

# Maple Avenue Middle School Newsletter

December 2011



## Principal's News

Eric Naylor-Principal  
Chip Fissel-Assistant Principal

P-47 THUNDERBOLT



### Thank You Grandparents!

I would like to thank our grandparents for taking the time to visit the school for our Grandparents Day program. Spending time with your grandchild sends a positive message, that you value their education and support them in their efforts. It's good for your children to feel like you are a part of their educational experience. Thank you for your continued efforts.

We are quickly approaching the mid-year mark and I invite all parents/guardians to continue to be active in your child's education. It is important to communicate with teachers and the administration, and to take advantage of the MMS Parent Portal for up-to-date grades and attendance information.

The faculty, staff and administration wish each of you a winter break filled with happiness and joy. Have a wonderful holiday and a happy New Year!



### Important Dates

Dec 23 - Dec 30 - Holiday Vacation

Jan 16 - No School, Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Jan 23 - No School, In-Service Day

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade News

### READING

Students on the Blue Thunder team finished the reading fiction unit in December. They also finished reading the novel *Hoot* and completed a character analysis project. A quick introduction to nonfiction began in December with a lesson on biography. Students are independently reading and responding to a biography or an autobiography. The nonfiction unit will continue through the months of January and February, and will focus on types of nonfiction writing, text structure, main idea, and context clues. The unit began with biographies and will move on to informational writings, and then persuasive articles. For practice at home, students can read newspaper and magazine articles. You may also see the novel *Hatchet* come home in January. The students will be reading this novel and doing an author study on Gary Paulsen.

The T-Bolts completed two novels in the past month. Everybody read *Wringer*. The other books that students chose between were *Where the Red Fern Grows*, *Summer of the Monkeys*, and *Cracker Jackson*. Students also learned how to create a PIA. The rest of the fiction unit will be spent reviewing for the fiction PIA.

In January, we will jump into our nonfiction unit. This will focus on persuasive, biographical, and informational text.

### SOCIAL STUDIES

Congratulations to Brigid Costello, Noah DeCampo, and Corbin Brown for advancing to the middle school Geography Bee finals. They will compete against 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to determine who will represent Maple Avenue Middle School in the regional round of the National Geography Bee.

Social Studies classes will be studying the geography, history, and cultures of the United States and Canada. They will explore the unique geographical features of both countries and look at their history and cultures. They will move on to explore the regions of both countries in greater depth.

### MATH

In Core 1, students will be finishing up Chapter 5 in January. This will include an investigation of the area of triangles, parallelograms, and trapezoids. We will continue to look for strategies for how to find area of irregular rectangle-like figures as well. Students will review our work with fractions, mixed numbers, & decimals from before break in their homework. All of this will prepare them for the Chapter 5 assessment in mid-January. The remaining part of the month will be spent starting Chapter 6. This begins with the exploration of division and then moves into division of fractions.

In Core 2, students will continue their work in Chapter 5. We will continue to review and extend our knowledge of probability and to use tables and trees to analyze our results. We will finish the chapter with a study of strategies for solving word problems, including the introduction of the 5-D process. Chapter 6 will start near the end of January and includes comparisons and strategies for solving inequalities and equations.

### SCIENCE

The New Year will bring a new book as we begin our second book, *Earth's Surface*. Through the book we will be exploring weathering and soil, erosion and deposition, and also take a trip through geologic time. Our first unit will be focusing on weathering and soil. Students will still receive study guides and graphic organizers to help them prepare for quizzes and tests. Also remember that just like our first book, this book can be accessed on-line. If you need the information to access the on-line book and information, please contact us and we will get it for you.

## Aviators

In January Mr. Felipe Lupian, a senior education honors student from Shippensburg University, will begin his student teaching experience in Mr. Smith's world studies class. Mr. Lupian has spent time in Maple Avenue observing many educators as well as teaching a lesson in world studies. Mr. Lupian is a native of Gettysburg and a graduate of Gettysburg High School. He will be working with Mr. Smith from January 17th through March 7<sup>th</sup>. We welcome Mr. Lupian as part of the Maple Avenue family.

**World Studies** classes have been studying many emotional topics lately. We've learned about the "troubles" in Northern Ireland, the Holocaust, the nuclear disaster in Chernobyl, and studied the Balkan War in Bosnia/Serbia. Soon we will depart Europe and travel to Africa. Our visit to Africa will take us through most of the early spring months.

**Science** students will finish their studies on genetics shortly after their return from the winter break. There are many new concepts and vocabulary introduced in this field of study as this is the first time they are exposed to this curriculum. There will be many performance assessments which can improve the students' grades if they apply themselves. They also need to be reviewing their notes and textbooks as part of their daily academic routine.

**Reading Class** will wrap up our fiction unit and our study of *The Outsiders* and dive head first into non-fiction after the break. We will begin by looking at the parts of a persuasive argument and will continue with many persuasive techniques used in advertising and media.

**Communication arts** students will have completed their rough copies of the advantage/disadvantage essay. We focused on the writing skill of elaboration, the use of three or more details to further explain ideas. In January they will revise their essays and type the final copies in class. This is a two-week process, and the final grade is considered a "test grade" in my class. Please check in the agenda for the due date to avoid losing any late points.

Vocab and DOL quiz grades usually take a slight dip this time of year due to "holiday preoccupations," so please be aware of the quiz dates that are written in the agenda as well as the Aviator homework log, and the amount of time that is spent preparing for these quizzes at home. Students should be taking advantage of the <http://quizlet.com/> website; just type in "Aviators" at the search bar, and the entire year's vocab lists can be accessed for studying purposes.

