

# MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

MOC-Floyd Valley

December

2024

**Special points of Interest:**

- Success Strategy ~ Care
- PBIS
- Leader in Me
- Book Fair Thankyou

## Success Strategy ~ Care

As we put an end to November, it is important to note how grateful we are for all our students and their families! You provide us an opportunity to celebrate our profession and “fill our cup” with the joy of seeing others succeed! THANK YOU... and Happy Belated Thanksgiving!

I have been sharing some success strategies from the Jon Gordon book, *The Carpenter*. The last two months I shared thoughts on the success strategies of Love and Serve! Love, in Gordon’s words, is the greatest success strategy of all. To choose to love all that comes our way and all that we get to do is to simply to choose to find the positive in circumstances and in relationships!

To serve others is to bring out the best in them and in ourselves. This creates a “team” of success and a belief in the WE > ME! It is powerful and high-achieving to have a group of people desiring to serve others ahead of themselves. It makes sense that serving is a success strategy!

The success strategy this month is to Care! I have been challenged, and I like to pass along the challenge, to care... and then care a little bit more. For example, care enough to show up to work every day... and care a little bit more to make a difference at your work!

- Care about the work you do... would you sign your name to it?
- Surround yourself with people who care. A YOU Matter climate leads to success
- Show your team you care about them. Give your best away not just the rest of what you have to give away; in both your time and talents!
- Build a team that cares about one another! When a team fully cares about one another, it is much harder to give up or walk away in tough times!

This is a photo of some of our eighth grade students caring enough to give of their study hall time to help sixth grade students in P.E.. This is great for our sixth graders and our eighth graders!



Love, Serve, and Care our way to success!

Thank you,  
Mr. Yaw

December 25, 2024

| Inside this issue: |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| 6th Grade          | 2-3 |
| 7th Grade          | 3-4 |
| 8th Grade          | 5-6 |
|                    |     |
|                    |     |
|                    |     |
|                    |     |



**WINTER BREAK**  
**DEC. 23 2024 ~ JANUARY 1 2025 ~ NO SCHOOL**  
**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY**  
**JANUARY 2, 2025 ~ NO SCHOOL**  
**SCHOOL RESUMES**  
**JANUARY 3, 2025**

HAVE A  
**Merry Christmas**  
 & HAPPY NEW YEAR  
 January 1, 2025

## Growing and Changing in 6th Grade English

By: Mrs. Jacobsma

We are looking at multiple ways writing plays a part in the everyday world of adults. Then the students will explore some of those styles and purposes in their own writing. This unit takes my authors on a self-directed journey through writing in styles and manners they may have never considered before.

Following the real world writing unit, we will return to grammar and ramp up our writing skills. We will examine the basic structure of good sentences and then reconstruct our writing style with more complex and compound writing! Our next major writing assignment will be a hero poem where we look at what it means to be an everyday sort of hero. We'll choose someone who has made a significant impact on us and interview them. Then we'll create a tribute poem to honor them!



## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading . . . Read All About It!

By: Mrs. TeGrotenhuis

One of my goals for independent reading this quarter is to encourage students to step outside their reading comfort zones by exploring new genres. By January 16, each student is expected to read at least three different genres. It's already been exciting to see students discovering new types of books they're excited to continue reading! Please keep encouraging your child to read daily and fill out their reading log. Thank you for all your support in helping our students succeed.

In December, our sixth-grade literature classes will focus on a non-fiction unit about young heroes. We've been learning about Malala Yousafzai, one of the youngest Nobel Peace Prize winners. Malala, a young girl from Pakistan, was shot by a terrorist group for standing up for her belief in the right to an education. Students have been introduced to key vocabulary such as "oppressive," "terrorist," and "refugees." We've also been working on non-fiction reading and writing skills, such as identifying the main idea and supporting it with text evidence. Learning about Malala's story has helped students reflect on how fortunate they are to have access to education as well as the opportunity to be in a wonderful school system.

Additionally, students will read articles and watch videos about other young heroes in the United States who have made a difference in their communities. These inspiring stories show that anyone can positively impact the world around them. Toward the end of the unit, students will write a response based on what they've learned about these young heroes which is always one of my favorite assignments to read!

As we approach Christmas, we will read a dramatic version of *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. The students enjoy reading this classic aloud in class, where we'll discuss the literary elements of mood, theme, and character development, particularly focusing on Ebenezer Scrooge. While most students are familiar with the storyline, we will also explore the historical context in which the story was written to better understand the author's intent. We typically end this reading discussing how the students want to be remembered. Will you be known as a "grinch" or someone who cared about others?



## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade World History

By: Mr. Nonnemacher

Page 3

Happy Holiday season to all of the sixth grade families!! In social studies, we just recently wrapped up one of our favorite projects of the year, I'm sure that it was talked about at home! Each year I do the city-state project, I hesitate to put it in the hands of sixth graders with less than 50 days of sixth grade experience. However, each year I am completely blown away by their teamwork, their creativity, and their presentation skills. I continue to modify this project based on the things they come up with, and it gives me so much positive affirmation that we can learn wonderful things from the kids we raise and the students we teach. Thank you for supporting your kids in their creativity! We are moving on to our Ancient India unit. In the next few weeks before Christmas break, we will be talking about the mighty Himalayas, the culture and customs of India, and two of the world's most popular religions in Buddhism and Hinduism. There will be lots to discuss and unpack as we dive into yet another culture from a different part of our world.



## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Science

By: Mrs. Vande Kieft

Why do I have blue eyes? Why do you have brown hair? Can you roll your tongue? The seventh graders will be investigating the answers to these questions in February along with our Big Question: "Why do offspring with the same parents look different?" during science class as part of the Genetics and Heredity Unit. Each Team will be exploring various traits that they have inherited from their parents and comparing those traits with their teammates. During this unit, we will be conducting investigations to isolate DNA from various fruits, determining the importance of DNA in expressing who we are, and predicting the probability of various genotypes and phenotypes for potential offspring. Within the unit on genetics, we will also be looking at the occurrence of mutations and its effects on different organisms. Students will gain a better understanding of the common mutations that they may have or find around them in nature while determining if those mutations pose a potential harmful, beneficial, or neutral effect. Finally, we will explore the new area of science, epigenetics, to see how much the environment plays a factor in the genetics and growth of various organisms.



## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade English

By: Mrs. VR (Van Regenmorter)

Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, seventh grade students are writing personal narratives in English class. A personal narrative is a true story about an experience that happened to the person who is writing it. We will learn the elements of a good narrative and look at examples of a personal narrative. We will work through the five steps of the writing process and focus on four traits of good writing, which are voice, content, organization, and conventions. My plan is to have students complete their rough drafts before Christmas break, and when we return from break, they will revise, edit, and produce the final draft. By the end of the unit, students will have a final personal narrative that I hope they are proud of writing and that I'll look forward to reading!

Once again, I 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.

**Thanks for Coming to the "Wild about Reading" Book Fair!**

Thank you so much for your support of the fall middle school book fair!  
We appreciate you encouraging and celebrating reading with your child!

## 7th Grade Global Studies

By: Mr. Wieking

The first quarter seems to have passed by so quickly and with the holidays around the corner, this next month is sure to fly by! I am very thankful to be able to work with the seventh grade students. They are a pleasure to have in class. They ask good questions and are actively involved in their learning. Mr. Weaver has also appreciated their sustained efforts and engagement as he works with them as their student teacher.

Our social studies class has wrapped up our unit on human rights and the people and organizations who actively work to help people. Our favorite story from our unit was about the Lost Boys of Sudan. Their unbelievable experience and the groups of people who helped them along the way really grabbed the attention of our students. The goal for the unit was to inform students about the impact of government actions on citizens as well as the role that non-government organizations provide in helping people. We discussed and shared examples of how we can make our school a great place to be by being kind and helping each other.

It really does seem like we're falling into a good groove as the year progresses. I would like to encourage everyone to keep working hard and giving their best efforts on all homework assignments, projects, and tests. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at [bwieking@mocfv.org](mailto:bwieking@mocfv.org).



## 7th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Vermeer

It's hard to believe it's December! What a fast start to the school year. The seventh graders are doing an amazing job learning new vocabulary, challenging themselves in their reading, and building their research skills this year. We are wrapping up our group work on our infographics and understanding more about factual evidence. As we enter December the beginning of the month will be focused on researching our TEDTalk by presenting our argument with evidence.

After wrapping up our TEDTalks we will begin by reading two Christmas stories *A Kidnapped Santa Claus* and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* and comparing their various connections. Individually students will read a variety of stories about winter and complete different questions regarding the stories using a Tic Tac Toe board. The stories include both fiction and nonfiction and address a variety of important literacy-based skill questions.

The quarter will wrap up when we return from winter break. We will jump back into vocabulary finishing up the unit on suffixes. Quarter 2 book log will also be collected at this time. A new reading goal will be provided, and we will promptly begin our class novel of *The City of Ember*. Way to go seventh graders! I am excited to see what else they will accomplish this year!



