Principal’s Message

Dear Parents,

As I write my column for the third PTA Newsletter of the 2015-16 school year, I can hardly believe that we are already a bit past the half-way point of the third marking period. While this has been a fairly mild winter with just one snow day so far, we’re hopeful that “Old Man Winter” has decided to go north for the rest of the year!

Our Cultural Heritage Celebration was a tremendous success again this year. Under the direct leadership of a wonderful committee of parents and staff, the celebration was a magical mixture of pride and happiness as our students and many of their parents actively participated in this year’s show, as well as the table displays in the gym. What a proud night for our school! What was especially gratifying for me was that in addition to demonstrating pride in the individual cultures, our students and parents were also demonstrating their pride in being a part of this very special community of South Middle School. We are so fortunate. I am most grateful to be a part of this special community. Thank you everyone for your hard work in making this such a special celebration for our school community.

Our students have worked very hard since December to produce “Oliver” for the enjoyment of our entire school community. I want to thank them and our staff, under the direction of Mr. Gabe Carras, for bringing this classic musical to our stage once again. The production was fantastic! Thank you cast and crew for sharing your wonderful talents with us!

As you may have heard, our Board of Education has been working diligently dealing with the development of the budget for the 2016-17 school year. The budget is being very carefully developed with particular note of the current economic conditions and the tax cap. I strongly urge all of our parents to attend the remaining meetings. They are scheduled as follows: Tuesday, April 19th at 7:30 PM at South High School and Monday, May 9th at 7:30 PM at South Middle School. Please remember that the date of the budget vote is Tuesday, May 17th, and please remember to vote!! Registered voters living north of the LIRR vote at the Baker School – Multi-purpose room; and registered voters living south of the LIRR vote at South High School – West Gym. The voting booths are open from 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM.

I again want to thank you for the opportunity to work with such wonderful students. Your children make South Middle School very special. Thank you for your continued support of our school. Together we will continue our work to provide the best learning opportunities for your children.

Peace,

James R. Welsch, Ed. D. Principal
PTA President’s Message

Dear Parents:

What a busy quarter it has been! From the fabulous displays and performances at the Cultural Heritage Celebration, the sensational production of “Oliver!” to the delicious Spaghetti Dinner, the South Middle family is truly a collaboration of parents, teachers, staff and students.

Thank you to all of our parent volunteers who manned tables at Cultural Heritage, translated at the PTA meeting, and helped (solicited restaurants, sold tickets, picked up trays of pasta, served) at Spaghetti Dinner! Special thanks to Spaghetti Dinner parent co-chairs, Nancy Cohen and Lisa Goodwin!

Our eighth grade trip to Manhattan to eat at Dave and Buster’s and to see Hamilton was a huge success due to the exemplary behavior of our students. Students were completely enthralled with the blockbuster show! The show was fabulous and was such a wonderful experience for our students. My hope is that students will never forget the joy of seeing Hamilton on Broadway!

The next important “not to miss” event for our eighth graders will be the Dinner Dance at the Village Club of Lake Success held on Thursday, June 2nd from 6 to 9 pm. The cost of the dance is $50 and includes a dj, buffet, and ice cream bar. Please send in checks via the eighth grade homeroom teachers by May 6th. Please note: Parents who wish to donate extra money to help defray the cost of the dance for families who are struggling financially are welcome to do so. In addition, please know that financial assistance is available. Families needing financial assistance are asked to call Mr. Nadherny, the eighth grade counselor, at 441-4620.

Reminder regarding SMS Commencement 2016

On Friday, June 24, 2016, we have scheduled our annual commencement celebration at Great Neck South High School. Due to the limited space available at South High School, each student will receive only two tickets for our commencement ceremony. The ceremony begins at 10:30 AM, and we ask that you drop your child off no later than 9:45 AM on that morning.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email me at ptasouthmiddle@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Kuniko Langel, PTA President

8th Grade Highlights from Gina Cartolano

Our eighth grade trip to Manhattan to eat at Dave and Buster’s and to see Hamilton was a huge success due to the exemplary behavior of our students. Students were completely enthralled with the blockbuster show! The show was fabulous and was such a wonderful experience for our students. My hope is that students will never forget the joy of seeing Hamilton on Broadway!

Coming up:
- PTA Executive Board Nominations (April)
- Staff Appreciation Luncheon (May 6)
- New! Summer Book Fair (June 8-10)

NOT TO BE MISSED!

May 22 7:30pm: Spring Concert I & Art Show
May 23, 7:30pm: Spring Concert II & Art Show
June 6, 10:00AM: PTA Meeting
June 7, 6:30pm: Rebel Pops Concert

8th Grade Highlights from Gina Cartolano

Dr. Gina Cartolano

The PTA is proud to co-sponsor the author visit every year

Mr. Carras with author Ben Mikaelsen
8th Grade Trip to Hamilton
8th Grade Trip to Hamilton
**GRADE 8: TEAM A**

**ENGLISH:** In English, Mrs. Klein’s students finished reading Steve Sheinkin’s award-winning non-fiction book *Bomb: The Race to Build and Steal - the World’s Most Dangerous Weapon*. Students are in the midst of workshopping and rewriting their argumentative essays on this book. In his/her writing, each student had to present cogent and valid evidence that proved that America either was or was not justified in dropping atomic bombs on Japan in 1945. This was a challenging assignment, and students are emerging better writers because of this process-oriented approach.

The new text that 8th graders get to experience? Lorraine Hansberry’s classic drama *A Raisin in the Sun*. In class, students are learning about Chicago from the 1940s - 1960s. They have discussed patently racist practices such as restrictive covenants, redlining, and segregation in housing. They have thought about what they see and experience in their own lives in 2016. In class, students are assuming character roles and reading the text aloud to their peers. And, as many of you hopefully know, students are interviewing family members to draw a parallel connection between their own families and that of the Youngers in connection with the quest for the American dream. This is a prescient and profound drama that, although almost 60 years old, resonates with our young readers of today.

This drama is also a fantastic tie-in to having our students better appreciate our school’s very own production of *Oliver*, our 8th grade trip to see the award-winning play *Hamilton*, and our future exploration of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

**MATH:** Mr. Zweig’s math classes are gearing up for the state math assessments which will be on April 13-15. We are studying in class and doing homework assignments to hone our test taking skills. In addition to these items we will add in the PARCC Diagnostic Practice assessments. Last week all the students took a diagnostic test to see what individual topics they need to focus on. This is a great way to differentiate the learning in the math classroom.

The 8th grade Pre-Algebra classes have just completed Chapter 8. We learned how to determine the volume and total surface area of various 3-dimensional figures. In addition we drew nets of these figures using our spatial orientation skills. Our next unit is Chapter 9 where we will learn how to construct and interpret scatter plots as well as to draw lines of best fit to model data that suggest a linear association.

Algebra classes just completed graphing absolute value functions. We are starting to graph quadratic functions and compare them to the parent graphs. Finding the axis of symmetry, vertex, and min or max points is the talk in math. We will solve quadratic equations by factoring, using square roots, completing the square, and using the infamous quadratic formula. We will finish up by using the discriminate to determine the number and type of solutions of a quadratic equation. All this while we are preparing for our June 16 Common Core Regents with our daily do now Regents review questions of the day.

**SOCIAL STUDIES:** During the third quarter Mr. Bua and Mr. D’Angelo’s social studies classes have been focusing on international conflict and diplomacy, war and peace. Students have been analyzing the causes of military involvement in world events, the events themselves, and the processes that brought about resolutions. Furthermore, students have examined the results of the resolutions and how they impacted upon future relations. Conflicts covered so far include the Spanish-American War and WWI. We recently began studying WWII. The entire eighth grade will soon begin reading Ruta Sepetys’ *Between Shades of Gray*. Sepetys’ historical fiction page-turner pulls students along on a forced journey through Stalin’s Soviet Union and exemplifies tyrannical control over those less powerful. Following U.S. involvement in WWII, classes will examine the origins of the Cold War and the conflict that consumed America for half a century.

