

Maple Avenue Middle School Newsletter

September-2011



Principal's News

Eric Naylor-Principal
Chip Fissel-Assistant Principal

P-47 THUNDERBOLT



COLLEGE PREPARATORY MATHEMATICS

The Littlestown Area School District utilizes the College Preparatory Mathematics (CPM) program in grades 6-12. The curriculum emphasizes a variety of teaching methods that include lecture, class discussions, and structured study teams. During class, students are actively working on guided investigations to develop mathematical concepts and problem solving skills.

What do we value:

- **Mathematical Understanding:** Understanding is a prerequisite to remembering, connecting and using mathematics.
- **Skill Proficiency:** Skills are necessary to succeed at the mathematical tasks that students will encounter in these courses and beyond.
- **Problem Solving:** Our students need to learn to use what they know and think logically about problems to devise effective strategies to find solutions.
- **Communication:** Our students need to be able to use mathematical language and talk and write about their ideas effectively.
- **Justification:** Our students should be able to give logical arguments to defend their reasoning both orally and in writing.
- **Mastery Over Time:** We expect our students to continue to build broader and deeper understanding of the ideas in each course as the year progresses.
- **Multiple Ways of Seeing:** We value breadth of thinking. Our students should seek, find, hear, and understand multiple ways to think about a given mathematical task.
- **Cooperative Learning:** In order to achieve many of the above-mentioned goals, our students need to work together. They need practice talking about mathematics and building deeper understanding by listening to the reasoning of other students. Therefore, it is essential that we place high value on students learning to work cooperatively.

Team Reviews: Team reviews are great opportunities for students to assess themselves and for teachers to assess the use of mathematical language, cooperation, problem solving, justification and multiple ways of seeing and representing.

First and foremost, Team Reviews should be opportunities for all students to perform well. Team reviews are utilized to prepare for individual tests and review content. The team activities contain scenarios of higher cognitive demand and tasks that require a combined team effort to solve. We want to challenge our students, but we also want them to have opportunities to show what they can do.

6th Grade News

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

In Core Connections 1, we will be working in Chapter 2. This begins with a study of the uses and how to read different plots and graphs. Next we will explore area and perimeter with a concentration on rectangles. Finally, we will finish up with work on arithmetic strategies, such as mental multiplication, estimation, greatest common factors, and using the multiplicative identity.

In Core Connections 2, we will also be working in Chapter 2. We will begin with review of decimal to fraction and fraction to decimal conversions. We will continue with an investigation of integer addition and multiplication. Finally, we will look for strategies on how to scale axes of graphs correctly.

Please make sure students are completing their homework every night. They should bring home a graded HW Chart on Mondays each week to show you. They should also start bring home graded quizzes, team reviews, and chapter tests as we move into Chapter 2.

Mrs. Becker and Mrs. Smith's science classes have been working in their first science book, *Earth's Structure*, by examining the Earth's interior. This month we will be focusing on Minerals and Rocks. We will also continue to learn more reading strategies to aid us in reading and understanding our science text book.

Students in Mrs. Smith science classes are currently studying about the structure of Earth. Students will use a variety of tools to help them in their learning. They should be reviewing study guides, vocabulary, and graphic organizers on a daily basis. They are

now registered for pearsonsuccessnet.com and can interact with our on-line science program. Students are required to keep their science materials organized into a separate binder or compartment to better enhance their learning.

Mr. Breighner and Ms. Willet's social studies classes will be starting the year learning about geography. We will study the five themes of geography, the tools that geographers use, and the Earth's physical geography. As we study the Earth we will examine how the Earth's movement affects time and seasons and what forces shape the Earth.

Mr. Crockett's reading classes are in the middle of their Poetry unit. During this unit, we learn how to read a poem four different ways to increase our comprehension. Our next unit will be our fiction unit.

Mrs. Curlen's reading classes finished the poetry unit and will take the PIA on October 17. They will continue to read the novel *Love that Dog* in class. This novel was the culminating activity for the poetry unit. The novel, by Sharon Creech, is the story of a student named Jack who is exploring poetry and looking for inspiration.