## 7th Grade Math

By: Mr. Baker

What a fun start we have had to our year in math! I can't believe how fast it is going and all that is being learned. In math we are learning about equations and inequalities, or better known as pre-algebra concepts. While some people may view algebra and variables as a foreign language, I would like to encourage both students and parents to approach this chapter with a great attitude. Great effort will be necessary in this chapter as we learn new concepts, and I know that a great deal of learning will occur if everyone carries a growth mindset. This is one of the most difficult units we learn during seventh grade but can also be a fun one. I want to encourage students to finish strong before the Christmas break!





## Our Corner of History

By: Mrs. Phelan

In our latest unit for eighth grade History, we were fortunate to have the opportunity to commemorate Veterans Day. Each student was asked to interview a veteran and ask them questions about their service. Furthermore, they individually researched topics connected to the military, including various memorials (Korean War Memorial, Vietnam War Memorial, etc.), wars (World War II, The War in Afghanistan, etc.), and the stories of several Medal of Honor recipients (Desmond Doss, Sylvester Antolak, etc.). Following their research, eighth graders presented their findings to the rest of the class in a speech ranging from two to five minutes.

For some, it is a big challenge speaking publicly in front of their peers, and I am glad that they had the opportunity to work on this important life skill in a positive environment rooted in a growth mindset. It is also my hope that these students came to better appreciate the role of service in the armed forces and the cost of the freedoms we enjoy in the United States. If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to ask your student to share about their projects from this unit! Looking ahead, we are moving into our unit on the War for Independence which begins with an in-depth look at America's "break up letter," the Declaration of Independence. When teaching students about the major events and battles of this period, I allow students to "Choose their Own Adventure" in the shoes of an American soldier. As they see where their choices take them, students will journal about their "firsthand experiences" in the Revolutionary War.

At the end of this unit, we will be viewing a school-appropriate version of *The Patriot*, to see what the combat experiences of the time were like. The film has been edited from the original to omit R-Rated elements such as language and gore, yet there will still be intense moments depicting warfare. Before viewing the movie, we will spend some time preparing for these thematic elements. If you have any questions or concerns before viewing, please don't hesitate to get in touch.



## 8th Grade English

By: Mrs. Oolman

From now until the December break, we will be in a unit on Colors / Mindset / Grit / Personality / Learning Styles. Students will be "tasked" to choose their own assignment for a final project! In other words, they will be asked to share what they learned in a way that works for them! Students will answer the question: "What is YOUR biggest take-away from learning more about yourself--- your color, your mindset, your grit, your learning style?" Your son or daughter may ask for some assistance with materials. This unit covers employability state standards and "soft skills" we all need for success. Things like demonstrating leadership and responsibility. Recognizing our own strengths and the strengths of others. Considering different perspectives. Creating information in a variety of formats. Accepting and owning mistakes as a part of learning. Carry out tasks and projects to completion. Transfer learning from one subject to another. Accept and provide feedback. Self-initiate work or tasks and stay focused on tasks over different time periods.

I would encourage you to ask your own student the following questions during the next four to six weeks of class:

1. What "color" they are and what that means.
2. HOW they are smart.
3. What their "circle of control" is.
4. What "grit" is.
5. What "productive struggle" is.
6. What "growth mindset" means.
7. If they are "left-brained" or "right-brained" and what that means.

## 8th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Hughes

We wrapped up our Biodiversity unit! We learned about ecosystems and biomes, the variety of life within those, limiting factors, endangered species, human impacts, conservation and sustainability, and what we can do (even as middle schoolers) to mitigate some of those environmental issues.

We researched and created posters that showed how different factors impact an ecosystem's biodiversity. Each group chose an ecosystem from around the world and became "experts" on the variety of life in that area. We presented the information to classmates. Even though this was a group project that they worked on in class, students were more than welcome to work on their assigned section outside of class as well.

We will next move on to Earth Science where we will study fossils, adaptations, comparative anatomy, genetic technology, and more!



## 8th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Hoppe

The eighth grade Literature class is nearing the end of our unit on *The Outsiders*. We will be finishing our body biography projects within the next couple of weeks, and then we will begin writing a thematic essay. We have discussed how characters are vehicles of theme. We have learned that characters are complex and have troubles, which reveal motifs and how concepts expose themes. From our work together, we created a list of five big ideas in the book, which include divided communities, empathy, individual identity, self-sacrifice and honor, and preserving childhood innocence. In a thematic essay, each student will demonstrate their ability to identify a theme, write a thesis statement, and incorporate textual evidence by using direct quotes effectively.