**SCIENCE:** After finishing up the geology portion of the curriculum, Mrs. Stanick and Ms. Desu’s Earth Science classes have begun to study the multitude of factors that contribute to our daily weather. We’ve been learning how air temperature, air pressure, relative humidity, winds, and the “Coriolis effect” affect the development and movement of weather systems. Students will understand how clouds form and how hail differs from sleet. They will be creating and reading a weather map. From there we will move on to investigate the causes and characteristics of various climates found around the Earth. The weather and climate units will be followed by the astronomy unit in which we will learn about our solar system and the stars.
GRADE 8: TEAM B

SCIENCE: Mr. Piteris’s and Ms. Re’s Earth Science classes are studying weather and climate, including air masses, fronts, El Nino, monsoons, and hurricanes. An emphasis will be placed on weather forecasting and how to track conditions on the Internet as well as on TV. Many have been intrigued by a phenomenon known as “virga,” where precipitation falls from clouds but re-evaporates before actually reaching the ground! The unit that follows involves water movement through the ground, with an emphasis on porosity, permeability, and capillarity. Groundwater aquifer contamination (largely from saltwater intrusion and the gasoline additive MTBE, or methyl tertiary butyl ether) and remediation on Long Island will be part of class lessons and discussions.

MATH: The students in Mr. Barbosa’s Algebra 8H class have progressed through much of the Accelerated Algebra Curriculum. They undergo rigorous assessment on a daily basis and have shown very promising results. The class has recently been assessed on the different methods of factoring, solving quadratic equations, and working with complex numbers. Connections are being made to real-world problems through discussions in class and students are regularly attending extra help in order to gain further understanding of the new material. Even as students are learning new Algebra 2 concepts, they are also keeping up with the Algebra 1 review for the Regents.

Mrs. Carroll and Mr. Barbosa’s Pre-Algebra class has made tremendous progress in the past couple of months. They have recently finished a unit on surface area and volume, and as a result of their collaboration and their hard work, received promising results on the assessment. After learning the different methods of data analysis, the students have started to review for the state exams. In order to keep the students motivated to relearn the Pre-Algebra material, they will be reviewing many relevant examples through the use of interactive games and collaborative work, while being assessed every week. Students should continue to take full advantage of extra help during lunch and after school in order to really grasp the new concepts.

Mrs. Sposito’s Common Core Algebra class has been hard at work looking at the differences and relationships of linear, quadratic and exponential equations. We have been using multiple representations of each, and have solved such equations algebraically, by using graphs, and deciphering them from real-world word problems. The students have discovered that from one quadratic equation we can find a ton of information! We are quickly approaching the end of curriculum, and will start Regents review before we know it!

SOCIAL STUDIES: Students in Mr. Isaac’s Social Studies classes are currently exploring the complexities of World War II. We have looked at the causes of the war, and of the costs and benefits of America’s decision to stay out of the conflict for so long. Using the film “Swing Kids,” students have had deep discussions about the process by which ordinary citizens can become indoctrinated to doing terrible things. Going forward, we will layer our understanding of this crucial concept with additional information provided from our whole grade reading of Between Shades of Grey and Self-Select students’ reading of The Plot Against America. We will also discuss the decisions made by the United States at war’s end about such enduring questions as how to handle the threat of Russian aggression, nuclear proliferation, and future crimes against humanity. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that students can make connections between the events of 60 years ago and the complex geopolitical realities of the present day.

ENGLISH: Students in Miss Kostopoulous’s classes began the quarter by finishing up their position papers arguing the justification of the atomic bomb. These argument essays were prepared after reading Steve Sheinkin’s nonfiction book, Bomb. Later, students took books out of the classroom library for an ORP focusing on nonfiction. They are annotating reflectively focusing on the author’s central idea and purpose. In addition, all 8th grade students are participating in a grade-wide American Dream interview project. This assignment is being done in conjunction with Lorraine Hansberry’s classic, A Raisin in the Sun. Also, as students act out the play, they will increase their background knowledge of the Civil Rights Movement, the Harlem Renaissance, and the Great Migration. These lessons will enhance their contextual understanding of the play. In addition, students have been testing out their acting skills by reading dramatically in class.

As the quarter progresses, students will work in their ELA workbooks on both reading and writing comprehension to prepare for the state exam in April. Later in the quarter, students will tap into their creative side by exploring the world of poetry. In addition, after the spring recess, students will be introduced to Shakespeare’s Globe Theater as we introduce A Midsummer Night’s Dream.

GRADE 8: TEAM C

SOCIAL STUDIES: During the third quarter, social studies focused on the theme of international conflict and diplomacy, or war and peace. Here classes analyzed the causes of military involvement in world events, the events themselves, and the processes that brought about resolutions. Furthermore, students examined the results of a resolution like The Treaty of Versailles, and how it impacted future world affairs. To foster enrichment, self-select students are reading Philip Roth’s Plot Against America, which envisioned a very different America during the Great Depression. The entire eighth grade is also reading Ruta Sepsey’s Between Shades of Gray. Sepsey’s historical fiction page-turner pulls students along on a forced journey through Stalin’s Soviet Union and exemplifies
tyrannical control over those less powerful. Following U.S. involvement in WWII, classes will examine the origins of the Cold War and the conflict that consumed America for half a century.

**ENGLISH:** To reinforce the state standards of making interdisciplinary connections, the 8th grade English teachers collaborated with their social studies colleagues in their teaching of *A Raisin in the Sun*. In light of this decision, Ms. Cahn’s students maintained a dramatic focus during March, reading Lorraine Hansberry’s classic play *A Raisin in the Sun* and analyzing the plot, themes, characters, symbols, and dramatic elements. Considering that a primary theme of *A Raisin in the Sun* is the importance of seeking aspirations, the English department is initiating an American Dream Project, a framework in which students will be investigating the American dreams of their family members. We also began to focus on the reading of classic literature, as students were required to check out classic novels for their next outside reading project. The culminating event of this task will be an interactive presentation called “Speed Dating the Classics.” In this activity, each student will create a book talk to present to his/her fellow students. The goal of the book talk is to persuade other students to “take out” the presenter’s book from the library as a second classic. April, hopefully, will engender a sense of spring. The warmer weather and foliage lends itself to figurative expression; therefore, we will expand our understanding of poetry and figurative language.

In Mr. Powder’s Pre-Algebra classes, students recently completed the unit on analysis of data. In this unit, they compared the different measures of center, and then they learned how to analyze data based upon certain criteria. Students are also moving into review mode for the New York State Assessment Exam, which is rapidly approaching.

**MATH:** In Mr. Powder’s Algebra classes, the students have been developing and graphing functions, ranging from linear, absolute value, exponential, and quadratic. Students are able to discern the differences between all types, visually through graphs and mathematically through equations.

Mr. Carras’s students have maintained a dramatic focus during March. They have been reading Lorraine Hansberry’s classic play *A Raisin in the Sun* and analyzing the story, themes, characters, and dramatic elements. The classes also conducted research into how particular members of their families experienced the American Dream, and they also read a novel of their choice for an outside reading project. As we move into spring, we will take some time to explore poetry; in May, most students will get their first taste of William Shakespeare when the entire eighth grades dives into *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

**SCIENCE:** This quarter, Earth Science students studied weather and the factors that control it. Using sling psychrometers, they determined the dew point and relative humidity of the air in and outside of the classroom, and how these factors determined the altitude of a cloud’s base. Students formed a cloud in a glass bulb, and learned how the temperature of an air mass can be changed by changing the pressure exerted on it. In the culminating lab of the weather unit, students will learn how to construct and interpret weather maps to formulate predictions.

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After as mild a winter as we could hope for, spring is upon us! It is hard to believe that we are three quarters of the way through the year (my first at South Middle), and as we prepare for the final ten weeks of the academic calendar I continue to discover what an amazing school we have. Whether witnessing our students’ tremendous accomplishments in the classrooms or seeing the passion they display in the multitude of extra-curricular activities we support, I am perpetually impressed by the smiles on your children’s faces. South Middle is a unique and extraordinary place that pulsates with an energy that is commendable and contagious.

Since our last newsletter, I participated in my first Cultural Heritage celebration and watched my first South Middle musical (Oliver! was amazing!). I am anxiously awaiting our Spaghetti Dinner, Can You Escape? event and Relay for Life Field Day which are on the horizon. South Middle provides countless opportunities, both inside and outside of the classroom, that create experiences our students will never forget. Our goal is to make the three years our students spend with us a time when they learn about themselves and the world and develop skills they will carry for a lifetime. In the next few pages, you will have an opportunity to learn about all the wonderful things going on in the 7th grade.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have at 516-441-4600 or bmcconaghy@greatneck.k12.ny.us.

All the best,

Brian McConaghy
Assistant Principal
**GRADE 7: TEAM HERO**

**ENGLISH:** Mrs. Marr’s English classes balanced assessment practice with outside reading projects, creative writing, public speaking, and poetry activities this quarter. As the English Language Arts Assessment is April 5th, 6th and 7th, 2016, seventh grade students have been reviewing the format of the assessment and brushing up on their test-taking skills on standardized tests by practicing taking sample tests and analyzing their performance in order to improve.

