISASP and the effort they put forth in completing the ISASP. Reminder for the end of the year is our genre log will be due the week of Tulip Festival. Students received this project at the beginning of the year and had the whole school year to complete. Reminders will be continually provided to students as this project's due dates gets closer.

Our last unit for seventh grade is an exciting one! We talk about fear and look at what that looks like in literature and TV shows. Very excited to see what this group of seventh graders can accomplish this year!



7th grade English

By: Mrs. Van Regenmorter

As I write this newsletter, I cannot believe it is the end of March and already two weeks into the fourth quarter. In the last newsletter, I wrote that the seventh grade English students were practicing three kinds of writing to prepare for what they would be expected to write during the ISASP state testing. I am very pleased with how well students used time provided in class to complete prewrites, write the pieces of writing, and do revising and editing. They worked hard. ISASP has been completed, and students were happy that they felt ready and prepared during the testing.

In the small amount of time between the ISASP tests and Easter/spring break, we have taken on the challenge of commas! Sometimes the hardest part of teaching commas is to help kids change their negative mindsets about them. I hope to show the seventh graders that commas do not need to be as intimidating and difficult as they think. It just takes looking for certain things in a sentence to decide if a comma is needed. If they can examine a sentence for these things, they will be able to find where commas are needed in over 80% of sentences.

Thank you once again for reading the middle school newsletter. Thank you for staying informed with what is happening in our school and in classes. We are heading into spring, and it can be difficult for students to stay focused on school. Please continue to communicate with your son or daughter about school, what's happening in their classes, homework assignments, etc. When you communicate with your child about school, it sends a message to them that what they do in school is important. Until next month.....



7th Grade Math

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By: Mr Baker

The school year has gone extremely fast, and it's hard to believe that we are in the final quarter. In April we will wrap up with the Unit on equations and inequalities. I look forward to a fun finish to the school year, and I thank you for your continued efforts in helping your child along the way. This seventh grade class has been a fun group to work with.



8th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Hoogeveen

In late February and early March, the eighth grade science students researched how a particular synthetic material was made. This involved what natural resources 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, students 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, perfume vs essential oils--to name just a few. Finally, our eighth graders made a presentation to a small group of their peers 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 first law of inertia is why we need seatbelts, air bags, and headrests in the car.

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

We would like to welcome Ms. Emma Anunson, a student teacher from Northwestern College, to our eighth grade classroom. She will be with us for the next five to six weeks. We look forward to catapulting her new career with engaging experiences from our eighth grade science classes.



Our Corner of History

By: Mrs. Phelan

In eighth grade American History, students have been learning about the nation's rocky first years as 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.



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8th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Jill Hoppe

The eighth grade class is wrapping up their Holocaust novel response by answering 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.” It has been great to see evidence of how their knowledge has grown while learning about this significant time in our history.

Our next unit will also challenge students to focus on how to read and think about historical fiction as we begin our black history unit. Students will be placed into book clubs and will read one of the following books:

- *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
- *Nightjohn* by Gary Paulsen

In this unit students will also identify new vocabulary words in their book while documenting key passages. They will use this information in conversations about their novel with their book club. They will 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 shows that . . .
5. What is the historical conflict?
6. What role does the protagonist play in the conflict?
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 the essential question, “How does an agent of positive influence demonstrate courage amid adversity?” Students will choose from a variety of quotes and explain how the ideas of courage relate to a character in their book. Students will provide textual evidence from the book with examples from their own life.

I look forward to students engaging with one another in their book clubs while learning to orient themselves to a historical fiction text.



PBIS Reboot Initiative



Last month, a team of nearly 50 students from MOC-FV Middle School and High School came together at Staples Promotional Products as a part of our middle school's "PBIS Reboot" Initiative! Each team collaborated to craft a script for a scenario that they will act out. These teams will continue to work together in the month of April to fine tune their script before being recorded at the end of the month for use in upcoming PBIS activities. This initiative is a great opportunity for our current and former students to work together collaboratively to promote a positive culture in the Middle School. Great job, everyone!



Leader in Me

During the month of April, 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. Next, students will examine the importance of considering the viewpoints of others while working to build and strengthen relationships. Finally, students will practice using courage and consideration to prevent or stop bullying.

Focus: Learning to Lead Others

- Building Relationship Trust
- Thinking with an Abundance Mindset
- Showing Consideration for Others
- Having the Courage to Stand up for Others



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 8 th gr. Career Day @ NCC 1:15pm Early Dismissal	13
Makerspace						
14	15 End Exploratory Cycle 5	16 Start Exploratory Cycle 6 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				

May 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Qrt. 4 6 Wk Gr. Chk	2 4:15pm MS Soccer vs Sheldon 5:30pm Boys	3 1:15pm Early Dismissal	4 MS Band Pella Tulip Time
5 MS Band Pella Tulip Time	6 4:15pm MS Soccer vs Sioux Center	7 7:00pm MS Spring Concert Choir & Orchestra	8	9	10 1:15pm Early Dismissal	11
12 Mother's Day	13 4:15pm MS Track @ West Sioux	14	15	16 11:15 Early Dismissal-Tulip Festival	17 No School	18
				Tulip Festival		
19	20	21	22	23	24 1:15pm Early Dismissal	25
26 Commencement	27 Memorial Day No School	28	29	30 End 4 th Qrt. 1:15 Early Dismissal	31 Professional Development	