During October and November Blue Thunder reading students will be working on the fiction unit. They will be concentrating on reading fiction and reviewing literary skills. The unit focuses on plot, conflict, point of view, and theme. During the fiction unit most classes will be reading the novel *Hoot*, by Carl Hiaasen. This novel follows the themes of preserving our environment and protecting endangered species.

Aviators

School is back in session and the Aviator Team is already off the runway and soaring above the clouds. The first few weeks of classes have been excellent and all of the Aviator teachers have launched into their lessons at full-speed.

Much hard work has been completed in **communication arts** classes establishing a clear schedule to be followed the rest of the year. DOL lessons are begun on Day Ones, reviewed on Day Fives, and quizzed on Day Sixes. We also began the Classical Roots program, working through the study guide, mini-quiz, synonyms essay, puzzle worksheet, and finally the first quiz. Our next focus will be the personal narrative, specifically an eyewitness report. Please check the agenda for the week's goals and for any assignments due. Of course, homework is also entered on our homework link:

http://www.lasd.k12.pa.us/mams/Webpages/7_Grade_Team/homework/7thHomework.html

All students were shown in class how to access my website to download and copy vocab, composition, and DOL papers. My site address is <http://www.lasd.k12.pa.us/teachers/shultzb/Ind ex.html>

Science classes see clear skies ahead with the study of microscopes and the cell. As you may have noticed from the agenda or homework log on the school website, there is not much written homework in science. I have asked the students to record what they need to study in their agenda. When your child says they have nothing to study, remind them to review the information from class that day either in their paper textbook or the digital textbook on line. I don't anticipate many problems as this seems like a first class group of students with no one flying coach. If you have any questions or concerns, please email me at gallr@lasd.k12.pa.us.

World Studies class has been reviewing some of the map skills introduced last year. We've recently tested chapter 1 and now will combine a few review chapters into 1 study unit. These chapters include topics such as: culture, climate, agriculture and government.

Students, by now, should have a note book to keep current notes. We discussed how to study and how this can lead to extra credit throughout the year. One option is to complete pretests on pshschool.com. The students know how to get to the site as we covered this in class recently. I look forward to an outstanding school year working with your children. Please contact me with any questions or concerns at smithch@lasd.k12.pa.us

In **Core Connections**, we are wrapping up Chapter 1. In this chapter, students learned all about probability and how to convert fractions to decimals and percents. In Chapter 2, students will begin working with integer operations and graphing.

Algebra Connections students learned problem solving strategies in Chapter 1. In this chapter, students reviewed guess and check tables, coordinate plane, and generalizing patterns. Chapter 2 will focus on variables and proportions.

Reading is delving into poetry in the months of September and October. We will be analyzing poetry and song lyrics for a variety of techniques that poets use. The culminating project will be a comparison between a poem and another work. Look for more explanation of the project to come home later in his or her binder.

I am really excited about the wonderful group of students on the Aviator Team. I hope all students have a successful year! Please contact me with any questions or concerns. innerstk@lasd.k12.pa.us

Lightning

American History (8th Grade) - Students in American History are finishing up the early exploration and colonization of the Americas. Now that we are finished with 1492 when Columbus sailed the ocean blue, we will set our sights on beginning stages of the great nation of America. First, we will examine the original 13 colonies of America. Then, we will go into battle with our mother country, Great Britain as we fight for our independence during the Revolutionary War.

World Studies (7th Grade) - Students in World Studies have successfully completed a review of the foundations of geography. We will now be venturing into the uncharted territory of the Eastern Hemisphere. Our first stop this coming month is the continent of Europe. Along the way, we will investigate the geography, history, and culture of Europe.

CA 7th Grade: This month students will begin to analyze sentence structures and improve the contents of their own sentences. The goal of the month is to start making their ideas come alive by using figurative language, descriptions, and comparisons to help others better understand what messages they would like to convey. Students will continue to get weekly spelling and vocabulary lessons as well.