The Crossover by Kwame Alexander inspired this quarter’s outside reading project. The Crossover won the 2015 Newbery Honor Medal for excellence in young adult fiction. It is a novel in verse featuring a family drama and the sport of basketball. Students read fiction and nonfiction books about sports from our classroom library and from the school library. In their writing and speaking about their reading, students considered writer’s craft and persuasive writing techniques, and evaluated the books in persuasive book reviews. Students competed in a March Madness public speaking activity to determine the best sports fiction and nonfiction books for middle school readers. I hope that listening to their classmates’ presentations about books will inspire students to read, read, read! Please continue to encourage your child to read and write inside and outside of school. Better reading and writing skills help academic performance across the disciplines. If your child enjoys public speaking, please encourage him or her to join the debate club or to seek leadership positions in Student Government or other clubs and activities in the eighth grade.

As the quarter ends, students will be analyzing, writing, and sharing poetry. Students are encouraged to submit their creative work to “Rebel Pen,” South Middle’s art and literary magazine, and to read their poetry at South Middle’s Poetry Cocoa House on April 14th after school or on “Poem In Your Pocket Day” on April 21st. The fourth quarter will be devoted to reading and writing science fiction, reading nonfiction works to understand the science behind science fiction, and completing a portfolio presentation based on their digital portfolio. Maintaining a digital portfolio helps students stay organized, encourages reflection and fosters pride in their work. Students will continue to improve their vocabulary by using the Quizlet App to study words from the “Seventh Grade Essential Vocabulary” booklet, a resource of interdisciplinary academic vocabulary. Students will be receiving information about the Self-Select Honors Program in English and about the summer reading assignment.

In English and social studies Flex classes, students have been preparing video research projects within their groups. They have spent weeks researching a topic using online periodicals. They used their notes in Google Docs to gather research notes, prepare argument essays and plan their storyboard for their movie. In the computer lab, students are using iMovie to edit and arrange raw footage on their topic. Their task is to create a meaningful video to show both sides of an argument on their topic. Students are in the process of videotaping interviews. In the end, students will be using research gathered through online periodicals and the interviews to create a documentary using iMovie. Their video research projects will be on display at the Akidemy Awards Celebration at 6pm on May 10, 2016. Save the date as it promises to be a wonderful celebration of our students’ hard work!

**MATH:** In Mr. Powder’s Math 7 class, students have just completed the unit on probability. Students were able to construct simulations, and calculate basic probability based on situations. They were also able to explain the difference between theoretical and experimental probabilities. Mr. Powder’s students will be moving onto the unit on statistics and then they will be preparing for the New York State Assessment Exam, which is rapidly approaching. The Math Assessment will be given April 13-15, 2016.

In Mrs. Sposito’s Math 7 class, students are diving into the world of statistics using real world situations. They will be collecting data and analyzing it using probability, making graphs, and making future predictions. During the unit on probability, we learned a fun fact: locker combinations are actually locker permutations! As we move closer to the New York State Assessment exam, we will be spiraling in past topics to review.

Mr. Zweig’s Pre-Algebra 7 just completed Chapter 10, Statistics and Probability. We learned about measures of center and variability, mean absolute deviation, comparing populations, as well as using sampling to predict outcomes. We are gearing up for the Math State Assessments, which will take place April 13-15, by completing the daily in-class and homework assignment reviews. In addition to these items, we will add in the PARCC Diagnostic Practice assessments. Last week, all the students took a diagnostic test to see what individual topics they need to focus on to improve. This is a great way to differentiate learning in the math classroom.

**SCIENCE:** Mrs. Garg’s 7th grade science trip to the Dolan DNA Learning Center in Cold Spring Harbor, NY, was a success! The 7th grade curriculum covers DNA and genetics, so this trip was a great way for students to take what they learned in science class and apply it to real life, concrete examples. Students had the wonderful opportunity to complete hands-on activities to learn more about DNA, mutations, and how crimes can be solved using DNA sam-

(Students work with iMovie to create a video documentary.)
Students took on the roles of young geneticists as they learned about genotypes and phenotypes and how traits can be passed on from parents to their offspring. Students have practiced making Punnett squares to show the possible inheritable traits such as dimples, eye color, and the sex-linked inheritance of hemophilia and color blindness. You may wish to ask your child(ren) to explain how two brown-eyed parents may have a blue-eyed offspring, or why males have a greater chance of being color-blind. Students worked on a Create a Creature Lab and used the principles of genetics to make baby aliens and their birth certificates.

Students also studied the theory of evolution. A strong focus was placed on the evidence that scientists have collected to support this theory. Students studied fossils and other techniques (comparative anatomy, DNA sequencing, the phylogenetic tree) to better understand and determine an organism’s common ancestor. After studying evolution, students explored how the diversity of organisms in the world is classified into different groups called taxa. In this unit, students are learning about the classification of organisms and their scientific names. They are making dichotomous keys to identify new and unknown organisms. They will even have a chance to look at live protists under the microscope!

Students continued studying cell processes: photosynthesis and cellular respiration. We learned about different foods made by fermentation that are enjoyed by various cultures. Through their hands-on experiments, they were able to see how yeast, during the process of fermentation, released enough carbon dioxide to blow up a balloon!!

SOCIAL STUDIES: “A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved -- I do not expect the house to fall -- but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other.”

Abraham Lincoln, June 16, 1858

This quote from Illinois Senate candidate, Abraham Lincoln, set the course for our nation as we entered the turbulent 1860s and a devastating war between the states that tested whether a nation based on self government can long endure. Over the past two months, Mr Nahoum’s social studies classes have analyzed the people and events that have helped to define America. Along the way, we have seen the leadership abilities of Captain John Smith at Jamestown, the loyalty of George Washington, the innovative spirit of Benjamin Franklin, the quest for freedom from our Founding Fathers, the shaping of our foreign policy by James Monroe, the complexity of Andrew Jackson, the rugged individualism of William Travis and David Crockett, and the boldness of the “madman” abolitionist, John Brown. Students have analyzed primary source documents about the characters of the men who helped shape the identity of a new nation. As we move towards the end of the third quarter, we will be studying the events that led to the Civil War and the war itself. As part of our examination of the Civil War, our classes will be reading Manhunt: The 12-Day Chase for Lincoln’s Killer by James L. Swanson. Manhunt presents a riveting look into the assassination of President Lincoln in April, 1865, and the effects of his death on our nation.

As always, our classes have stayed current with the news by regularly following the 2016 presidential primaries and becoming informed on ideas such as primaries, caucuses, delegates, Super Tuesday, and the quest to determine the future of the United States.
GRADE 7: 
TEAM VOYAGER

**ENGLISH:** The winter months were a great excursion for the 7th Grade Voyagers this school year! Quite a bit of snow did not impede our learning expressway. It was a pleasure to meet Ben Mikaelsen, the author of *Petey*. In Mrs. Gianis’s English classes, the 6/7 Portal delved into a new Book Club component. Along with their 6th grade partners, they planned the reading of a challenging fiction book. Through online partnerships, students collaboratively produced reading schedules and responded to questions. Using actively-learn.com, students increased their awareness of controversial topics. In conjunction with the Persuasive Writing Unit, students researched a variation of topics from the purpose of trendy adult coloring books to heated debates on current events related to the Syrian refugees. Topics were categorized according to local, state, federal, and global confines. We brought back PAPER with the emergence of “The Paper Dolls” project!

**MATH:** Mrs. Zambrotta’s classes have been using the Plickers app, a powerful tool that lets a teacher collect real-time formative assessment data without the need for student devices. Plickers is a great lesson opener or can be used as an exit ticket. With Plickers, QR codes are held by each individual student and scanned by Mrs. Zambrotta’s iPad. They allow for quick checks to see if students are understanding big concepts and mastering key skills presented in class. The Plickers app gives all students the chance to participate and engage in classroom learning without feeling self-conscious. The teacher has the ability to show or hide student responses. As I scan the students’ QR codes, I instantly see a bar graph recording each student’s answer. My list of planned questions is in my question Queue. These usually are questions that mirror the NYS Math Assessment Test. Questions can be in the format of multiple choice or true/false. Ask your child how they enjoy this new innovative app!

