

Middle School Newsletter
January 27, 2020

Dear Middle School Families,

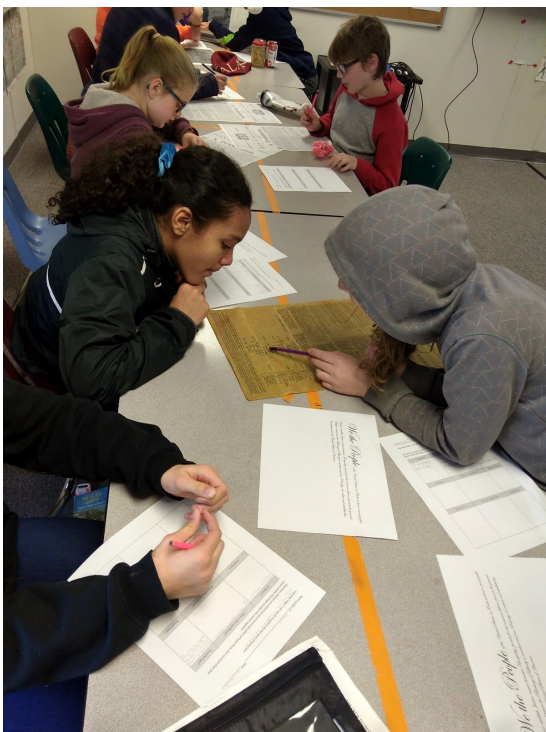
We want to keep you informed about what's happening in our middle school classrooms. Please be in touch with any of us if you have any questions or appreciations!

Upcoming Events in January and February:

- PPCS Blood Drive: Jan 31st- sign up at the office!
- End of Trimester: Feb 28th
- Math Counts Middle School Team Regional Competition on Lewiston: Friday, February 7th
- Middle School Ski Adventure: Friday, February 28th

6th Grade

Expedition: The 6th graders are deep into their Crew Economy experience. We recently finished our analysis of the founding documents of the United States (as can be seen in the photo below). In this analysis students discovered both why and how the US Constitution was passed. Following the end of this study, we leap-frogged over the 19th century (this content is covered in 7th grade) and landed in the year 1929. Naturally, I crashed their economy by imposing a set of economic conditions identical to those faced during the Great Depression. The class's task was to pass a series of policies that would stimulate economic recovery. We used arguments from both President Hoover as well as President Roosevelt and in the end the class solved three out of the four problems (bank strength, unemployment, and property value). We have one more week of this style of learning at which point we will start digging into our final product. This year, the 6th graders will be tackling the issue of affordable housing in Latah County.



Chinese: Last week we learned some phrases about school courses and students talked about their own class schedule. We are going to learn the characters, phrases and sentences about the class and classmates.

PE: With the coming of the snow comes lots of creative indoor activities. The 6th graders have been splitting their PE time between exercise videos, improv theater games, sally-up challenges, the occasional outdoor snow-play session, as well as additional crew economy time. We are looking forward to the clearing of our local play fields so we can resume our outdoor PE time.

Math: We are just finishing up our study of standard algorithms and strategies for division. Next week we'll dive into the world of positive and negative numbers. We are also continuing to work on our statistics projects and will do our first round of data analysis the week of February 10th, with the help of our expert Julia Piaskowski.

7th Grade

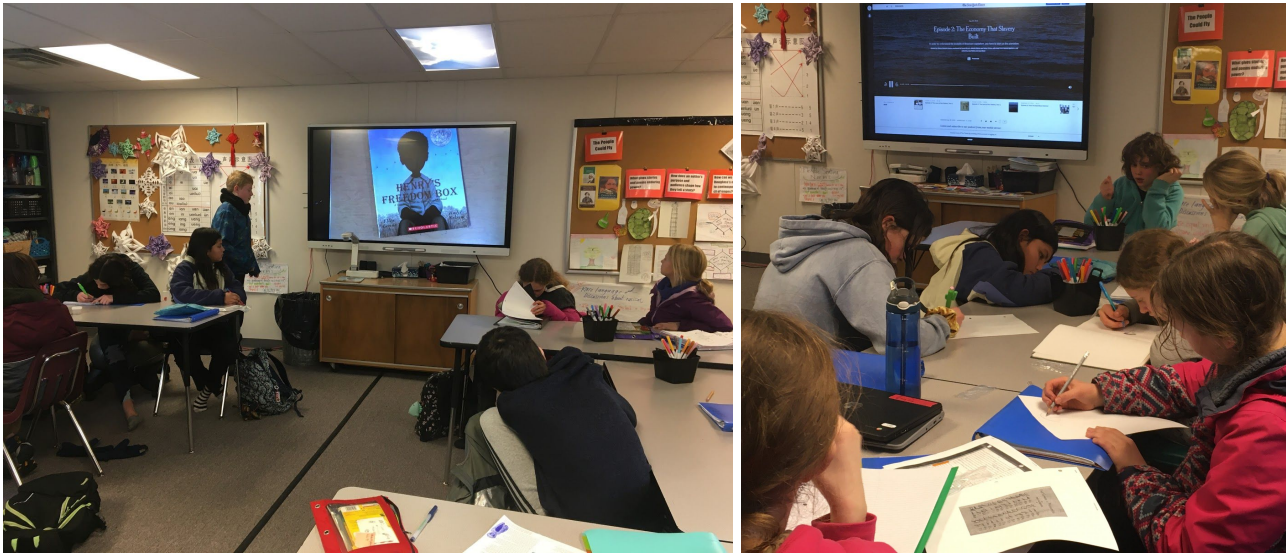
Chinese: Last week we learned how to introduce our friends to others and we practiced a tongue twister. We are going to learn some characters and sentence patterns to express comparisons (ages and sizes)

