

MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

MOC-Floyd Valley

April

2025

Special points of Interest:

- You Matter
- Leader in Me
- PBIS
- Scholastic Book Fair Thank You



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YOU Matter

Transformational Leadership –Tap the Needle

THANK YOU for your attendance and conversation at our recent Parent-Teacher Conferences. With instant online checks of student progress, we can miss the value of a face-to-face conversation with a young person at the center of that conversation! We appreciate your partnership!

I'm combing through a book titled *Transformational Leadership* for the third time! It is full of great information and motivation. I want to share a couple of insights from the early part of the book. I believe that if you influence just one other person positively, you are a leader. The goal in leadership should be to transform and equip the next person to lead in a transformative way!

YOU matter! Transformative leaders make sure to let others know they are valued and that they matter! People Matter!!! A public speaker from the book is quoted to say, "I first started to try and write the best sermons. Now I just try and love the people in the audience." What we say to others matters. What we do matters. HOW we do what we do matters even more. Transformational leadership happens when we lead as if everyone's heart is on the line. Transformational leadership is not easy, the book identifies that a transformational leader must be the first to do the "dirty hard work." It is not easy... yet it IS transformational! YOU MATTER!

We need to love ourselves! Then, and only then, do we have enough love to give others! Where do we start... right in your own backyard... lead where you are! Last, when it comes to being a transformational leader in your home or profession don't set goals (yes, I just said DON'T set goals), rather be on a mission! A mission comes from who you are at the core, and it involves DAILY action. Goals can be put off.

There is so much good information in this book. I will end with this powerful analogy that can be applied professionally and as parents. The analogy (from the book) starts with a quick story about acupuncture. The author had needles placed to help with some physical healing. The placement of needles provided zero relief. The therapist returned to the room, adjusted each of the needles and immediately energy and healing were felt throughout his body. Now, this isn't to persuade anyone on the topic of acupuncture. Rather, as transformational leaders we create and establish healthy boundaries and "place the needles" in the right spots. We then get to care deeply by just tapping the needles slightly. Ask the right question, give simple (not long-winded) advice, and touch on the boundaries. Again, the goal of transformational leadership is to have others take the same role and own healthy boundaries without us. YOU matter!

Mr. Yaw



6th Grade Science: What Your Child is Learning

By Mr. Hoebelheinrich

Here's a quick update on what your child has been learning in science class and what's coming up next. Since the last newsletter, the students have been exploring two topics.

#1 - Natural Disasters - We've discussed natural hazards like earthquakes, hurricanes, volcanoes, floods, and much more. The students did a research project on how these events occur, their effects on the Earth, the effects on life, how scientists study/prepare for these disasters & ways that humans can reduce risks and respond to these disasters.

#2 - Uneven Distribution of Earth's Resources - We've been investigating how Earth's resources, such as water, minerals, and fossil fuels are not spread evenly across the planet. We've discussed how geography, climate, and human activity influence the availability of these resources.

What's Next?

The sixth graders will jump into a fascinating unit on cells! Here we will focus on the basics of cell theory, which states that all living organisms are made up of cells, and cells are the basic units of life. We'll examine the different parts of a cell, such as the nucleus, mitochondria, and cell membrane, and their specific functions. Students will learn how each cell part contributes to the overall function and survival of the cell, as well as how cells work together in multicellular organisms. Thank you for your continued support!



Read All About It . . . 6th Grade Reading

By: Mrs. TeGrotenhuis

At the end of March, students completed their slideshow presentations for the award-winning books they read during the third quarter. It was awesome to see all the great books students have read! With only one quarter left of school, it was nice for students to get more ideas of books to read from their classmates. For the fourth quarter, 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 beginning a short figurative language unit studying terms 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. I like to see all the creativity in our students!

We will finish out the school year with a favorite book of mine and many 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 respond 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!



April 20
Happy
Easter



6th Grade World History

By: Mr. Nonnemacher

WHEN IN ROME!!!! ROME WASN'T BUILT IN A DAY!!!! ALL ROADS LEAD TO ROME!!!! These may all be phrases you are familiar with, and currently the sixth graders are becoming familiar with the civilization and empire of Rome. One of the coolest things we've done all year involved creativity and strategy! Our board game project went well, and game day was so much fun! We are now moving into the textbook section of the unit and learning about how the society of people was split up into patricians (rich people) and plebeians (common people). We look forward to talking about the Colloseum and other ancient Roman architecture, as well as the story of Julius Caesar! Ancient Rome is filled with stories, conflict, and influence on our world today.