**SOCIAL STUDIES:** Students in Mr. Isaac’s class have been exploring the theme of “Conflicting Ideas” and talking about how Americans have struggled for centuries to decide exactly which values and choices are right for everyone. We have looked at the rise of Andrew Jackson and compared his brand of populism to current political candidates, and we have discussed the costs and benefits of America’s unceasing desire to expand westward. Recently, students completed a project in which they designed their own travel books to teach “visitors” about key events related to this Westward Expansion. Going forward, we will be discussing the Civil War and how it ended some conflicts but started others. We will also be reading *Manhunt* along with the rest of the 7th grade and examining the impact of President Lincoln’s death on American history.

In Mr. D’Angelo’s classes, the theme of the third marking period in social studies has been “The Quest to Define America.” We started off examining the colonization of North America by the English - who settled here, why, etc... We moved on to our earliest presidents and how they shaped the early years of our country. From there we moved onto the era of Manifest Destiny. Topics such as the Oregon Trail and the California Gold Rush were studied. Clips from the Steven Spielberg miniseries “Into the West” were used to enhance the learning experience. Other topics discussed recently were the rise of Abraham Lincoln and the Republican Party and the actions of the infamous John Brown. Talking about Brown led to a philosophical discussion on the thin line between being considered a martyr or a murderer. This week begins our in depth study of the Civil War.

**SCIENCE:** Science is a truly eggs-ellent place to be in the 3rd quarter! During our studies of cell transport, we observed the effects of vinegar on the size of an egg. We learned about cell respiration, fermentation, and photosynthesis. We did labs for each of the cell processes. Next we moved on to our genetics unit, learning about different types of heredity. We did a lab where we identified our phenotypes and tried to determine our genotypes for different traits. We did a genetics lab where we created baby Snorks by mixing up the genes. Their birth announcements are created baby Snorks by mixing up the genes. Their birth announcements are

The 7th graders created visual representations of character transformations throughout their book club books. These masterpieces were displayed in a newly furnished art gallery. The 6th graders visited the gallery and used their iPads to capture their partners’ works and then provided valuable feedback. They also had the opportunity to color in the gallery to see what the hype is all about! The portal continues to be a “round-trip and back again” approach to sharing, applying, and synthesizing student-created information. As Mark Zuckerberg said, “Humans are fundamentally social. So...if a technology doesn’t actually help us socially understand each other better, it isn’t going to catch on.” We certainly can attest to that! Moving forward we are reading historical fiction novels and then studying 1776, the musical.
**GRADE 7: TEAM WONDER**

**ENGLISH:** After honing their nonfiction reading skills, students wrote persuasive essays. They brainstormed research questions, crafted and honed their thesis, gathered and angled a variety of support for their argument (anecdotes, statistics, quotes from experts, interviews, etc.), practiced different NASDQHs, addressed counter arguments, and wrote conclusions that called their readers to action.

During our next unit, students will become adept poetry readers, mining poems for figurative language and meaning. They will become experts at the SOAPSTone, a strategy that teaches students what to look for when encountering a poem. And of course, they will become poets. They will write odes, imagery poems, identity poems, found poems, and more! Students will present their original poems on their iPads.

After poetry, we will continue sharpening the skills we have been developing all year in preparation for the ELA assessment in April: recording key ideas,abbreviating, underlining key words, scanning texts, reading directions, headings, and titles, recognizing question types, using elimination strategies, writing leads, creating endings that linger in the mind of a reader, answering all parts of a task, restating, inferring, describing, explaining … we’ll do it all!

In English Flex, students participated in the 2016 *NYTimes Video Vocabulary Challenge*, using iMovie to create a 15-second video that portrayed their chosen vocabulary word. We celebrated their hard work at the 2016 Team Wonder Video Awards. Congrats to all winners and participants!

**SOCIAL STUDIES:** Mrs. Galgano’s social studies classes have begun the Thematic Unit on Conflicting Ideals and the Quest to Define America. We began our focus on the similarities and differences between the English colonies, and how the New England, Middle and Southern colonies compared and contrasted geography, economy, society, religion and government. We then pushed further west by focusing on the United States’ expansion west of the Mississippi River. During this unit the students mapped out the territories added to the U.S. and focused on why and how new territories were added. As they studied the Oregon Trail, students viewed the TNT miniseries *Into the West*, which depicts real life historical scenarios along the trail. Subsequently the focus shifted back to the East, as students compared the North and the South before the Civil War and how geography created two very different economies, societies and political viewpoints. Through their studies, students analyzed a variety of documents, which focused on both industrialization and slavery. The focus continued with the abolition movement and how differing views of slavery in the West led to the Civil War. In class students continued their study of the causes of the Civil War, including actions Congress took regarding slavery in the West, bestseller *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Bleeding Kansas, the Dred Scott decision, John Brown’s raid and the election of President Lincoln. A variety of primary sources were analyzed to create a more in-depth study of the causes.

In the coming month, students will be looking forward to examining many of the battles and events of the Civil War, including both sides’ plans to win the war, major battles, the Emancipation Proclamation, Gettysburg Address, prison camps, camp life and the contributions of women and African Americans to the war effort. Students will have the opportunity to see the Civil War first-hand, as it was the first American war to be photographed.

**MATH:** Mrs. Hodgson’s Math 7 and Pre-Algebra students started off the quarter by solving equations and inequalities, and graphing solutions to inequalities on a num
ber line. Word problems were analyzed and solved algebraically. In pre-algebra, students worked with complicated multi-step equations and word problems. Both groups then completed an in-depth unit on probability and statistics. They investigated theoretical and experimental probability, considered simple and compound events, and used the Counting Principle to figure out the number of possible outcomes of an experiment. They learned about different sampling methods, which are biased, and which yield valid results. Students interpreted graphs and made predictions based on those graphs. Measures of center were studied and used to compare populations. Students analyzed the interquartile range and the mean absolute deviation and used these as measures of variation of data.

In *Flex*, students engaged in an activity to determine the value of “pi.” After measuring the circumferences and diameters of several circles, they computed the ratios of circumference to diameter to determine a value for pi. Students computed the percent error of their results and analyzed possible sources of error. As the state assessments are soon approaching, students have been preparing for these exams by doing sample problems both in Math class and in *Flex*.

**SCIENCE:** What a busy crew we have been in the past few months! With our unit on DNA and Genetics, we began to understand how different traits are inherited and how to follow that inheritance pattern through a genetic family tree known as a pedigree. Next, we ventured on a “Virtual Voyage” to the Galapagos Islands...a very special adventure was had by all as we explored Darwin’s *Enchanted Isles*, with passports and airplane tickets in hand, attempting to understand how the Theory of Evolution was developed.

During our adventure ashore at the Dolan DNA Learning Center in Cold Spring Harbor, we conducted a DNA fingerprinting lab, investigated forensic science through a study of the Romanov family remains, and explored the various genetic mutations of fruit flies. We also previewed the new “Iceman” exhibit, which thrilled these 7th graders who learned about him in 6th grade social studies! We are currently working our way through our unit on Taxonomy, learning how to decode scientific names and classify living things according to similar characteristics. We have a boatload of exciting adventures ahead for quarter 4...stay tuned!

**GRADE 6: BLUE TEAM**

**ENGLISH:** Many of the texts we have read this year have dealt with outcasts and people trying to fit in with friends or society. We continued looking at these issues during our Book Club units in February and March.

One of the best ways for students to share their thinking and noticing about reading is to be part of a book club. Ms. Kuhn’s English classes worked together in two different rounds of books. In the first round, all of the novels dealt with segregation, Civil Rights, and discrimination. The students were able to make high-level connections between these characters and other characters we have met this year as well as have very powerful talks about these issues and how they are present in our world today. The students were responsible for having quality book club talks which focused on: plot, character analysis, connections to other novels, conflict analysis, theme, and discussing their annotations. Daily minilessons helped the students keep their talks going as well as improve the quality of these talks.

The second round of Book Clubs focused on outcasts in a school environment. The students were assigned to read *The Misfits* by James Howe. Many of our students really connect with this novel as they find similarities between themselves and the four friends presented in the novel. Students continued with their book club conversations and analysis. A final essay will be assigned and ask students to focus on the pearls of wisdom offered in the novel. These “pearls” teach many valuable life lessons that we all need to remember.

ORP #3 was assigned and it utilized two different apps on our iPads. The students were required to read a biography in the BryteWave K-12 app, and then create their own book in the Book Creator App or Keynote APP. They researched the person that they read about and then added to the biography by creating their own book. These books will be shared with their classmates when we begin presentations in March.

