

Maple Avenue Middle School Newsletter

November 2011



Principal's News

Eric Naylor-Principal
Chip Fissel-Assistant Principal

P-47 THUNDERBOLT



We continue to receive an amazing amount of support from parents, relatives, and community members related to our Fitness Day. The Parent Advisory Fitness Day fundraiser was a huge success. Your support of PAC will allow us to continue to support school field trips, assembly programs, and celebrate student success. These are just a few of the many events the PAC supports. I would also like to thank our local community for their continued support. In our continuous effort to encourage healthy lifestyles our fitness day program was a tremendous success due to the support of the Penn-Mar Karate Academy and the YMCA. Thanks for your support!!



Parent-Teacher Conferences- November 21-22

Parent-Teacher conferences will be held on November 21st and 22nd. Conference appointments can be scheduled on-line at www.myconferencetime.com/maple/ or by contacting the school office. In the event conference times are not available, alternative conference times (before or after school) may be scheduled on another date. Please contact the office for questions concerning parent conferences.

Important Dates

November 21 - In-Service Day No School
November 21-22 - Parent Teacher Conferences
November 22, 23 - Act 80 Days-12:30 dismissal
November 24-28 - Thanksgiving Vacation
December 1 - Picture Re-Takes
December 9 - Grandparents Day
December 14 - Band & Chorus Winter Concert 7:00

6th Grade News

Mrs. Curlen and Mr. Crockett's Reading classes

With the arrival of December, reading students will be finishing their fiction unit and turning to nonfiction. At this time all students should be able to identify and analyze a story's plot, including setting and conflict. The students have learned to better understand a story through characterization, point of view, and theme. Finally, they should be able to define words through context clues, and interpret figurative language in fiction. Reading classes continue to work on using reading strategies.

The nonfiction unit will focus on types of nonfiction writing, text structure, main idea, and context clues. For practice at home, students can read newspaper and magazine articles. Students may also want to check out a biography or an autobiography from the library.

Mrs. Eyer's and Mrs. Nelson's Math classes

In Core Connections 1 we will be finishing Chapter 4 on using ratios to compare similar figures. Also students will work with ratios in non-geometric contexts and use them to solve problems. Then we will begin Chapter 5 using area models to solve multiplication problems in context.

In Core Connections 2 we will be finishing chapter 4 finding the area and perimeter of algebra tiles using variables and constants and practice combining like terms. Also they will use the distributive property to develop an understanding of combining like terms. Then we will begin Chapter 5 finding part-whole relationships, finding and using percentages, and doing some probability games.

Mrs. Becker's and Mrs. Smith's science classes

We are into the second unit *Earth's Surface*. Students will be exploring mapping, soil, erosion and geologic time. Students have a variety of study tools to use that include graphic organizers, study guides, and the online program to aid them in their learning.

Ms. Willet and Mr. Breighner's social studies classes

We were busy in October studying how people's lives change because of population, migration, and economic and political systems. The students started learning about culture. In November we will continue our study of cultures and begin our unit on the United States and Canada.

Aviators

The Aviators are gearing up for eggnog, candy canes, sleeping in, and all the other perks that the holiday break guarantees. These past few weeks have been spent conquering academics and preparing for the up-and-coming festivities. Starting on the 23rd, students will have six days to recuperate before Maple Avenue once again lifts off into the tail-end of second term.

In **communication arts** students are selecting topics and gathering information for their advantage/disadvantage essays. Through several kinds of support they will give their readers the ability to make an informed decision about such diverse topics like owning a pet, playing in the band, or having a marine water tank. Students will also be taking their first diagramming test before the winter break.

Science classes are finishing the discussion of photosynthesis and respiration. Our next lesson is on the cell cycle. There will be a small project with this to demonstrate understanding of the stages a cell goes through to reproduce. Genetics will be introduced in the month of December. A reminder that students should bring their textbooks home regularly or go online for the digital textbook. Studying is a daily part of the science curriculum

Reading class is beginning their novel *The Outsiders*. We will be exploring various themes, enjoying a trip into the 60s, and holding a mock trial all while applying the skills and strategies needed to comprehend a work of fiction.

