

MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

MOC-Floyd Valley

November

2024

Special points of Interest:

- Greatest Success Strategy ~ Serve
- Veterans Day
- PBIS Update
- Leader In Me
- Scholastic Bookfair
- Parent Teacher Conferences



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Greatest Success Strategy ~ Serve

It is hard to believe we have hit the month of November in the school year! It is one of my favorite months of the year as we give special recognition to the concept of gratitude by celebrating Thanksgiving! I am grateful for our students and their families. I am specifically grateful for the opportunities that our school district provides! Thank you to our athletes, families, coaches, and instructors! We have many of our students involved in fall extra and co-curricular activities! Congratulations to our fall sports teams as they concluded their seasons the week of October 14 and to our music performers for their performance at our fall music concert on October 22. We are grateful for those who lead these programs AND we are grateful for our participants for sharing their gifts!

Last month I shared with you one of three “Greatest Success Strategies of All” from the book *The Carpenter*. The strategy I shared with you last month was Love! As a condition of the heart, love provides passion and courage for us to keep striving toward success.

The second of the three success strategies from this book is Serve. The power of serving, and the sacrifice that comes with serving, is that it seeks to elevate others! The privilege of helping others realize their best should not be taken for granted. Not only does this bring out the best in others, it typically brings out the best in ourselves. It is honorable to serve! I think of our veterans who have sacrificed so much (time, families, safety, their lives) to serve so many people! The leaders who have the most influence are not those who seek to accumulate power, but those who seek to have others experience their best.

As we move into November, may all of us embrace a sense of gratitude AND have our actions driven by gratitude! It is believed that it is impossible to be grateful and negative at the same time! Second, may our grateful hearts, attitudes, and actions lead to a desire to serve others and have them realize their best!

In gratitude,
Mr. Yaw



Veterans Day Program

The Middle School will host the Veterans’ Day program put on by the Floyd Post #200. The program will be Monday, November 11, 2024 at 10:25am in the Middle School New Gym. The public is welcome to attend.



Parent Teacher Conferences

November 4 ~ 4:00pm –8:00pm

November 5 ~ 4:00pm-8:00pm

No School ~ November 8 (Teacher Comp. Day)

6th Grade Math

By: Mr. Boersma

The sixth grade students have recently transitioned from Unit 1: Geometry to Unit 2: Ratios. For many of these students ratios seems to be an easier topic that comes a little more “naturally”. It’s one of my favorite topics to teach because of all the real life applications. From mixing up a batch of powdered Gatorade to making tuna casserole to mixing paint colors to match, students have been handling the new topic well.

Recently, I’ve had many positive interactions with parents discussing tests and quizzes. Many of these are centered around students who had a rough test or quiz. I typically (but not always due to timing in a quarter) offer retakes. Typically the student has to prove they’ve done some work (studying) to earn their retake. And while I appreciate this hard work, I’d suggest putting in the work BEFORE the test instead of after, while prepping for a retake. It would save a lot of time and effort. Students struggle on tests for a variety of reasons; test anxiety, not feeling well, not fully understanding the topics, even an argumentative game of football during activity may distract them from doing their best. I just ask for students to put in their best efforts and communicate with me if they aren’t satisfied with the results.

If you are looking for a way to help out your child at home, consider using this website: <https://im.kendallhunt.com>. The “For Students” section duplicates the workbooks they have in school. The “For Families” section has some helpful videos and sample problems.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to connect with me at jboersma@mocfv.org.



Read All About It ... 6th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. TeGrotenhuis

The first quarter went by so quickly! We spent some time taking inventory of all the books students have completed so far. Students are reviewing these and sharing one 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. I am hopeful we will all get ideas of another book to read as the second quarter begins!

We finished our book *Among the Hidden* and are in the final stages where we will focus on specific literary terms and devices that authors commonly use within literature. We have already taken a comprehension quiz and a vocabulary test over the book, and the kids did great!

We will begin one of my favorite units of study in mid-November centering around young heroes. We will learn 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, and 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.

Students will continue to have the assignment of reading 30 minutes 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!



The Scholastic Middle School Book Fair is Coming!

When: Monday, November 4 & November 5

Where: Middle School Library

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

Books available for purchase include . . .

- New teen releases and best-sellers
- Graphic Novels
- Science, Entertainment & Reference

6th Grade World History

By: Mr. Nonnemacher

As you read this we have completed our first quarter of the school year! What a fast and furious nine weeks it was! It's always fun to observe the sixth graders as they realize just how fast the school year goes when we have our daily class rotation and quick 40-minute class periods.