**SCIENCE:** In 6th grade science this quarter, we are having fun with the measurement unit. The students are having fun using real laboratory equipment such as graduated cylinders, triple beam balances, beakers, and test tubes to learn how to measure mass and volume. They did a volume lab where they mixed colored water and made all the colors of the rainbow. They really enjoyed it and they all felt (and looked) like little scientists!

For the rest of the quarter, the students will continue to learn more about measurements and matter. We will continue to do fun labs like the Bubble Gum Lab and we will understand more about how science is part of everyday life. As the weather gets warmer, we will be learning about temperature conversions and states of matter. It is going to be a fun and busy quarter for us in science again.

**MATH:** It is hard to believe that spring is nearly upon us. The days of adjusting to a new grade, school, teacher or routines have come and gone much like the winter chill and snow.

All 6th grade math students explored and practiced a variety of topics building from numerical and algebraic expressions, to writing and solving
equations, followed by functions and inequalities. In all topics, we work to bring together four key components of expressing math graphically, numerically, algebraically and in words. The ability to view and express ideas flexibly is central in these units of study.

Most recently, we studied the area of various shapes including composite and overlapping shapes. In the EP class, we also studied statistical measures such as mean, median, mode, quartiles and outliers and how they are used to describe both the center and spread of data sets.

In all classes, we work together to visualize new concepts with bar models, or graphically on number lines and the coordinate plane. We then apply these concepts in real world situations bridging our mathematical understanding with our everyday lives. Understanding any concept or skill is only the beginning. Ultimately, we strive to apply these skills to solve complex problems in the most accurate and efficient way.

In addition to our work in class, we introduced two new practices into our class to better support our learning and understanding. First, we are now posting many short videos to Google Classroom. These videos offer an opportunity to review a specific skill or question at the student’s own pace and space. Second, students are regularly asked to complete a daily reflection that is open to all members of the class. Here, students can summarize key concepts for themselves and their classmates, ask questions for clarification, or pose questions they are simply pondering based on the day’s lesson.

The sixth grade math teachers continue to work closely, planning curriculum and assessments together at their weekly meetings, so that all regular and EP students are presented with, and tested on, the same material, at the same time. This allows students to attend extra help any afternoon with any 6th grade math teacher. Students can also attend extra help at the math center during their lunch period or after school Monday through Friday.

SOCIAL STUDIES: As the clocks spring ahead, we complete our study of the Great Leap Forward. Living at the door step of Manhattan, students examined the necessities required to create a civilization and the similarities to ours today. We too find ourselves in a society created by its proximity to water. Ancient peoples did as well, making home in Mesopotamia, translating to the “land between the rivers (Tigris and Euphrates).” Students begin to comprehend the need for ancient civilizations to settle near bodies of water, in particular rivers. Students examine these ancient land and the creation of Sumer, Babylon, and Assyria. As these civilizations form we explore their development of values and beliefs, while the students reflect upon their own. Ancient peoples, now living closer together, were ruled by powerful leaders such as Sargon, Ashurbanipal, Nebuchadnezzar, and Hammurabi. In our examination of these rulers we look at what the American people will pick as their next ruler. These kings ruled according to their whims and desires, and ordinary people had few rights. The rights of these ancient peoples can be compared to a current time in which we stand in a discussion of what our own rights should look like. Hammurabi was a powerful king, who ruled ancient Babylon, and created The Code of Hammurabi. Students will discuss one of the first code of laws and judge the equality in which it handles various cases and discuss what equality looks like today.

As students become familiar with the Mesopotamian landscape, we move forward to a greater understanding of the Middle East and all that it has become in political news. Students discover the correlation between ancient empires, such as the Assyrian, and the ongoing military conflict today. Similarly, how political boundaries throughout the Middle East have transformed over time and how those borders are fluid. Together we move south into the Egyptian River Valley, explore the similarities between it, and Mesopotamia. As such students work on their ability to compare and contrast leaders and their influence on society.

As always the sixth grade social studies teachers continue to work closely, planning curriculum and assessments together at weekly meetings, so that all students are presented with, and tested on, similar material, at the same time. Students are welcome to attend extra help on Thursday afternoons and upon additional request.

GRADE 6: RED TEAM

ENGLISH: This quarter, the children became immersed in the world of classic literature with an emphasis on universal and timeless themes. We discussed what makes something a “classic.” We started in flex class with a viewing of the movie, The Wizard of Oz in our state of the art auditorium. This was an exciting shared experience.

Students also watched short video clips of famous Aesop’s Fables. They then read classic picture books, and short stories. Our Outside Reading Project was a classic novel of their choice. While they read, the students were annotating for plot, theme and hero’s journey. The culminating activity was a presentation using the Explain Everything app. Gone are the days of book reports and poster boards! Ask your children to see their work that they are so very proud of.

We are preparing for the ELA exam in flex class as well as English class. If you would like to see the booklets, ask your child to see the pink, yellow and blue booklets! The work will be ongoing in class and some work will be assigned for homework.

Our current reading and writing unit is a science fiction book club. The students had a choice to sign out an eBook from our school library using Follet Destiny on line or read the “old fashioned” way! Stay tuned for details on Google Classroom.

MATH: Common Core has continued since we last checked in with many new skills. Quarter 3
started with units on expressions and equations. All of our students learned to write a “let” statement after reading a word problem and to solve it algebraically. It is not that easy to turn our words into variables and operations but they did it with flying colors. The next unit that both classes tackled was on functions. Again, it is not just applying rules to numbers, but solving real-life situations. An example being that if a movie rental company charges a one time fee of $25 to join and $5 for every movie rented, what equation could you write to find the cost of joining the club and renting any number of movies. Then, how much would it cost to rent 1, 2, 3, or 4 movies?

We are now in the middle of the 3rd quarter and are delving into a unit on geometry. No longer do we teach just perimeter and area of simple geometric figures, but rather we find the area of composite figures composed of different geometric shapes. We will also be looking at overlapping figures where it is necessary for the children to discern the missing sides of the overlapping area. The EP students will be figuring out the effect changing the dimensions would have on perimeter and area. Take a look at their tests to see the complex problem solving skills now applied to the new course standards. The geometry unit will expand to include volume and surface area of prisms.

The EP classes are completing a unit on statistics, covering such topics as mean absolute deviation, and proving why a number in a set of data is an outlier. The regular 6th math students will cover statistics after the state exams. March is a busy school month with lots of great activities, but as April is a testing month both for English and math, we will also be spending time teaching concepts necessary for the children to be successful on the tests, while constantly reviewing the work already presented this year.

SCIENCE: We are presently immersed in the measurement unit. Mass, volume and density will be explored. What are the units for each in the metric system? Ask your children, they will know. The children are using actual laboratory equipment in science such as graduated cylinders, beakers, test tubes, and triple beam balances. We discussed the difference between mass and weight. Unfortunately going to the moon will definitely cause you to lose weight, but not mass.

“The Rainbow Lab” afforded the students to become adept in using a graduated cylinder. Using nothing more than three different colors of water (red, blue and green), six test tubes, a graduated cylinder and good measurement skills; they were able to create six colors of the rainbow, each with the same amount of volume. Have you ever wondered why a cruise ship floats on water or how a submarine can float on water and then sink? It is all about density! Density will also be explored in the measurement unit. In a few weeks you can ask your child the same question and they will be able to explain the answer to you.

We will be finishing up measurement by learning about temperature in Celsius. The students will learn how to convert from Fahrenheit to Celsius. Hopefully by the time we are done it will be at least 15°C outside and spring will finally be here.

Social Studies: Sargon, Ashurbanipal, Nebuchadnezzar, and Hammurabi. Sounds like a rock band? Not quite. They were some of the most powerful leaders in Mesopotamia. Students explored these leaders and how they went on to become influential rulers and create empires. In ancient societies, people didn’t have a courtroom in which to plead their cases. Kings ruled according to their whims and desires, and ordinary people enjoyed few rights. Hammurabi wanted to change this. The powerful king who ruled ancient Babylon had a keen sense of right and wrong. The Code of Hammurabi enacted one of the first law codes “that the strong might not oppress the weak.” This is part of the students’ study of the “land between the rivers (Tigris and Euphrates),” Mesopotamia, dubbed by historians as the “cradle of civilization.”