CA 8th Grade: This month students will analyze the elements of writing and identify the structure of a paragraph and a composition. Students will be expected to apply these structures to their own writing. As the month continues students will be expected to move away from a generic response to a more thoughtful and personal response in their writing. Students will continue to get weekly spelling and vocabulary lessons as well.

Life Science 7th Grade: What are cells? How do cell parts of a cell work? How do cells work together in an organism? These are the questions that we will be answering in Life Science this year through labs, projects, and teacher demonstrations! Each student will be given a "Unit Packet" of material that needs to be placed in a 3-ring binder. This material will be used to supplement the text book that we use in class. Please review daily your child's agenda book and Homework Link to help with time management and studying habits! Any questions please contact me at sandersj@lasd.k12.pa.us or call the office and leave a message! I am looking forward to working with you and your child this school year!

Physical Science 8th Grade: This year the curriculum, has been changed from Earth and Space Science to Physical and Chemistry for 8th graders! This change should hopefully help with the Science PSSA's and eventually the high School Keystone Exams. Each student will be given a "Unit Packet" of material that needs to be placed in a 3-ring binder. This material will be used to supplement the text book that we use in class. Please review daily your child's agenda book and Homework Link to help with time management and studying habits! Any questions please contact me at sandersj@lasd.k12.pa.us or call the office and leave a message! I am looking forward to working with you and your child this school year!

7th and 8th Grade Math:

All math classes have hit the ground running!! We are finishing Chapter 1 in all classes. Look for grade to be updated on MMS soon. Parents, please check in with your student about homework. Most students have been doing an outstanding job completing assignments.

Reading:

In reading, both 7th and 8th graders will be focusing on our poetry unit during the months of September and October. We'll learn to identify and interpret figurative language, imagery, sound devices, and theme. Students will wrap up the unit with a poetry glog (an online poster project) that allows them to demonstrate their knowledge of poetic analysis.

Both 7th and 8th graders are also learning reading comprehension skills through the reading of a

common novel. Seventh graders are all reading *Stormbreaker* by Anthony Horowitz, and eighth graders are reading *Holes* by Louis Sachar. All students are completing responses to the text, and some students have the opportunity to learn how to discuss the novel in a large group setting where they delve into deeper themes and social issues brought up by the text.

Student of the Month



Morgan Willet

Morgan Willet is the Lightning Team's Student of the Month. This student-leader is the daughter of Tracey and Kyle Willet. Morgan is an animal lover. She has four pets that she helps to take care of. Morgan has a Jack Russell Terrier named Scrappy, a Tabby Cat named Amber, and two gold fish: Flo and Otis. Besides being a student who excels in the classroom, Morgan participates in several sports throughout the year: field hockey, softball, and volleyball. In her spare time, Morgan loves to play video games and sing. Morgan just began her singing career at her church, the Redeemer's United Church of Christ. When asked what profession she would like to strive for, this bright student responded that she wants to attend college at Virginia Tech and major in photography. To be even more specific, Morgan wants to photograph animals and different settings in nature. Congratulations, Morgan, on achieving the Student of the Month award!

Sky Pilots

Math classes are off to a fantastic start. Students in Algebra will be assessed on writing and solving equations with variables, how to write and simplify algebraic expressions, and how to solve proportional relationships. Throughout chapter 2, students are working with algebra tiles to assist them in their problem solving. In Chapter 3 they'll learn how to represent a situation using a table, a rule and a graph. In addition, they'll graph linear and parabolic rules.

The Geometry students are learning about relationships between pairs of angles formed by transversals, angles in triangles, and finding area of triangles, parallelograms, and trapezoids. They've worked extensively on three major skills in geometry: measuring, describing and transforming. During chapter 3 students will learn how to support a mathematical statement using flowcharts and conditional statements. They will focus on the special relationships between shapes that are similar and congruent and determine if triangles are similar or congruent.

The Core Standards students are learning about variables and proportional relationships after having completed problem solving activities in Unit 1. Students will be working with graphs and equations during unit 3. In addition students are receiving instruction on grade 8 PSSA math anchors in class and during DIR.