We recently enjoyed a taste of the Mediterranean as we sampled sardine, olives and dates. Prior to this we read the history of these staple foods of the region. Currently we are about to complete our journey through Europe. As we complete our trip we will specifically study the countries of: Italy, The U.K., Germany, France, and Sweden. Topics will include: 'The Troubles' of Northern Ireland, welfare states, the Cold War, regions of Italy and more. We will culminate the unit with a graded project entitled 'Project Europe'. Students will select one country from Europe. We will research that nation and prepare an extensive poster project.

In **Core Connections**, the students will review proportional relationships and order of operations in Chapter 4. Students will also begin simplifying algebraic expressions. **Algebra Connections** students are multiplying binomials using generic rectangles and solving proportions in Chapter 5.



Student of the Month - Dulaney Kile

It is with great pleasure that the seventh grade teacher team selected Dulaney Kile as the Maple Avenue Middle School Student of the Month. Dulaney is consistently earning exemplary grades that ensure her Gold Honor status throughout the academic year. She is part of the gifted education program at the middle school and declares that math is her favorite subject. Dulaney enjoys dance, reading and hanging out with friends. She is currently participating in the Talent Olympics in Luzerne, PA. She dances three times per week and is scheduled to compete in eighteen different dances at the Olympics. Dulaney is twelve years old and is the daughter of Ken and Dawn Kile from Gettysburg. For these reasons Dulaney, was at the top of list of candidates.

Lightning News

Lightning Math:

Math classes are working diligently through Chapter 4. Algebra Connections classes as well as Common Core 3 are focused on the connections between graphs, tables, and equations. We have found some interesting and helpful tie-ins. Common Core 2/7th grade has looked at proportional problem-solving and will finish up with some introductory algebra skills - combining like terms and simplifying methods. As always be checking agendas for notations of missing work.

Lightning CA:

7th Graders: 'Tis the season to be hard at work on informative writing. Students are learning about paragraphs and paragraph structure all the while using what they learn to explain a process, a cause or effect, or the advantages and disadvantages of a given topic. 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: December is a month with lots of distractions: Snow, snow days, snow related festivities, and snow breaks. The goal of the month is to keep the students focused on the task at hand and that is the formal outline. 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 towards memory everything else falls into place. 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.

Lightning Reading:

In December, both seventh and eighth graders will wrap up their novels (The Outsiders and The Giver) and will also prepare for the Fiction PIA test. We'll review each component of fiction and practice finding it in the novels. Students will also be creating a theme collage for their respective novels, where they find images that illustrate their novel's theme and arrange them creatively in a poster that will be displayed in the hallway.

Lightning History:

8th Grade American History:

Students in American History are now entrenched in the Revolutionary War in which America battles Great Britain for its freedom. Once students finish seeing America successfully defeat the British, they will focus on the early years of this great nation.

7th World Studies:

Students in World Studies recently learned about the rich history of Europe and Russia. Now, students will start a journey in which they focus on the culture and heritage of Europe and Russia.

Lightning Science:

In December 7th Grade students will be discovering the world of genetics. Why are some people's eyes blue and others brown? Do you have attached or unattached earlobes? Can you roll your tongue? All these questions will be answered when we look at how inherited traits are passed down from parent to off-spring. Physical Science students in 8th grade will be moving into a new book soon to discover the world of forces and energy. Our labs may look like playing with toys, but they will be learning the laws of motion!

Sky Pilots

Core 1 students are working on Multiple representations of a pattern, graph, table and equation. We'll begin Chapter 6 in Dec and begin working on writing and solving systems of equations.

Algebra classes will finish chapter 5 before the Christmas break which covers distributive property, multiplying binomials and trinomials, solving multi-variable equations, and writing and solving equations. We'll begin Chapter 6 solving systems of equations.

Geometry class is working on chapter 5 which covers special right triangles, trig ratios, the Law of Sines, and the Law of Cosines. Returning in January, we'll complete our work with the measurement of triangles and begin Chapter 6 the study of congruent triangles

Science has just begun **Atoms, and the Periodic Table**. We will work through the different groups and learn 30 elements and their symbols. We are still doing quick labs to introduce the topics to the students. Continue to log into <https://www.pearsonsuccessnet.com/> and complete the activities. These assignments are for remediation and practice.