Our study of ancient civilizations continues with Egypt. The overarching theme for this unit was “How did the Nile influence the rise of the powerful Egyptian civilization?” “Egypt,” said the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, “is wholly the gift of the Nile.” His statement is accurate. Like Mesopotamia, Egyptian civilization was shaped by its close proximity to a river. The pyramids were considered one of ancient Egypt’s greatest achievements. When they were built, these pyramids stood as the largest structures on Earth. They illustrated Egyptians’ command of mathematics and advanced building techniques. To conclude our study of the ancient world, students will investigate “the Middle Kingdom,” China. Separated from the rest of the world by its natural features, China believed it was the center of the world. There along the Yangtze and Huang He Rivers, this major empire grew.

Since January 2011, you can’t turn on the TV or pick up a newspaper without seeing the tumult occurring in the Middle East. In an election year, the Syrian refugee crisis has taken center stage in national and global politics. Next, students will test their geography skills by learning the countries that comprise the Middle East and North Africa regions, which great cities are found there, and the major bodies of water that flow in the region. By studying these current events issues along with geography, it is our goal to enable our students to become better citizens of the world.
GRADE 6: WHITE TEAM

MATH: The sixth grade teams continue to follow the Common Core Math Curriculum. The core curriculum provides the educational resources that will enable students to become the problem solvers of the 21st century. We have been stressing problem-solving skills while working through multiple layered, real-life word problems.

Over the past few weeks, students explored functions and inequalities. For the first time, many students learned to take information from a word problem, translate it into a function or inequality, substitute numbers into a function table, and make an accompanying graph. They also solved and graphed inequalities and found the 'rule' given only some points of an equation.

EP math classes tackled the ‘Statistics’ strand. We found the ‘measures of variation’ of given data presented in various graphs. We also calculated outliers and the ‘mean absolute deviation’ of given data.

We are currently studying the ‘Geometry’ strand. Students can find the area of various two-dimensional and composite figures. They can also calculate the volume and surface-area of various three-dimensional figures.

We sometimes use flex class to review for the New York State Assessments. Ask your child about ‘Math Boot Camp’ and the other review materials he/she has been working on.

As always, the lessons and homework assignments are posted on Google Classroom. Students can always go back to previous lessons as they are all still posted from the beginning of the year. Students continue to receive ‘optional/extra’ work on Google Classroom and the ebook has a plethora of review ‘quizzes’ and tutorials.

The students have really been working hard and have grown into quite the young mathematicians!

SCIENCE: Currently, the white team scientist’s are learning how to use lab equipment to determine the mass, volume, and length of objects. Students used rulers to find the length and volume of regular solids. They are also used graduated cylinders and beakers to calculate the volume of irregular solids and liquids. Then, the students used their measuring skills to mix specific volumes of colored water to create six test tubes of water that were each a different color of the rainbow. Ask to see the picture of their final product on their iPad. The students were surprised to learn that there is a difference between mass and weight. Ask them to explain to you why they would weigh less on the moon but still be able to fit in the same size clothing! Be sure to also ask them how much they would weigh on the moon! The students will be using triple-beam balances to calculate the mass of various objects that are found in the classroom. We will finish our measurement unit by learning about density. The students will be able to explain why two objects that are the exact same volume can have different densities. Quarter 3 was filled with cooperative learning and hands-on experimentation. I am looking forward to an exciting rest of the school year.

SOCIAL STUDIES: Welcome back to Ms. Disney’s Social Studies class! This quarter, students are fine-tuning the skills they will need to be successful students of history. We’ve been reading both primary and secondary sources with attention to highlighting pertinent information and annotating the text. Students are learning how to take notes during a lesson as well, and have been introduced to several methods for doing so. Finally, the cause and effect relationship is being explored, with a particular focus on why this is one of the most important relationships in studying the past.

Did you know that you have the Sumerians to thank for the invention of the wheel? We are currently involved in the unit on Mesopotamia and the modern Middle East. Students have traveled through ancient history, meeting characters like Sargon, Hammurabi, and Nebuchadnezzar, as well as exploring ziggurats, ancient villages, and even the Hanging Gardens of Babylon! We will look at how the ancient world shaped our modern world in many ways, comparing and contrasting the ancient history with what is going on in the world today.

One of the amazing activities that took place this quarter was debating Hammurabi’s Code, arguing whether these laws promoted justice or violence. Students were encouraged to think critically about ancient civilizations and the need for strict laws with harsh punishments. We’ve also written our own test questions, read excerpts from the first known story in history (The Epic of Gilgamesh), completed webquests, and more! Next up: the Modern Middle East, and then on to Egypt! Get ready for an awesome ride through more ancient history! I know I’m excited!

ENGLISH: We have been extremely busy this quarter writing and reading. We have just completed the reading of Red Midnight by that wonderful author of Touching Spirit Bear, Ben Mikaelsen. Once again, with his wonderful use of literary devices, the students were engaged in not only the reading, but in the plight of the protagonist, a young boy escaping the horrors of his country to sail to America.

This reading experience moved us into our second persuasive essay, focusing on the Syrian Refugee crisis. With the help of our 7th grade portal partners, the topic was researched/debated, and the essay was written and edited. It has been a tremendous learning experience for both the 6th graders and the 7th graders as well.

We are now heavily involved in our Black History book club with exciting and powerful titles that span the 1890’s to 1965. The students are enjoying the freedom that book clubs provide along with the opportunity to share thoughts and grow from one another’s perspectives. It is always wonderful to watch and listen to the students as they interact with each
other on a very sophisticated level, sharing ideas about racism and the inequalities of the past. Even more exciting is listening as they relate these ideas to the world around them today!

Of course, our creative writing unit was a blast. Everyone had an opportunity to write about topics they enjoyed with only a few restrictions: all writing had to be PACTS perfect, must include literary devices and sensory details, and incorporate newly acquired vocabulary words. I must say, they rose to the occasion and many have continued to perfect their stories in extra help, in order to make them even more powerful and meaningful. Our next quarter will focus on the application of ALL we have learned – I can’t wait.

Special Area and Club Highlights

ART
South Middle Celebrates Youth Art Month in March

On Friday, February 26th South Middle kicked off its celebration of “National Youth Art Month” when sixth and seventh grade students had the opportunity to show their creative side by participating in an activity called “Make Your Mark...Design a Dot!” The creative dots were displayed in the main lobby of the school.

Later in March, students shared their creativity and love of art in “The GREAT South Middle ART EXCHANGE.” Students created an original piece of art in class and offered it to a special adult in their life, who was asked to participate in the art exchange by creating a work to exchange back. The art from the art exchange was also exhibited in the school’s main lobby.

Albert Einstein once said, “Creativity is intelligence having fun.” and the students truly enjoyed this year’s celebration of Youth Art Month by embracing the power of their creativity. – The Art Department

DIP FOR A DOLLAR TIE DYE FUNDRAISER:
The Art Department sponsored a new Relay Field Day Fundraiser on February 24th after school. Students were able to tie dye a t-shirt purple with a one-dollar donation to Relay Field Day and the American Cancer Society. It was a fun afternoon for all students involved and the shirts came out great!

ART FOUNDATIONS—GRADE 8: Students recently completed a still life drawing project using Charcoal. This was a new medium for most students. Students quickly became familiar with the different types of charcoal: compressed, vine, and white conté crayon, and executed powerful 3-tone charcoal drawings.
ART 8: The Art 8 students just finished their pastel eye drawings. The students learned pastel techniques to recreate the look of a human or animal eye. They are now beginning to create ceramic vases.

ART 7: The spring Art 7 students learned about the elements of art and principles of design to create strong, well-composed, abstract designs at the beginning of the semester. They are currently completing the Art 7 drawing unit and have rendered magnificent still life drawings with a full range of values.

ART 6: Mrs. Smith’s sixth grade art students learned about Henri Matisse and the art of papier collé or paper collage. Bright and colorful paper was used to create beautiful nature-themed collages. Students chose split-complementary color schemes and learned how to create a sense of movement in an artistic composition. Mrs. Smith’s students also studied Cubist portraits and are creating a Cubist print from their own portrait drawings.

MS. Krupala’s Art 6 students are sculpting clay animals using a variety of hand-building techniques. The students are learning how to make pinch pots, roll coils and score and slip. They will be glazing their terra-cotta pieces in the next few weeks.

PAINT FOR A CAUSE:
Thursday, April 7, 2016

Mark your calendars for South Middle’s 2nd Annual Paint for a Cause fundraiser.

