

MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

MOC-Floyd Valley

May

2025

Special points of Interest:

- Gratitude and Transformation Leader-Power Questions
- Leader in Me
- PBIS



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Gratitude and Transformation Leader – Power Questions

Our last newsletter of the 2024-25 school year! Thank you for your connection to our middle school and to MOC-Floyd Valley! I want to express sincere and genuine gratitude for the opportunity to serve the MOC-Floyd Valley Middle School and the entire school district. It has been a privilege to serve the students, staff, and families of this outstanding school district. We are all very blessed to have a quality education system, TK–12! A large part of the “quality” of our district is families who greatly value education and learning! Thank you!

Last month I shared some thoughts with you from a book titled *Transformational Leadership*. The best servant and transformational leaders are great listeners. These types of leaders choose to listen and care before making sure they are heard. Concurrently, transformational leaders are typically outstanding question engineers. They are able to design and develop great questions that allow others to process and grow. If we are lazy about choosing our questions as leaders, coaches, teachers, and parents, we can promote a fixed mindset vs a growth mindset. Golf and track seasons are in full swing (or are running at full speed)... puns intended... so let me give you some examples. Fixed-mindset questions from adults might be “What did you shoot today?” Or, “What was your time today?” If we are not careful and if these are the only questions we ask, then our leadership can become housed in performance only. Our questions, as leaders and parents, have a tendency to send a message of what we value most. While a score and a time are part of playing golf and running track, we all have the ability to ask questions that stir up intrinsic value in others and are separate from performance. Asking about grades does the same thing to students.

I encourage everyone of us to ask questions that motivate others to keep growing. Questions that are relational and not simply a transaction of facts and figures. I have listed a few questions from the book that can partner with, or take the place of, performance questions. The “Power” in these questions is sustaining a growth mindset!

“What was your best moment today?”

“What did you learn today?”

“Tell me something you did well today.”

“What are you most excited about right now?”

“What is your biggest challenge right now?”

“How did you grow as a person today?”

“How did you help someone realize their best today?”

I appreciate your partnership to serve our children and students.
Let’s all Finish Well!

Mr. Yaw



The Push to the End--6th Grade English

By: Mrs. Jacobsma

The end is quickly approaching, and yet there is so much left to do. The best academic thing you can do for your child right now is to encourage him/her to keep moving forward. As easy as it is to spend evenings outside, the school day will come again tomorrow. In English, we have many items left on our academic list. We begin May with preparing and delivering persuasive speeches! The last week of the year will bring self assessments of each student's progress and how they fared on our district's essential learnings.

As always, please contact me at the middle school if you have questions.



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 units.

1. A fascinating unit on cells! Here we focused 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've examined 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. We also took some time to look at different types of cells under a microscope. We saw that cells come in all shapes and sizes.

2. Most recently we have been learning how organisms reproduce. Students have been comparing and contrasting asexual reproduction where offspring are genetically identical to the parent, to sexual reproduction where offspring are unique from the parents because the DNA comes from two parents instead of one.

Starting early may we will jump into discovering how different systems of the body - like the respiratory, circulatory, and digestive systems work together to keep us healthy and functioning. From oxygen delivery to nutrient absorption, it's amazing how connected everything in our body is. We will end the year dissecting a worm & a small pig to see the difference between the two organisms.

Thank you for your continued support!



6th Grade World History

By: Mr. Nonnemacher

I've said it the whole year...this year will very quickly be history! I've always thought that the sixth grade school year moves faster than any year before for students. We've had such an unbelievable year in my classroom. From the pyramids of Ancient Egypt to the islands of Greece; from the simple Stone Ages to the glory of the Roman Empire...we have discussed so many different types of leaders, religions, and artifacts. One more month to go, and we will spend a lot of it talking about Ancient China! What a blessing the middle school has been this year! The kids have been such a joy, and if you ask them, I hope they can say they had as much fun learning from me as I had teaching them! I am looking forward to these last few weeks for continued fun in the classroom learning just a little bit more about this subject called World History. When we reach the last day of school at the end of May, I know for certain that our kids will be able to say that they earned a break!! Thanks for all your support at home in studying for tests, making sure homework gets done, and just providing general support for your sixth grader during this very fast and very busy school year. I will soak up these last 20+ days and then look forward to seeing them come back next year as seventh graders!!