In **Core Connections**, the students will learn the 5D process for solving word problems and revisit probability in Chapter 5. **Algebra Connections** students are multiplying binomials using generic rectangles and solving proportions in Chapter 5.

## Lightning News

### 8th Grade American History:

Students in American history are beginning to explore the early years of this great nation. Students are currently entrenched in the formation of our first state governments. Next, we will examine the Articles of Confederation. Students will learn about the positive and negative effects the Articles presented to the 13 colonies. After the demise of the Articles of Confederation, we will break down the Constitution and why the United States has thrived under it.

### 7th World Studies:

Students in World Studies recently learned about the culture and heritage of Europe and Russia. Now, students are beginning to focus on the preeminent nations of both Western and Eastern Europe. Once we conclude our journey through the continent of Europe we will head south to the continent of Africa.

### Communication Arts:

7th Graders: In the New Year students will continue to improve their paragraphs and paragraph structures all the while work on enhancing sentences and content to dazzle others with their words. Of course vocabulary, grammar, and spelling will continue to assist their writing abilities as well so keep checking for new words and help you kid study for the weekly quizzes.

8th Graders: For the first month of 2012 students continue to apply the formal outline to their composition writing. It is the foundation of the five paragraph essay and the next step towards better, more focused and organized writing. Once the outline has been mastered and committed to memory, we will begin focusing on areas of the actual composition to find ways to improve and enhance the overall content of the essay. Of course vocabulary, grammar, and spelling are still important aspects of their writing style so don't forget to help your child prepare for those weekly quizzes as well.

### Reading:

In reading class during the month of January, both 7th and 8th graders will begin the Persuasive Text Unit. We will learn about the structure of a persuasive argument and how to analyze its effectiveness through understanding propaganda techniques. We'll read advertisements, commercials, persuasive essays, movie reviews, and editorials. Also, we will begin participating in literature circles about halfway through January: students will be able to choose from a selection of novels to read and interpret the novel with a small group.

### Science:

#### 7th Graders:

Prior to the Holidays 7th graders learned about the Father of Genetics - Gregor Mendel and how science learned about passing down traits to offspring. During January we will look at the mathematics of Genetics and practice predicting the probability of offspring and physical traits. We will visit Bikini Bottom and those wonderful sea creatures and their offspring!

### Math:

Keep up the good work and remember to always turn in your tool kits. Homework can also be turned in for a graded. Parents remember to check MMS for up-dates on grades.

**TO ALL LIGHTNING STUDENTS AND PARENTS:**  
**Grades for the end of Term 2 will come quickly after the holiday break. Remember that PIA's will be given and graded towards the Term 2 grade! Don't let the cold winter blues bring you down. Stay warm and study by a fire!**

### 8th Graders:

We will be leaving the science of chemistry and entering the world of physical science! Looking forward to putting in a lot of "work" and hopefully Mrs Sanders will not have to "force" the students to want to learn!

## Student of the Month

Morgan McCrea is the Lightning Team's Student of the Month. This student-leader is the daughter of Lisa and Mike McCrea. Morgan has a younger sister named Madison who is in second grade. Morgan is an animal lover. She has a Black Pug named Lizzie. Besides being a student who excels in the classroom, Morgan participates in two sports throughout the year: volleyball and competitive cheerleading. She has competed in volleyball for Annunciation for 3 years. Morgan has cheered competitively for the New Oxford Relics for 4 years. She was also a team captain for the Bolts cheerleading squad this year. In her spare time, Morgan loves to read, take photographs, and root on her beloved Pittsburgh Steelers. Morgan also babysits in her spare time. When asked what profession she would like to strive for, this bright student responded that she



wants to attend college and major in childcare and/or photography. Congratulations Morgan on achieving the Student of the Month award!

## Sky Pilots

**Social Studies** classes will be studying the US Constitution. The study focus will include the three branches of government and their functions and responsibilities. The Bill of Rights will receive attention as well as our rights and responsibilities as US citizens.

**Reading** classes are finishing up our unit on Fiction and are about to venture into our memory project presentations. The students will then begin the nonfiction unit once we return from Christmas vacation. We will begin the unit with persuasion, then move to informational and narrative nonfiction.

**Geometry** classes are continuing Chapter 6 investigations of triangles

**Algebra** classes are continuing Chapter 6 "Writing and Solving systems of equations and set to begin Chapter 7 the study of Linear Relationships.

**Core 3** students will begin the study of congruent triangles.

Parents please continue to check your student's completion of homework by checking their homework grade sheet in the front of their math notebook.

In **Science**, we have finished the periodic table and bonding. We will be covering chemical reactions then acids, bases and solutions. The students have been very receptive to the new curriculum. Please continue to help/assist your son or daughter and encourage them to access [www.phschool.com](http://www.phschool.com) for additional resources.

In **Communication Arts**, classes will begin a study of cause-effect writing. To practice this form of informational writing we will investigate some social studies topics which the students will be able to apply later in their classes. The students will use animation software to illustrate what they have learned after completing their essays. Of course we will continue our weekly Vocabulary lessons and Daily Oral Language practices as well.

The **Sky Pilots** would like to remind parents to check the agenda regularly, if necessary, for assignments and notes from teachers. Also the assignments can be found posted on our website at: [http://www.lasd.k12.pa.us/mams/Webpages/8\\_Grade\\_Team/Homepage.htm](http://www.lasd.k12.pa.us/mams/Webpages/8_Grade_Team/Homepage.htm)