Science has gotten off to a smooth start. We have changed the topics that will be studied. Starting this year Introduction to Chemistry, Forces and Motion, and Sound and Light will be the curriculum. Lots of hands-on activities/labs will be completed during class. There will be times where the students may bring them home...please be patient and allow them to investigate. We are planning a lot of fun in the class

Please remind your son or daughter to access the on-line science program and complete the activities and assignments. These assignments are for review and practice. These are not graded assignments. Time is given in class to utilize this program and activities. Each student has a log-in and password. If they forgot it, I will get it to them. The on-line address: <http://www.pearsonsuccessnet.com>.

Reading class is marching through our unit on Poetry. Students will soon be completing a four day poetry portfolio that will be used as a study tool for the PIA that will follow. All classes will then begin the Fiction unit. We'll become adept at analyzing the elements of literature by reading short stories and practicing vocabulary concepts in class. The short story unit will take some time to complete. However, once we get the ball rolling with this unit, students will begin reading their first novel, *The Giver*, for the eighth grade school year.

History classes are finishing up their study of the colonization of North America. The next unit of study will include a study of the French and Indian War and the causes of the American Revolution.

CA students are just finishing up a unit on Elements of Writing. This included writing poetry, completing an author study on Dr. Seuss, and writing a short play. We will follow that this October with a unit on writing a personal narrative and students will finally be getting their textbooks as we start that unit. Also we will continue with Daily Oral Language lessons to practice proofreading, and our weekly lessons in vocabulary, which culminate each Friday with a test.

Counselor's Corner

Welcome to a new school year at Maple Avenue! We encourage you to stay involved in the day-to-day experience of the middle school years. There are no other school years similar to those of the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. Please check the website, homework log, and Parent Portal weekly for updates, and never hesitate to reach out to teachers and counselors with questions or concerns. We are here with you on this journey, and our combined efforts can make all the difference in helping students find success.

Please be sure to check both the Guidance and *Parents still make the difference* web pages for helpful information. <http://www.lasd.k12.pa.us/mams/webpages/guidance/index.htm>

<http://www.lasd.k12.pa.us/mams/webpages/guidance/Parentsstillmakethedifference.html>

Student Assistance Program (SAP)

The guidance office orchestrates services to help students achieve academic and personal success. One of those services is the **Student Assistance Program (SAP)**. The SAP program helps in identifying issues including alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and mental health issues which pose a barrier to a student's success. The primary goal of the Student Assistance Program (SAP) is to help students overcome these barriers in order that they may achieve, remain in school, and advance.

The core of the program is a professionally trained team, including school staff and liaisons from community agencies. SAP team members are trained to identify problems, determine whether or not the presenting problem lies within the responsibility of the school and to make recommendations to assist the student and the parent. When the problem lies beyond the scope of the school, the SAP team will assist the parent and student so they may access services within the community. The student assistance team members do not diagnose, treat or refer to treatment; but they may refer for a screening or an assessment for treatment.

Anyone can refer a student to SAP when they are concerned about someone's behavior -- any school staff, a student's friend, or a family member. The students themselves can even go directly to the SAP team to ask for help. The SAP team contacts the parent for permission to proceed with the SAP process. If you have concerns about a student, please contact the guidance office.

From the Nurse.....

Due to new Pennsylvania state immunization laws, every student needs a 2nd Varicella vaccine, and 7th graders specifically need a 1 dose of tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis (Tdap) & 1 dose of Meningococcal (MCV). If your child does not have the required immunizations at this time, they are considered provisional.

THUNDERBOLT PRIDE STUDENTS



Back row: Hanna Riley, Gillian Scott, Emily Staub, Jenna Ballard, Amanda Dyson
Front row: Brandon Rosenblatt, Tyler Gladfelter, Ian Miller, Robert Ohler

Important Dates

- September 29 – Progress Reports Distributed
- October 7 – Picture Day
- October 10 – In Service Day - No School
- October 11 – 7th Grade Leadership Conference
- November 1 – 1st Marking Period Ends
- November 4 – Fitness Day