Read All About It . . . 6th Grade Reading

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By: Mrs. TeGrotenhuis

The sixth-grade literature classes are nearing the end of the novel, *Freak the Mighty*, by Rodman Philbrick. One area of focus has been character analysis as we've observed the changing of characters throughout the course of the book. Another focus area has been vocabulary as students continue using context clues to develop meaning. This book has often become a favorite of my sixth graders as they enjoy the unique friendship that develops between two completely different characters. We will continue to do a mixture of reading aloud, small group reading, and individual reading while working on specific reading strategies.

After we complete our novel, we will move on to the last big activity of the year. Students will be creating a brochure/poster "advertising" one of the books they read this year. I will use these projects next school year as advertisements for my new students. I look forward to seeing the favorites of the students!

Students are still expected to read 30 minutes daily. Sometimes this becomes more difficult when the weather gets nicer outside! I appreciate those of you who encourage your child to read each day. I have so many students enjoying great books, and this certainly makes my job easier.



7th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Vermeer

It's hard to believe that our school year is almost over. In April we spent time working through poems and understanding what they may mean to us. The poetry unit is often a unit we start out not like but by the end we can say some students tolerate and even enjoy poetry. Our focus for the unit is spent making meaning of poems and connections to our lives. We will also read about various well-known poets including Shakespeare and Edgar Allan Poe. To wrap up our poetry unit we complete a Tic Tac Toe board of various poems to read and complete an activity over. This gives the students the opportunity to read many different poems and work to build a connection to their own lives.

The quarter 4 book project is an exciting one that requires more work with students' creativity skills. For this project students will be taking a book they read in seventh grade and turning it into a children's book. The challenge with this project is sharing only the main plot elements of the story and using vocabulary that a child would understand. The students will have the option for this project to use a website I have found or create by hand. Most of the time students choose the website as it is easy to use and allows for a lot of custom creations. Once they have completed this we read the books aloud to the rest of the class to see everyone's creativity.

To wrap up our seventh grade year we are going to be doing a reader's theater. Each student will be assigned a part based on how much reading they would like. The show is based off a TV show, and we will watch that as well. The goal for this is to build reading fluency by reading aloud. Second, we will work on comparing text to the digital screen version. .

Great work seventh graders! Looking forward to finishing up an exciting and learning filled year!



7th Grade Math

By: Mr. Baker

What a fun year of seventh grade math! We will finish our seventh grade math year learning about probability.

I wanted to say thank you for all of your support of your son/daughter and me. I am confident the growth your son/daughter has displayed will carry them forward into eighth grade math. Have a wonderful summer!

Wieking's World 7th Grade Global Studies

By ; Mr. Wieking

The springtime always seems to fly by. Our students have done a wonderful job throughout the school year. So far, we have read, researched, and discussed new places, people, and events. Our students have asked good questions, connected ideas, and thought critically about difficult topics. As April ends and May approaches, our students will explore the issues of migration, population growth, and standard of living. These are big issues that connect the people of the world and embody the idea of a global citizen. There is little doubt that the world will continue to become more interdependent, and our students will play a significant role in shaping the future.

As 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 Science

By: Mrs. Vande Kieft

It is hard to believe that the end of the year is near. As a conclusion to seventh grade Science, the students will combine everything that they have learned into the Ecosystems Unit. Within this unit of study, each Team will examine populations in various ecosystems and how each organism interacts with others. The seventh graders will also discuss the importance of resource availability by looking at the migration and survival of various species. By referring back to the Plant vs. Animal Unit, the students will investigate how energy flows from the Sun to producers, to various consumers, and finally to decomposers in a food web. The final project for seventh grade and the finale of the Ecosystem Unit will consist of an Ecosystems Project that will allow each student to personalize and construct their own ecosystem to represent everything that they have learned this year in seventh grade Science. To celebrate all of their hard work and success, each Team will enjoy an Ecosystem Extravaganza where we will observe and admire everyone's projects.