Thank you for being involved with your child's learning of how the past continues to influence the present! Enjoy the pictures!



6th Grade Math with Mr. Boersma

By: Mr. Boersma

Any way you look at it, $\frac{3}{4}$, 75%, 0.75, we're approaching the end of the school year. The sixth graders have recently finished a unit called Arithmetic with Decimals. We reviewed the addition and subtraction of decimals, but really focused on the multiplication and division of decimals. The unit included the most computation of any unit we've done so far. So students really love this, others are a little less enthusiastic about it.

Our next unit will be entitled Expressions and Equations. This unit is essentially an introduction to algebraic thinking. We'll be teaching some of the mathematical principles that students will use over their next few years of algebra. Associative Property, Distributive Property, and Commutative Property to name a few. We'll also start preparing students to be comfortable using a variable to represent an unknown quantity. It's really quite interesting!

If you have any concerns or questions, please feel free to email or call me at school and I'll get back to you as soon as I can.



Earth Day



April 22

Putting It All Together in 6th 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.



7th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Vermeer

Quarter 4 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.

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 started as a tool to help us prepare for ISASP. Students will compete as a literature class for the highest average score by completing a Google Form with passage and a variety of questions they may encounter on the ISASP test. Each day the score will be added to the previous day's score.

Reminder for the end of the year is our genre log will be due the week of Tulip Festival, May 14th. 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. I'm very excited to see what this group of seventh graders can accomplish this year!

April 25

Celebrate Arbor Day



Plant A Tree

7th Grade Global Studies

Page 5

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 recently finished a unit on food supply and food production. After learning about regions of the world like sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, our unit on Food Supply addressed issues like supply chains, food production, and what the future of food production could look like. It was interesting to learn about where our food begins and the journey it takes as it gets to our homes. In the coming month we will begin units on Globalization, Central America & the Caribbean, Population Growth, and Immigration.

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.



7th Grade English

By: Mrs. Van Regenmorter

As I write this newsletter, I cannot believe we have begun 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, do revising and editing, and produce final pieces of writing. They worked hard, and hopefully they feel prepared for the ISASP testing.

During the last couple weeks of third quarter, we also had someone join our classroom. Mr. Jack Laven, a Northwestern College senior, has joined us to complete his student teaching. He has been working with students and has begun to take over many teaching roles and requirements. He will be preparing and teaching the next seventh grade English unit, which is commas. Yes, he has taken on the challenge of teaching comma use to seventh graders! Sometimes the hardest part of teaching commas is to help kids change their negative mindsets about them. Mr. Laven and 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 about what is happening in our school and in classes. After all our crazy March weather, we hopefully 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...

Thanks for Coming to the "What Aarggh You Reading" Book Fair

Thank you so much for your support of the spring middle school book fair! It was great to see so many bookaneers come and check the fair out! We appreciate you encouraging and celebrating reading with your child!

7th Grade Math

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 unit six 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.



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 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.

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.



8th Grade English

By: Mrs. Oolman

Thank you all for attending Parent / Teacher conferences. It is always good to connect!

As mentioned in the students' Slide Shows at conferences, we are hoping that Mrs. Koenig (HS Guidance Counselor) will visit our classroom to work with students on long-range planning of classes to take at the HS level and to plan freshmen year's courses. This will happen in the next four to six weeks.

Moving forward, we will be doing some one to two day units on every day things we need to know such as following written instructions, addressing an envelope, and even avoiding being redundant in our writing. Further review on the parts of speech and capitalization and punctuation will also occur.

One of our favorite units on Black History will be starting soon. During this unit, we will focus on a couple of wonderful pieces of literature. One is an historical piece (Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, "I have a dream" speech), and the second is a poem (Langston Hughes's "Dream Deferred"). Mrs. Hoppe and I will collaborate on this unit. In English class, we will do an activity to get ready for understanding Black History by reading and discussing five topics from the time period of Civil Rights. The five topics include the following: Martin Luther King, Jr., Langston Hughes, Brown vs. Board of Education, Medgar Evers, and Jim Crow Laws. Students will be divided into teams, become experts on their subjects, and use their laptops to prepare a brief presentation for their peers. Following this introductory study, students will be viewing two movies ~ *The Help* and *Hidden Figures*. We will study four themes as follows:

1. Social expectations
2. Family expectations
3. Racism
4. Ambition vs. Fear

This is an exciting unit filled with lots of challenges about our roles, our society, our attitudes, and our own lives.