The **Reading** classes are currently wrapping up gaining the fiction skills necessary for reading our novel, **The Giver**. The novel will reinforce the fictional reading skills of characterization, setting, plot, conflict and theme. In the past, the students really enjoyed reading this novel and how it pushed them to think outside of the box. I love teaching this book and seeing the students question the ways of Lois Lowry's created utopian society. The topics of this book provide great conversation and questioning. Be prepared to ask if your child has read his/her **Giver** assignment each night and completed the reading activity.

History classes are beginning a study of the creation of a new republic following the American Revolution. They will also familiarize themselves with the writing of the Constitution and the growing pains of a brand new nation. National Geographic's National Geography Bee competition will conclude during the month of January with a school wide winner competing for a spot at the state level bee.

This month **Communication Arts** will be starting a new writing unit where we will be reading and writing "cause and effect" explanations and designing related visuals. These activities will help students to both understand their world and explain it to someone else. Of course, we will also continue with vocabulary and grammar studies as usual.

Counselor's Corner

Middle school students still need after-school supervision

When kids reach middle school, parents may feel they no longer need to be supervised after school. But studies show that kids with too much time on their hands may be at risk of substance abuse. One study found that eighth graders who were unsupervised for 11 hours a week were twice as likely to use drugs and alcohol as those under some form of adult supervision.

Where can parents find the after-school supervision that kids need? Here are some suggestions:

- School activities. Whether your child stays after school to play in the band, work on his jump shot or attend a club meeting, he's involved with positive activities.
- Community centers. If your community does not have a preteen program, perhaps a group of volunteers could start one.
- Volunteering. Your child can gain job skills while making the world a better place.
- Youth organizations. Scouting, 4-H and many other student organizations have programs designed for middle school students.

Break your middle schooler's bad habit with rules & consequences

Your child slams his door shut each time he goes to his bedroom, and you've had about all you can take. Should you take the door off its hinges and be done with it? Maybe, but not right away. Start by inviting your child to help you address the problem--and to come up with a solution. Here's how:

- Explain the situation. "I've asked you over and over not to slam your bedroom door, but you keep doing it. We need to figure out how to solve this problem."
- Acknowledge that it's not intentional. "I understand that you're not always slamming your door on purpose. But you need to stop."
- Develop a game plan. Help your child modify his behavior by giving him a few steps to follow. "Each time you go into your room, stop, turn around and close your door." By thinking about what he's doing as he's doing it, he may be able to break the door-slamming habit.
- Outline the consequences. Be sure he understands what's at stake. "I'll give you one week to stop slamming your door. The first time it slams after that, you'll lose the privilege of keeping it closed."
- Follow through. If your child continues slamming the door after one week, either prop it open or remove it altogether. Tell him he'll earn back his privacy when he comes up with--and agrees to follow through on--another no-slamming plan.

Reprinted with permission from the December 2011 issue of *Parents Still make the difference!*® (Middle School Edition) newsletter. Copyright © 2011 The Parent Institute®, a division of NIS, Inc.

MAMS BOOK FAIR

The Maple Avenue Book Fair, from Scholastic, will be held later this year due to the change in Parent-Teachers Conference days. The Fair will run from Friday, December 9 through Friday, December 16. It will feature a variety of books along with pencils and pens, book marks and other items. There will be books of interest for middle level students, along with some for younger readers and things for parents, like cookbooks. The flyers will be coming home shortly. Please note that there are always many more items available than listed on the flyer, and that sometimes things from the flyers are not available due to high demand. The proceeds from the Fair will be used to buy books for the library. We are adding an online book fair this year. You will be able to shop from home, and there will be more items available from the online fair than the real one. You will be able to access the online fair from the LASD web site. When you have opened the district web page, select Maple Avenue, then Faculty, and finally Library. Items ordered online and will be shipped to the school for delivery to your child. If you want anything as a gift for Christmas, we will have it in the school office for you to pick up. The online fair will open November 26 and end December 16. The hours for the regular book fair will be Monday through Friday during regular school hours: 7:30 - 3:00. It will be held in the Library. We will be open on December 9 for Grandparents Day. We will also be open the evening of the Christmas Concert from 6:00 to 7:00, and for half an hour after the concert.