Below are photos from last year’s Paint for a Cause Event. Please consider attending the event this year on April 7th. Paint for a Cause – Helping to find a cure for cancer one masterpiece at a time!
COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE

The Community Action Committee has, again, been hard at work. We kicked off 2016 with well wishes for every single student. CAC students gave their time in January to write positive messages of hope and cheer on snowflake Post-Its and affix them to every single student’s locker. In February, the CAC ran its first-ever Valentine’s Day Candygram fundraiser. Students throughout the school were surprised right before February break with Valentine’s Day Blow Pops from their friends, secret admirers, visiting author Ben Mikaelsen, Justin Bieber, and even presidential candidates. With funds raised from Box Tops, the CAC was able to provide a generous donation to the American Cancer Society and Relay for Life. In March, CAC students brainstormed some of their favorite books growing up. In support of the GNTA Book Drive for CLASP and CoPay, we used our funds to buy these books for local child care centers. CAC students created meaningful inscriptions for each of the books, explaining how and why these texts were so important to them as they grew up. Currently, CAC is looking to future outreach activities involving the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, DonorsChoose.org, the United Cerebral Palsy Association of Nassau County, as well as the Henry Viscardi School. We are fortunate to have a large population of students who are willing to work hard to make a positive change in our society; these students are the reason why our committee is so great. Thank you, parents, for inculcating in your children a sense of philanthropy and love of humankind. We CAN be the change we wish to see in the world. Please continue to collect Box Tops for Education. All box tops contributions can be turned in to Ms. Bazzani or Ms. Klein in room 623.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES

Mrs. Stefandl: The sixth grade successfully completed their pillow projects where they combined their creative talents with their recently learned sewing skills. Several students volunteered to have their projects displayed in the main office showcase. Currently students have moved to the Foods Room where they will learn how to make several nutritionally sound recipes.

Seventh grade students have learned all about the sewing machine. Recently they completed a travel pillow and have begun to work on a drawstring tote.

8TH GRADE CHEFS: Currently students are showing what they know by demonstrating to their classmates a recipe they researched. This activity allows students to construct their own knowledge in a fun and creative way. Research, presentation, management and planning skills are developed and honed during this assignment, all skills necessary as they move on to the high school. Pictured below are students demonstrating how to make dumpings.

Ms. Teixeira: Ms. Teixeira’s sixth and seventh grade classes began the third quarter developing their culinary skills and preparing several delicious recipes. In the lab, students practiced their math skills as they applied measurement adjustments for accurate results. Each class explored the scientific functions of different ingredients and the effects of variables of time and temperature. Students learned about the historical backgrounds of their recipes as well as their cultural significance. This quarter, Ms. Teixeira’s sixth graders even got to present a bit about their own heritage foodways as part of a special Cultural Heritage activity. Students designed “food flags” for their native cultures, recreating the country’s flag using traditional cultural dishes and ingredients. Students used the iPad application Quiver...
to make their food flags wave digitally in three dimensions! FACS: an encore class where core subjects are applied and come alive!

Sew Crafty Club:
The Sew Crafty Club spent the start of the new year preparing for the Cultural Heritage Celebration. Club members created almost twenty beautiful tissue paper wreaths representing the flags of the diverse cultures of South Middle School. The wreaths adorned the doors of the language hall classrooms and the school lobby windows during Multicultural Week in February.

Ms. Panzarino:
Ms. Panzarino’s sixth grade FACS class enjoyed working on the 6th Grade Pillow Project in the Sewing Lab this quarter by demonstrating their sewing skills using the line stitch and blanket stitch in order to make their own personalized pillow. Before the transition into the Foods Lab, students explored the world of Digital Citizenship. Students have begun their introduction to the Foods Lab, which includes investigating the different types of kitchen equipment, ingredient measuring techniques, kitchen safety, and the proper way to operate an oven. The implementation of the Foods Lab procedures will prepare students for success in their cooking labs.

Cooking Creations Club:
The Cooking Creations Club continues to meet every Tuesday at 3:00 pm in Room 219. During Cultural Heritage week, students made Mexican dumplings to fuse together both Mexican and Asian cuisines. Students also made mini calzones, popular in Italian cuisine, using whole wheat pizza dough and spinach in the filling. (Pictured below) Students participated in Mrs. Smith’s “Dip for A Dollar Day” selling cookies baked by the club and various brownies baked by the FACS department. All monies raised were donated to Relay for Life.

Health Education
Health 6: Sixth grade Health is well on its way to a great second semester. The students are learning about addiction and how difficult it is to stop the harmful behaviors this disease causes. They are learning that sympathy, support and compassion are important when dealing with a person with addictions. The dangers of tobacco are expressed in a skit the students perform. How do you say “No Smoking” in twelve languages? With the help of the iPad, each student is able to figure out this challenge.

When a person harasses or bullies someone with the use of electronic devices, it’s called cyber-bullying. Do you cyber-bully without being aware of it? Each student is given a survey to assess their experiences with cyber bullying. A short Pixar cartoon helps to clarify six examples of the different types of bullying. What exactly would you do if you were being bullied? Tactics to help the victim are clearly explained.

Puberty is a confusing and emotional time for children of middle school age. A comprehensive movie is shown to all the sixth graders. After the age appropriate video is completed, a discussion follows. The reasons for the changes during puberty are clearly explained. With the help of Brain Pop, the students get a chance to interact on a subject that previously seemed embarrassing and is now easier to talk about.

SADD: Friendship Day has come and gone. It was about friends watching out for each other. It encourages the children to help each other with positive decision making and choices. The objective is to keep everyone safe. Positive peer influence has proven to be one of the best ways to encourage young people to do the right thing. Bracelets were sold and exchanged between friends. The money from this fund raiser will go to the Make A Wish Foundation. A check is presented to a representative of this foundation at the March SADD meeting.

GTV The Movie Club:
And the winner is.... “Inside Out”, winning an Oscar at the Academy Awards this year. The GTV Movie Club enjoyed this wonderful movie about the emotions of a young girl. The movie club continues to welcome students for age appropriate movies and at the conclusion of the movies discussions follow. It’s been a cold winter and being able to share time with your friends after school in a comfortable environment, makes it great place to visit. Popcorn is offered to all the members every Thursday afternoon.
HEALTH 7: As the 3rd quarter got underway, the South Middle School Health Education program welcomed a new crop of eager 7th graders into the classroom. The quarter began with a strong emphasis on emotional health and embracing one’s self. As students in middle school began to develop their own identity, personality, and preferences, they’re encouraged to express themselves and potentially make connections, while recognizing similarities with others around them.

Our 7th graders have also received a vast education on First Aid, AED (Automated External Defibrillator) and CPR training. Each student was responsible for creating a presentation on a First Aid related topic and presenting it in front of the class. The projects created included the presentation of skits, poems, songs, informational slides and many more creative ideas used to pass along valuable information. The students were urged to take every lesson seriously, as you never know when you will be called to apply what you know to save someone’s life.

Lastly, the students are currently embarking on a unit it cyber-safety and cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology and devices such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites. Every day, our students, your children, are exposed to the many potential dangers raised by technology. After this unit, they will be more prepared to handle anything that may be presented to them, and know who to go to in time of need.

HEALTH 8: Our students are focusing on the ability to make healthy decisions. There are many factors that can influence actions. Friends, family, and pressure are just a few topics we discuss.

We recently had a guest speaker from the Long Island Crisis Center. She presented a workshop on teen depression. The students are aware of the warning signs and are encouraged to seek help for themselves or a friend if they are in need. The LICC is available for families 24/7/365 for help during a crisis.

Our next topic of study is alcohol and other drugs. There are many social pressures that begin in high school regarding alcohol use and underage drinking. Our goal is for all the students to be prepared for a healthy future. An excellent resource for parents is: www.drugfreeworld.org

LEGO CLUB

To celebrate Cultural Heritage week, The Lego Club made cultural heritage figures made of Legos for the front lobby showcase. Some of the sculptures included the Eiffel Tower, Japanese sushi, The Great Wall of China and flags of several nations among others.
LIBRARY

March Madness is upon us in the library! Students are voting on their favorite novels under the categories of “Classic” vs. “Modern”. Each week, the “winner” is moved into the next bracket. At the end of the month, the book with most votes will be declared the “winner” of “March Madness of Young Adult Books!”

Another exciting first happening in the library….our very first South Middle Maker Faire Spectacular! This event will give students a chance to expand their creativity through different mediums such as: coding, legos, littleBits and much more. Our Maker Faire will take place on April 5, 6 and 7 during the lunch periods. Students can sign up on the grade-level Google class-rooms. Join us and enjoy making a new creation, tinkering and interacting with other students on a variety of projects.