I would like to thank you all for the opportunity to work with your children each and every day. It has been a memorable year in seventh grade Science!!



PBIS Update

As we wind down the remainder of the year, it is a great time to celebrate the impact that PBIS has on the climate and culture at the Middle School. Due to the clear expectations aligned to our PBIS matrix and the intentional recognition of students who are making positive choices, the Middle School is a safe, welcoming, and exciting place for students to learn and grow. It is truly a joint effort of the staff and students that contribute to the positive environment.



Tulip Festival

May 15-17

May 15 ~ 11:15am Dismissal

May 16 ~ No School



7th Grade English

By: Mrs. Van Regenmorter (Mrs. VR)

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Since the last newsletter, students in seventh grade English have begun another project. Students are working with partners to create a book that tells about “The ABC’s of seventh grade English.” In the book, there is a page for each letter of the alphabet. Students needed to find something that we learned about this year that begins with that letter. On each page, they must display the letter, an explanation that tells what they learned and know about this, and a picture or illustration that represents the item and its explanation. They also will create a front cover, a title page, and a back cover for their books. As I write this newsletter, students are working on the letter pages. When the pages and covers are done, they put their books together, and I encourage them to find a way to assemble the book without using staples!! In the past, I’ve seen students use needle and thread, ribbons, rubber bands, twist ties, key chain rings, and many more items to make a binding. This project gives students a great review of twenty-six things we learned this year, and an opportunity to be creative. I can’t wait for their books to be done so I can read them!

When the ABC books are completed, students will begin their final unit for the school year, which is the End-of-the-year Self-assessment. The unit begins after Tulip Festival. For this unit, students complete a final assignment that asks them to assess their schoolwork, tests, writing, and overall performance during seventh grade English. In addition, they will look at some work in their sixth grade portfolios. Students will analyze their growth from sixth grade to seventh grade by responding to essay questions. They will use both their sixth and seventh grade portfolios that contain writings, tests, and projects to help them self-assess and formulate answers to the self-assessment questions. It’s always eye-opening for students to see how much they have grown and developed as students, writers, and individuals since sixth grade!

In addition, Mr. Laven, our student teacher from Northwestern College, will be leaving us soon. His last day is Friday, May 2. The seventh graders have done a great job welcoming and working with Mr. Laven. He will be missed! Mr. Laven has been hired to teach eighth grade English in Spirit Lake next school year! His students will be blessed to have him for their teacher.

Finally, thank you for reading the Middle School newsletter and staying informed about what your child is doing and learning in school. Also, thank you for the privilege of teaching your child this year. At this time of the year, it is very fun and rewarding to see how my students have grown in their abilities and character.



8th Grade Science

By: Lily Hughes

During March and April, we tackled our waves unit in eighth grade science. In March, we started with wave basics and sound waves, and then we finished off the unit with light waves. Students got to participate in various labs and hands-on activities to see these light behaviors and properties in action!

The students also enjoyed exploring “big” questions about light waves. Students took some time to research interesting 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?

We have begun forces and motion, including Newton’s Laws. Students will get to participate in a lot of hands-on labs and activities to see how these laws impact their daily lives.

April 11

Happy Mother’s
Day



Our Corner of History: 8th Grade American History Class

By: Mrs. Phelan's

The end of the school year is nearly here! This past April, students have spent their time exploring the presidencies of Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and Jackson. Most recently, we have investigated the legacy of Andrew Jackson and evaluated his role as the face of the twenty dollar bill. My goal is for students to see historical figures less as a name on the pages of their textbook and more as dynamic, yet complicated people. We will continue to take this concept and apply it toward other figures as we progress through the Civil War.