In World History, we are right in the middle of our Ancient Mesopotamia unit. This is a really unique unit, because it's not a place that is defined by borders. Mesopotamia was a region that is now made up of multiple Middle Eastern countries. We were able to compare Mesopotamia to Iowa a little bit! The word "Mesopotamia" literally translates to "Land Between Two Rivers," just like our beautiful state that we live in! We discovered more about the geography and the lifestyles of Ancient Mesopotamia, as well as different leadership styles from kings throughout the civilization. We learned about Mr. Hammurabi, who created one of the earliest sets of written laws. They were aggressive laws and consequences!

We will begin our unit project. The kids will be in small groups, and each group will be in charge of developing their very own city-state. This is one of everyone's favorite projects of the year, and I'm excited to see how it turns out for all my different groups. As we have learned in this unit, city-states are self-governed. It is always very interesting to see some of the laws and consequences that the kids come up with for their city-state!



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 return to a few more tools of the writing trade and then 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.



6th Grade Science

Mr. H (Hoebelheinrich)

I hope this newsletter finds you well! I want to share some of the exciting things we've been learning and doing in class. We have finally finished the Engineering Design Process. We learned about this process while creating catapults! We created our first catapult and tested to see how far it could shoot. We then looked at other catapults to determine what worked best and what didn't work so well, and created another catapult to shoot! Shout-out to Graham, Cambrea, and Hawksley for shooting the furthest!

We have started with our physical science unit. Physical science will take us up until Christmas break! Some of the main concepts we will discuss are: The history of the atomic model, what makes atoms up? How do 100 atoms off of the periodic table create everything we see in the world today? What are chemical changes? How do particles move based on the state of matter they are in? How does this change with pressure? Temperature?

Thank you for your continued support at home. We encourage you to discuss these topics with your children and see what they're most excited about. As always, feel free to reach out if you have any questions or concerns at phoebelheinrich@mocfv.org.

7th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Vermeer

Seventh graders are having a great start to the year. Quarter 1 ended on October 25th. At this time students have completed their first quarter book log. Most have been doing a great job of making their goal. Students are diligently working on completing their genre log which isn't due until May but getting a great start on this early. We wrapped up quarter 1 with a book project where students created a movie poster about a book they read in the first quarter. They created a cover and a short description to capture the audience's attention. At the end of the first quarter, we have completed unit 1 of vocabulary which covers six prefixes, two short story units with essential questions, one book project, and morphological practices.

For quarter 2 we will spend most 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 mediums. Students have selected a topic to research. The first couple of weeks we learn about sources and how to take good notes. Halfway through the unit we complete a mini project creating an infographic to synthesize the information we have learned so far about their chosen topic. The final project for the unit is recording a TEDTalk presenting their facts and information that supports their belief. Their TEDTalk will include notes and an eye-catching presentation. The TEDTalk does create some nervousness for students, however this is done individually, and I will be the only one to see their recordings.

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 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 practice the different reading skills we learned about in quarter 1.

Such an exciting year so far, looking forward to much more! Keep up the amazing work seventh graders!



7th grade English

By: Mrs. VR (Van Regenmorter)

During the first quarter in English class, seventh graders have done the following units: The Listening Unit, Simple & Compound Sentences, and Writing Emails. After learning strategies that we can use to be good listeners, we started with simple and compound sentences. The sentence is the basis for all writing, so it is a logical place to begin. Everything we do in seventh grade English connects to improving our writing. Students worked to make sure they could find subjects and verbs and how to check if a sentence is complete. They worked hard with much repetition, so they can use simple and compound sentences correctly in writing. In the future we will learn about the complex sentence. The goal is that students be able to use a variety of sentences correctly in their writing. Varying the kinds of sentences in writing creates fluency, which makes writing flow and enjoyable to read.

We ended the first quarter with 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 45 emails from students. Unfortunately, many of them are not communicating correctly or effectively in their emails, so we learned how to write an email that communicates effectively and reflects positively on them, the sender. We looked at positive and negative examples and practiced 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.

I can't believe that we are already heading into the second quarter of the school year. The first quarter flew by! Thank you for taking the time to read the middle school newsletter. By reading our newsletter, you stay informed, and it gives you opportunities to talk with your son or daughter about school and what they are learning.

7th Grade Math

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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 your 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, 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.



7th Grade Global Studies

By: Mr. Wieking

The start of the school year always seems to go quickly. We set a good foundation during the first quarter about topics and ideas we will cover in greater detail throughout the school year. During the past month, we have learned about and discussed our culture and the influences of religion, economy, and government on individuals and groups.