Science Investigations 2: We're examining Newton's laws of Motion. One of our learning targets is: I can describe Newton's (1st, 2nd, or 3rd) law and recognize it when I see it in action. Students each created a demonstration to show Newton's 1st law. We're also learning important distinctions between speed, velocity, and acceleration.



Students conduct experiments to observe $F = ma$; Ella sharing her experiment to demonstrate the law of inertia

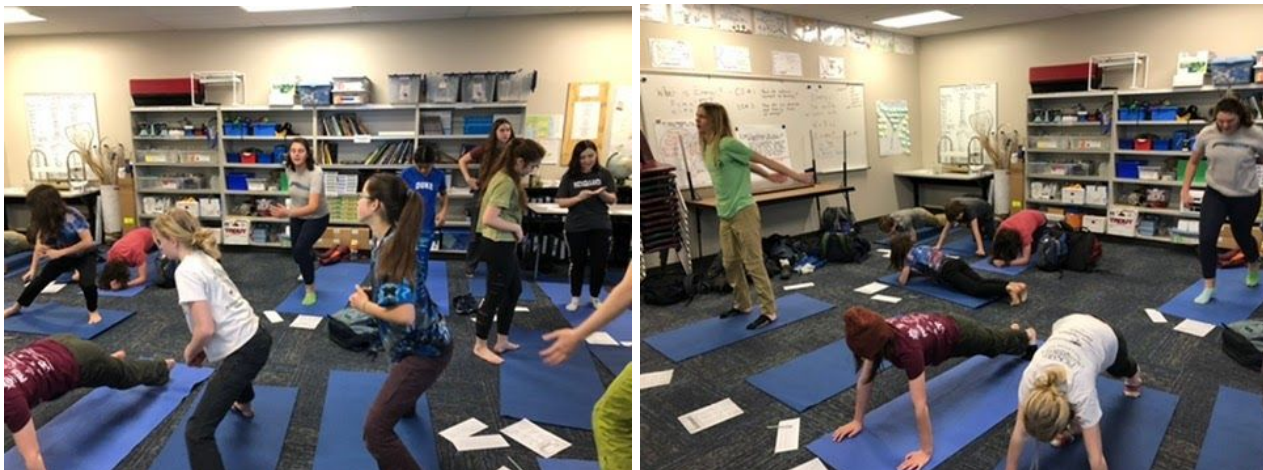
Expedition: 7th-graders continue to analyze primary source documents, share book talks and posters of independent reading books related to our expedition, read *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, and will begin creating interactive digital timelines as part 1 of their final product for this trimester with the support of University of Idaho Librarian Marco Seiferle-Valencia. This week students will meet, via skype, with Kenneth B. Morris Jr, co-founder of the Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives, to learn about Frederick Douglass and Ken's work as a modern day abolitionist.



Math: We just finished up a review of working with positive and negative numbers and will move into algebraic problem solving this week. First, we'll model our algebraic thinking using objects and pictures. Over the next few weeks, we'll move toward modeling using algebraic equations and variables. Ask your student to share with you the many ways they use algebraic thinking to solve problems on a daily basis!

8th Grade

Wellness: We're well underway with our sexual ed topics; you and your student should have had several homework tasks together. In health, we're still completing circuits in class to strengthen our bodies and our minds! Right after winter break we tracked and evaluated our sugar consumption. See some of our pictures.



Chinese: Last week we learned to write a resume in Chinese and to discuss it with a partner. We are going to learn to apply for a part-time job this week.

Expedition: We are wrapping up our second case study, learning about how to classify energy, transform energy, and make inferences about the electromagnetic spectrum and its connection to energy. Last week we visited the UI steam plant to see how biomass is used for heating and cooling at the University. We're launching into final product this week, which will hopefully make our school even greener. Check out the photos.



Math: We are continuing to work on solving more complex linear and exponential equations while justifying our problem solving strategies. This week, we'll spend a few minutes each day tracking emerging information related to the Wuhan coronavirus. Our data collection of new cases will help us with the modeling work we'll start in March.