

Middle School Newsletter
December 9, 2019

Dear Middle School Families,

We want to keep you informed about what's happening in our middle school classrooms. Please be in touch with any of us if you have any questions or appreciations!

Upcoming Events in December:

- December 13th: Winter Gala from 6:00-8:30 pm at the 1912 Center. We hope that you can join us! This is an adult only event.
- Dec. 20th is a teacher work day. Winter Break for students begins Dec.20th!
- Stay tuned for our first Middle School Dance date in January!

6th Grade

Expedition: The 2019 Crew Economy is up and running! I like to think of Crew Economy as the economics and government equivalent of a long-term scientific experiment. Student companies are crafting business plans, collaborating and competing with other student companies, investing, extracting natural resources to be sold into a secondary market, and seeing first hand the impact that government has in an economic system. In addition to the Crew Economy, students have participated in several economics workshops that focused on basic economic systems and the relationship between supply, demand, and scarcity. Starting this week we will jump deep into the political turmoil surrounding the United States' independence from England, the shortcomings of the Articles of Confederation, and the process of drafting and ultimately ratifying the US Constitution.

Chinese: Last week we learned 13 radicals of Chinese characters, and this week we will continue to learn another 16 radicals. And we will totally learn 32 radicals. These 32 radicals are the most common ones in Chinese. 6 Graders should know the meaning of them, they can help to guess and understand the meaning of the characters.

PE: In 6th grade PE we have been using Berman Park to play several games. I created a hybrid between capture-the-flag and ultimate frisbee that is proving to be an epic game with the 6th graders. In addition, sometimes we play flag football, which is also not void of epicness! I know that by now we're supposed to have snow on the ground, and that there are many reasons why snow is super important, but as a PE teacher with no indoor space, I have to say that the weather this fall has been amazing!

7th Grade

Chinese: Last week we learned 15 radicals of Chinese characters, and this week we will continue to learn another 17 radicals. These 32 radicals are the most common ones in Chinese, they can help us to guess and understand the meaning of the characters, so students should know the names and meaning of these radicals correctly.

Science Investigations 2: We are reading, *The Year I Got Polio*, by Peg Kehret. Students are listening to this book (Ms. Kuhle is reading aloud) in order to learn about polio and to refine their listening and notetaking skills. In addition to our read aloud, we are returning to the work we did last trimester on our argumentative essay. Students are completing the writing and going through the revision process this week and next. The essay is due Thursday, Dec. 19.

Expedition: Last week 7th-graders participated in fieldwork at the University of Idaho to learn about the roots of race and racism. Students were highly engaged in their workshops with Dr. Vanessa Anthony-Stevens, Dr. Philip Stevens, and Dr. Rynne Pilgeram. Students were introduced to the conditions that made race-based slavery possible. I am so thankful to this team of professors for their thoughtful lessons and engagement with our students around these essential topics. Please thank them when you see them around town!

Back in class this week we are diving into American history by reading informational articles, excerpts from *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, and analyzing primary source documents from the 1800's.



8th Grade

Wellness: We launched our wellness and sex ed units. We'll generally have sex ed on Monday, Wednesdays, and Fridays; our wellness activities will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Topics in sex ed include female and male anatomy, and reproduction basics. Check in with your student about our most recent topics. For our wellness activities, we learned about the benefits of exercise on our brain. We've calculated our maximum heart rate, target heart rate zone, and learned how to check our pulse. We're completing circuits in class to strengthen our bodies and our minds! See some of our pictures.

Chinese: Last week we learned 16 radicals of Chinese characters, and this week we will continue to learn 16 more radicals. These 32 radicals are the most common ones in Chinese, they can help us to guess and understand the meaning of the characters, so students should know the names and meaning of these radicals correctly. 8th-graders will play a guessing game to test their skills next week. I will show new characters to students, and the students will try to guess the meaning according to the radicals we've learned. This will be a fun way for them to practice connecting the radicals to their meaning!

Expedition: We kicked off our Expedition, Plugging into Sustainability. We are wrapping up our first case study, which was to learn about atoms and their connections to energy. We visited the WSU nuclear reactor last Tuesday and have been busy conducting inquiry in class. We're also paying attention to using craftsmanship in our science journals, spelling, and handwriting. We'll have our first assessment Tuesday, December 10. Check out the photos.