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 are 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. Our goal is to provide our students with a new understanding of global issues and to promote an awareness of different ideas they could encounter as they become more involved citizens.

This fall we are also fortunate to have a student teacher, Mr. Elijah Weaver, joining us until December. Mr. Weaver has already done a great job of connecting with students and adding to our positive culture at the middle school.

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



7th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Vande Kieft

In November the seventh graders will continue their exploration into space, but their focus will shift to what lies beyond the Earth, Sun, and Moon within our own Solar System. To gain a better understanding of the complexities of our Solar System, each class period will take a virtual tour of the planets, dwarf planets, and moons within our Solar System. The seventh graders will also read various scientific articles to better understand what lies beyond Earth, our Solar System, the Milky Way Galaxy, and farther out into the Universe. To analyze how small the Earth truly is in comparison to the Sun and the rest of space, each class period will create their own Solar System Scale Model using an online simulation. During this simulation, the seventh graders will reduce the proportions of the planets to scale making the Earth the size of a bouncy ball and positioning the Sun in Windmill Park in Orange City with the rest of the Solar System spanning out in their orbits across the community to make connections to the sheer size of our Solar System.

Finally, the seventh graders will end their journey in the Earth and Space Unit with a virtual trip to the Grand Canyon to explore the various rock formations and fossils to understand how scientists determine the age of the Earth.



Our Corner of History

By: Mrs. Phelan

In eighth 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. Our current unit will now examine the origins of the 13 colonies and the formation of a uniquely “American” identity.

In our Document Based Question project, 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. Their goal was to make claims supported by evidence and examples from this variety of primary sources. 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. I encourage you to check in with your students as we get closer to the holiday for an opportunity to hear about what they have been researching!



8th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Hoppe

Currently, in eighth 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 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.



8th Grade Math

By: Mr. Mouw

In quarter 1 we have learned about exponents, power rules, and scientific notation. We are currently working on the Pythagorean Theorem (and I am sure all of you parents remember how to do that, right!). We take our Cool Down quiz every Friday, so if you are ever wondering how to help your child in math, you can always spend a few minutes with them preparing for their Cool Down quiz. If you ever have any questions, don't hesitate to contact me.

By: Mrs. Oolman

This fall has been fun watching the students grow as both speakers and listeners. We have spent time learning how to prepare for a speech (specifically what our note cards should look like and exactly how long a person should rehearse or practice before feeling truly prepared to present! The scores have been very good on the presentations! And, individual goals have been set for growth in the area of “public speaking”. Questions to ask your son or daughter include the following:

1. Who did you introduce to your classmates, and what goal did you set for yourself for your next speech?
2. What was your second presentation about (words that sound the same but have different meanings)? What words did you choose? How did the speech go?

In the midst of learning speaking skills, we also reviewed some basic “language skills” we need to know. This is information that “scaffolds” or holds up our writing and speaking in English. We began by reviewing the use of quotation marks and underlining in our writing. Our next topics will include 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. Students are learning that it’s best to “just do it right the first time.”

Our next unit deals with “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. Words like their, they’re, and there. 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! A test on the words we learn will wrap up the unit.

As we finish up the “registers unit”, we will start a unit on Colors / Mindset / Grit / Personality / Learning Styles. Students will be “tasked” to choose their own assignment for the end of the unit. 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! I would encourage you to ask your own student what “color” they are and what that means. Or, ask them HOW they are smart. Or, ask them what it means to “push pause” or have “no regrets” or what their “circle of control” is. Or, ask them what “grit” is. Or “productive struggle”. You will be absolutely amazed at the mature answers you hear!



PBIS Update

Hopefully, you have heard about some of the fun that PBIS brings to the Middle School to help celebrate a safe, positive, and welcoming learning environment for all students. When students are recognized for meeting the three expectations of the Middle School: Doing Your Best, Doing What’s Right, and Treating Others How You Want to be Treated, they receive a Dutch ticket. Students then have the opportunity to turn their ticket into the Weekly, Monthly, or Activity drawing boxes outside of the Office where they have the chance to be drawn for various prizes. Each ticket is also counted toward a STAR and grade level total to be used for monthly ticket challenges. At the end of each month, the Middle School celebrates the positive impact that students have made throughout the month by having a PBIS Assembly where everyone gathers in the gym. Individual students who have turned their Dutch tickets in are drawn and recognized for their choices, efforts, and contributions to the positive culture of the Middle School. Each monthly PBIS Assembly ends with an activity where students are able to enjoy a friendly individual and/or grade level competition. The month of November’s assembly is infamous for our annual “Turkey Bowling.”