Following *The Outsiders* unit, the eighth grade will begin with an introduction to the Holocaust. We will start a timeline activity, where students will study and analyze events before, during, and after the Holocaust. This activity builds background and incites enthusiasm for the other activities we'll complete in this unit.

Lastly, please continue to encourage your child to read independently each night. Now that we have concluded our class novel, we will continue our Take Time for Ten independent reading habit in class. Daily independent reading is crucial to your child's improvement and success as a reader. Thank you for encouraging and setting aside time for your child to read daily. If you are looking for Christmas gift ideas for your child, giving them books is always a great option!



## 8th Grade Service Project = Schoolwide Food Drive

The eighth grade yearly service project team invites you to join us in our Food Drive for the Orange City area food pantry located in the American Reformed Church in Orange City. We will be collecting items from December 3 until December 17, 2024. We are asking that the whole school join us in bringing in a few items (1-3) to help others during this time and make it a joyful holiday season for all. Items you may bring include canned goods, boxed goods, paper products, and personal hygiene items. Outdated items cannot be accepted. Thank you for allowing us to share this opportunity with you, and we appreciate your generosity. The eighth graders wish you a joyful holiday season.



## Leader in Me

In December the Middle School moved into Habit 3: Putting First Things First centered on “Prioritize, and do the Most Important Things First.” The lessons in Habit 3 encouraged students to recognize the importance of planning ahead, focus on their priorities, and strive for organization. Students worked to hone life skills such as time-management, accountability, work ethic, and flexibility. Habit 3: Putting First Things First focused on key concepts such as:

- Planning Ahead
- Understanding Urgent vs. Important
- Organization
- Prioritization
- Saying No to Time Wasters



## PBIS

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.

In the month of December, the PBIS ticket challenge is a Christmas Cookie Challenge which will run from Tuesday, Dec. 3<sup>rd</sup> through Friday, Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>. During this challenge the STAR with the greatest number of tickets turned in for each grade level will earn the opportunity to have Christmas cookies during the final week of school prior to break. The Christmas Cookie Challenge has been a huge hit each year, so best of luck to each STAR in the challenge! More importantly, keep up the great work as you positively impact others around you because kindness is one of the greatest gifts we can give to one another.



**December 12, 2024**  
**Middle School Holiday Concert**  
*(Band, Choir, and Orchestra)*  
**Middle School Gym**  
**7:00pm**



# December 2024

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



# January 2025

| Sun           | Mon   | Tue           | Wed   | Thu  | Fri  | Sat   |
|---------------|---|---------------|---|--|--|---|
|               |   |               | <sup>1</sup><br>New Year's Day<br>No School   | <sup>2</sup><br>No School –<br>Professional<br>Development Day                             | <sup>3</sup><br>Full Day of School   | <sup>4</sup>                                  |
|               |   |               | <div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">Winter Break</div> |  |  |   |
| <sup>5</sup>  | <sup>6</sup>  | <sup>7</sup>  | <sup>8</sup>  | <sup>9</sup>   | <sup>10</sup><br>1:15pm Early<br>Dismissal                                 | <sup>11</sup><br>Dutch Youth BB<br>Tournament |
| <sup>12</sup> | <sup>13</sup>   | <sup>14</sup> | <sup>15</sup>   | <sup>16</sup><br>4:15pm. GBB vs<br>Sioux Center<br>7 <sup>th</sup> (H) 8 <sup>th</sup> (A) | <sup>17</sup><br>End 1 <sup>st</sup> Semester<br>1:15pm Early<br>Dismissal | <sup>18</sup>                                 |
| <sup>19</sup> | <sup>20</sup><br>Begin 2 <sup>nd</sup><br>Semester<br>8:00am-4:00pm<br>6 <sup>th</sup> gr. Strong<br>Foundations<br>Honor Band<br>4:00pm GBB vs<br>Sergeant<br>Bluff-Luton 7 <sup>th</sup> (A)<br>8 <sup>th</sup> (H) | <sup>21</sup> | <sup>22</sup>   | <sup>23</sup>  | <sup>24</sup><br>1:15pm Early<br>Dismissal                                 | <sup>25</sup>                                 |
| <sup>26</sup> | <sup>27</sup><br>4:15pm GBB vs<br>LeMars 7 <sup>th</sup> (H)<br>8 <sup>th</sup> (A)   | <sup>28</sup> | <sup>29</sup>   | <sup>30</sup><br>8:00am-4:00pm<br>NWIA Honor<br>HS/MS Orchestra<br>Festival                | <sup>31</sup><br>1:15pm Early<br>Dismissal                                 |   |