At the end of the year, eighth graders will be watching the film *Glory* to wrap up our last unit over the Civil War. *Glory* is a 1989 movie about the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, the first all-African-American volunteer company to fight in the Civil War. The movie offers an unforgettable history lesson about soldiers who transcended the racism and ignorance of their time to display dignity, courage, and valor when given the opportunity to prove their worth. In portraying the realistic obstacles that these soldiers faced, the film does contain some scenes of wartime violence, thematic material, and racially-charged language. To prepare students for viewing the movie, I will be spending some time in class to introduce the film and explain some of the more intense things they will see; along with my expectations for handling such scenes with maturity. I do believe *Glory* is a highly valuable teaching tool for learning about the Civil War and encourage its viewing. Feel free to contact me with any questions prior to viewing the film.



8th Grade English

By: Mrs. Oolman

The year will wrap up with a few short units.

1. Finish team- teaching Black History (reading and writing) with Mrs. Hoppe.
2. Poetry reading and comprehension.
3. Signing up for courses with HS Guidance Counselors (4-yr. plans) in prep for "bump up day" the Thursday morning of Tulip Festival weekend.
4. A self-evaluation of student growth in writing and speaking over the course of three years in the Middle School.
5. Thank you note writing.
6. Formal letter writing where students will introduce themselves to the HS Principal and their freshman English teacher.
7. Grammar and parts of speech review (last before HS!)

The end of the year tends to come RUSHING at us! I want to take this newsletter opportunity to thank you for a few things. One, thank you for sharing your son or daughter with me this year. It has been fun to watch this group grow! They have learned about leadership in many ways and have tried putting into practice speaking up for themselves and others. Two, thanks for taking a genuine interest in your son or daughter's education and for partnering with me from home. Your support means a lot and goes a long way as well. Best wishes for a safe and happy summer and a smooth transition to FRESHMAN year!



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8th Grade Literature

By: Mrs. Hoppe

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The eighth grade Literature students have just started reading their black history novels. Your student had the opportunity to listen to book talks and read a synopsis of each of the novels below before providing input into which book they would like to read. They were then placed in groups of 2-5 members where they have been learning to orient themselves to historical fiction text, aligning the events of their novel to historical events, and learning how the characters respond to trouble and adversity. I am looking forward to seeing how students become more confident to think deeply about what they are reading and engage in good conversations about their novels.

- *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
- *Nightjohn* by Gary Paulsen

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 one of the quotes below, or identify one of their own, and explain how the ideas of courage relate to a character in their book. Students will provide textual evidence from the book, along with examples from their own life.

"He who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life."

~ Robert Frost

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."

~ Nelson Mandela

"Courage is the most important of all the virtues because without courage, you can't practice any other virtue consistently."

~ Maya Angelou

"Courage is the ability to do the right thing, all the time, no matter how painful or uncomfortable it might be."

~ Tony Dungy

I am enjoying watching students show an enjoyment for reading and engaging one another with rich conversation. I look forward to reading their responses and seeing their final projects.



Leader in Me

As we venture to the end of the school year, the Middle School has shifted its focus onto **Habit 7: Sharpen the Saw** where the importance of "Renewing Yourself Regularly" in body, brain, heart, and soul is emphasized. The lessons in Habit 7 are a great opportunity for the Middle School students to practice living a balanced life to be able to be the best version of themselves. As a final review and preparation for Bump-up Day and Tulip Festival, the Middle School students will celebrate everything that they have learned with **Habit 8: Find Your Voice** where students will be encouraged to use their voice to lead and encourage others within their home, school, and as part of their community.

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 6 th gr. Field Trip	¹⁴	¹⁵ 11:15am Dismissal 5 th & 8 th gr Bump Up Day	¹⁶ No School	¹⁷
¹⁸	¹⁹	²⁰ 7:00 MS Spring Concert	²¹ 8 th gr. Arnolds Park Field trip	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 7 th gr. Field Trip	²⁹ 9:30am 7 th gr GSB/BBB @ MOC-FV Elem. 11:00am-8 th gr	³⁰ 1:15pm Dismissal End 4 th Quarter & 2 nd Semester 9:30 7 th gr GSB/BBB @MOC-FV Elem. 11:00am-8 th gr	³¹