8th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. 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.



8th Grade Science

By: Mrs. Hughes

During the month of March, we have been studying waves! In the last few weeks, we have learned about what makes a wave, the different types of waves, wave properties, and wave behavior. Students participated in a variety of labs and hands-on activities to watch these behaviors and properties in action!

Last week, the kids took the assessment over wave basics and sound, so we are now ready to move on to light waves. Students will continue to experiment with hands-on activities, simulations, and labs to see the behaviors and properties of light waves first-hand. We have enjoyed exploring “big” questions about sound and light. For this next unit, we will be looking to answer questions such as: Why is the moon so bright? Why does water make a shirt darker? Why do camera flashes make your eyes turn red?

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.



Leader in Me

During the month of April, the Middle School has ventured into **Habit 6: Synergize** based on the idea that we must "Work Together to Achieve More." The lessons in Habit 6 are a great opportunity for the Middle School students to practice using their strengths while also recognizing and utilizing the talents and abilities of others to work effectively with their peers. Students worked to hone life skills such as the ability to motivate or inspire others, show initiative, and communicate information and ideas clearly in their interactions with others. **Habit 6: Synergize** focused on key concepts such as:

- Value Differences in Others
- Celebrate Differences in Others
- The Third Alternative
- Recognizing Barriers to Synergy
- Competition vs. Synergy



PBIS Update

The PBIS Team continues to provide students with volunteer opportunities to serve our community and make impacts around the world. In March seven eighth grade students volunteered at Hope Haven and help to assemble wheelchair parts to be distributed all over the world. Students cut vinyl for the wheelchair pads, stuffed wheelchair pads with foam padding, stapled the vinyl to finish the pad, drilled holes for the parts to be attached to the wheelchair, and packed the wheelchair pads to be shipped for final assembly. Another group of twelve sixth and seventh grade students were given a brief history of the current situation in Ukraine. Students worked to build 30 solar lights to be distributed to displaced persons in Ukraine who are without electricity.



April 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
					8 th gr. NCC Career Day 1:15pm Early Dismissal	
		ISASP Testing				
		Makerspace				
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
					1:15pm Early Dismissal Qrt. 4 3wk gr. chk.	
					DC/NYC Trip	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
	End Exploratory Cycle 5	Begin Exploratory Cycle 6 4:15pm MS B/G Soccer @ Sheldon			No School	
DC/NYC Trip					Spring Break	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Easter	No School	Earth Day 8:00am-4:00pm NWI 5 th – 7 th Honor Choir @ MOCFV HS	8:00am-4:00pm Book Bash @ Sioux City	4:15pm MS Soccer G @ Sioux Cetner B @ MOCFV Elem.	Arbor Day 1:15pm Early Dismissal	Jr./Sr. Prom
Spring Break						
27	28	29	30			
	5:15pm Boys Soccer vs Sheldon @ MOCFV Elem.	4:15pm MS Track @ Sheldon				

May 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				¹ 4:15pm Soccer vs Sheldon @ MOC-FV Elem. 4:15pm MS Track @ Sioux Center	² Qrt. 4 6wk gr Chk.	³
⁴ Baccalaureate	⁵ 4:00pm MS Track@ LeMars	⁶ 4:15 MS Track@ Central Lyon	⁷	⁸	⁹ 4:15pm MS Track@ Northwestern College	¹⁰
¹¹	¹²	¹³ 4:15pm MS Soccer@ Sioux Center	¹⁴	¹⁵ 11:15am Dismissal	¹⁶ No School	¹⁷
				Tulip Festival		
¹⁸	¹⁹	²⁰ 7:00 MS Spring Concert	²¹	²²	²³	²⁴
²⁵ Commencement	²⁶ Memorial Day No School	²⁷ 9:30 7 th gr. GSB/BBB @ Vets Park 11:00am-8 th gr	²⁸	²⁹ 9:30am 7 th gr GSB/BBB @ MOC-FV Elem. 11:00am-8 th gr	³⁰ End 4 th Quarter & 2 nd Semester 9:30 7 th gr GSB/BBB @ MOC-FV Elem. 11:00am-8 th gr	³¹