8th Grade Science

By Mrs. Hughes

We are having a lot of fun in eighth grade science! We wrapped up our Engineering and Design unit. Students were put into small groups to create a rubber band-powered car that travels as far as possible. I didn't give many directions, only limitations on the materials they could use, and the creativity was endless! The kids blew me away with the cars they came up with. We made design plans, ran our first trial, collected data, changed our variable, ran our second trial, and collected the final data to see who our class winners and overall winners were. Even if "engineering" wasn't a student's strong suit, each of them worked so hard to think outside the box and support their group members. I was so proud of them!

Last week, we started our Biodiversity unit, where we are studying the variety of life on Earth! We kicked off the unit by watching the "Our Planet" documentary on Netflix. This week, I will be sending a letter home with your student asking for permission for them to bring their phones/electronic devices to school to use in my class for one day. The goal is for us to explore the variety of plant and animal species in Alton! More information is detailed in the letter, but I would like students to download the Seek App. on their devices. The app uses photo identification to give us information about the different species we see in the area. It will be a great opportunity for students to explore and use their technology for good. Please reach out with any questions you may have at lhughes@mocfv.org.



Leader in Me

In October and November, the Middle School students moved into **Habit 2: Begin With the End in Mind** focused on "Defining Your Own Mission and Goals in Life." Habit 2 began at a pivotal time of the year as we finished the 1st Quarter and started the 2nd Quarter. Throughout Habit 2, students were encouraged to recognize their strengths and talents, think ahead to their futures, set goals, and commit to meeting those goals using their own talents. **Habit 2: Begin With the End in Mind** focused on key concepts such as:

- Mental Creation Precedes Physical Creation
- Principle-Centered Living
- Creating a Personal Mission Statement
- Goal Setting
- Goal Tracking



Turn Your Clocks Back



November 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 1:15pm Early Dismissal 7:00-9:30pm MS Party Night @ MS(Postponed)	2
3 Daylight Saving Time Ends	4 4:00-8:00pm Parent /Teacher Conferences <div style="background-color: black; color: yellow; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Scholastic Book Fair</div>	5 4:00-8:00pm Parent /Teacher Conferences	6	7	8 No School-Teacher Comp Day	9 NWIBA MS Honor Band Concert
10	11 Veterans Day 10:25am Veterans Day Program	12	13	14 4:15pm Girls Wrestling @ Sioux Center	15 1:15pm Early Dismissal Qrt.2 3 Wk Gr. Chk. Exploratory Cycle 2 Ends	16
17	18 Exploratory Cycle 3 Begins 4:15pm B BB vs Sergeant Bluff-Luton 7 th (H) 8 th (A) 4:15pm MS G Wrestling @ West Lyon	19 4:15pm B BB vs Sioux Center 7 th (A) 8 th (H)	20	21 4:15pm Girls Wrestling @ MOC-FV	22 1:15pm Early Dismissal Iowa Jr. Honor Orchestra	23
24	25 4:15pm B BB vs West Lyon 7 th (H) 8 th (A)	26 6 th Gr. Roller Skating 8 th gr. Bowling	27 1:15pm Early Dismissal 7 th gr. Bowling	28 Thanksgiving	29 No School	30

December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2 No School 4:15pm BBB vs Central Lyon 7 th (H) 8 th (A))	3 4:15pm BBB vs LeMars 7 th (H) 8 th (A)	4	5 4:15pm BBB vs Sioux Center 7 th (H) 8 th (A)	6 1:15pm Early Dismissal 4:15pm MS G Wrestling @ Okoboji	7
Makerspace						
8	9 4:15pm BBB vs Sheldon 7 th (H) 8 th (A) 5:00pm MS G Wrestling @ SBL	10	11	12 4:15pm BBB vs Rock Valley 7 th (A) 8 th (H) MS Holiday Concert @ MS	13 1:15pm Early Dismissal	14
15	16 4:15pm BBB vs LeMars 7 th (A) 8 th (H)	17 4:15pm BBB vs Rock Valley 7 th (A) 8 th (H) 4:15pm MS G Wrestling @ Rock Valley	18	19 4:15pm BBB vs Sergeant Bluff-Luton 7 th (H) 4:00pm 8 th (A)	20 1:15pm Early Dismissal	21
22	23 No School	24 No School	25 Christmas No School	26 No School	27 No School	28
Winter Break						
29	30 No School	31 No School				
Winter Break						