As always, don’t forget to check out our new books and our displays to pick out your next great read! We also have e-books in the Brytewave app that are available for all students. If you’re interested, see Mrs. Graybosch in the library.

MATH TEAM

On Saturday, February 6th, ten members of our Math Team participated in the chapter division of the annual MATHCOUNTS competition. Both Nassau County and Queens schools competed at this event, which was held in Bayside, Queens. Representing South Middle were: 8th graders Tessie D., Yilin G., David K., Kevin W., and Kevin Z.; 7th graders Jinwon (Eric) K., Anthony Z., and Allison Z.; and 6th graders Matthew T. and Jansen W.. Students competed in both individual rounds and team rounds, with the questions getting progressively more challenging as they went along.

Great Neck South’s team came in 1st place! The top three schools in each chapter advance to the state level competition, to be held at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy on March 19th. David, Tessie, Eric, Anthony and Yilin will be representing our school at States.

In addition, several of our students received individual awards at the competition – which was quite impressive! Yilin G. took first place overall! Yilin, David, Tessie, and Eric placed in the top twelve from among all students participating. This qualified them to participate in the fast-paced and challenging “Countdown Round,” where two students at a time faced off against each other to answer some very tough math questions, each within 45 seconds. It was exciting to watch all the talented math students compete and beat the clock almost every time!

Congratulations to the entire team!

MULTICULTURAL CLUB

The Multicultural Club is presently watching the choreography of dances of different Latin American countries. The students are also interested in returning to The Bristal Nursing Home where the students will laugh and dance with the senior citizens!
MUSIC

On the day before February break, South Middle was treated to another installment of the FRIDAY IN THE FRONT series, sponsored by the Rebel Pops. Each Friday morning, The Rebel Pops sponsors this musical series in the front hallway, giving the school a variety of different musical performers and styles.

To celebrate a special Valentine's Day Friday in the Front, over 30 members of the 6th, 7th and 8th grade chorus sang love songs from 2016 under the direction of Ms. Willcox. Mr. DeNise also provided guitar in the background. The Chorus and the Rebel Pops put a smile on all faces as the school began the last day before vacation.

Before that Valentine's Day performance, the Rebel Pops celebrated Ethnic Cultural Heritage Week with five straight morning performances in the front hallway, each from a different region of the world. Students played authentic Asian instruments, Mr. Ruvio played folk music from the United States, South American and the Caribbean folk music were played by a small orchestra, and surprise guest Mr. Chad Lasky from Saddle Rock School sang operatic songs from Italy, Germany and France. Mr. Lasky's performance marked the 300th concert in the front hallway sponsored by the Rebel Pops in a little over seven years. The Rebel Pops is proud to have provided over 300 concerts for South Middle and will always look to give the school informal and fun entertainment in the years to come! Remember, anyone is eligible to participate in a Friday performance, including the teachers, assistant teachers, custodians, office staff, school nurses, guidance counselors, cafeteria staff, brothers and sisters, parents, and of course your principal and assistant principals. Just contact Mr. Schwartz and he will help arrange a performance!

Earlier this March, six band students travelled to Syracuse to participate in the New York State Middle School Honor Band. This honor band, sponsored by the New York State Band Directors Association is made up of some of the finest 7th and 8th grade band students in the entire New York State. Our department wishes them congratulations on this fine honor that gives pride to our school. Our department also extends best wishes to five 7th and 8th grade instrumentalists as the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Competition has accepted them as winners. These five players (a piano duet and a flute/oboe/piano trio) will be performing the music of Mozart and others at a concert at Lincoln Center in May.

A reminder to put our Spring Concerts on your calendar: Monday, May 23rd at 7:30pm – ALL 7th and 8th GRADE MUSICIANS PERFORM Tuesday, May 24th at 7:30pm – ALL 6th GRADE MUSICIANS PERFORM Each concert is approximately no longer than an hour in length.

The public is always invited to sit in on any rehearsal of any of our performing groups, and we encourage you to actively participate if you play an instrument. Your contribution to our class would be so enormous and special. Contact Alan Schwartz at aschwartz@greatneck.k12.ny.us for any information on our Music Department.

PEER LEADER PROGRAM

The Peer Leaders continue to get involved in exciting new initiatives throughout South Middle School. Recently, the participants were thrilled to have the opportunity to help promote and introduce the Shared Decision Making initiative inspired by Tony Wagner’s work with helping students think outside the box. On March 4th the Peer Leaders pushed into seventh and eighth grade advisories to introduce them to South Middle’s “Escape the Room!” Since the Peer Leaders participated in an actual Escape the Room field trip, they were able to share their personalized feedback and ideas. In doing this, they facilitated a tremendous amount of enthusiasm within the students of South Middle in anticipation of this event. The Peer Leaders are also playing an integral role in introducing the Career Fair to the seventh grade students. They are currently talking about their experiences and enduring understandings from the event, which are going to be used in our introductory Career Fair Video. During the third quarter South Middle held a Purple Day in support of our Relay Field Day Event. The Peer Leaders proudly displayed their school spirit by wearing their purple Peer Leader shirts. The Peer Leaders are also in the process of organizing another field trip to the Henry Viscardi School. The Peer Leaders continue to be very active in the school community and we cannot thank them enough for their dedication and enthusiasm.
PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The students have been wearing the Polar heart rate monitors during Physical Education class. The students’ heart rates, percent of maximum heart rate and time in the target zone are projected on the wall using an app for the i-Pad. We are able to track our time in the target heart rate zone as well as our recovery time. Wearing the monitors has become an instant motivator in the gym!

The students have been participating in a nutrition unit. We have created activities that allow students to create meal plans using My Plate and learn about the different macronutrients and how to read food/nutrition labels. The students have completed their team sports unit with games of ultimate, team handball, speedball and 8 base kickball.

Morning Intramurals continue every morning at 7:25 in Gym 1 for basketball and Gym 2 for volleyball. After School Intramurals are held Monday thru Thursday from 3:00-4:00 in the recess area (Gym 1 or fitness center when the weather doesn’t cooperate). Bring a friend and join a game!

Athletics

The spring season began on March 29th. Our teams are practicing or playing in a game every school day. For more information, including schedules and highlights please visit our website http://www.greatneck.k12.ny.us/GNPS/SMS/athletics/index.htm

SHARED DECISION MAKING

Can you escape?

This year, the Shared Decision Making Committee has embarked on a journey inspired by Tony Wagner’s work with helping students think “outside the box.” The committee is proud to announce on Thursday, April 21st every student at South Middle School will participate in a special event, “Escape the Room.” In preparation for this day, all seventh and eighth grade Advisory groups will work together to develop ten clues that will lead to a key hidden somewhere in the classroom. On April 21st, the sixth graders will be assigned to a specific Advisory room where they will have one hour to employ their critical thinking skills in order to try and “escape the room.” As the sixth graders work to decipher the clues, the seventh and eighth graders will watch the experience unfold via FaceTime. The students and staff at South Middle are excited to participate in this unique, engaging, and adventurous learning experience!

TECHNOLOGY

8th GRADE: Some 8th graders are completing their circuit boards and nightlights. Other 8th grade classes are completing bridges and the 3D printing unit. All current 8th grade technology students will be planting seeds in the next few weeks. They have been watching the hydroponics set up of an ebb and flow tank in the STEMLAB over the winter as the marigolds and basil plants flourished.

6th GRADE: Wooden charging stations have been completed. Assembly line techniques were used to create these great projects. Students learned basic hand tool use, how to use some machines and do finishing techniques. Simple machines exploration is next in these STEM classes.

7th GRADE: Compressed air cars and egg crash vehicles are nearing completion. Speed, distance and/or crash testing will happen in the coming weeks. Transportation, materials processing, energy production/conservation, and problem solving were the main focus in these STEM classes.

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY: This semester’s photography class is busy learning to use digital cameras and Adobe Photoshop Elements. Camera functions and features are being explored and students are encouraged to experiment with composition and creativity. Upcoming special event shoots include macro shoots, bursting water balloons, fruit drop and portrait sessions. A field trip to photograph this campus during the spring bloom is being planned.
ROBOTICS: At the FIRST robotics competition on January 30th our team scored a victory and went on to the regional competition where they proved, once again, what a powerful team the SMS Robotics Team - Rebels’ Fury really is. They won the Alliance Award. We are very proud of their successes, especially the team work and problem solving that was demonstrated this year.

MAG LEV CLUB: Students have learned the basics of magnetic levitation and how to propel their cars down the track using wind, gravity, electricity or rubber band power. In the county wide competition at Brookhaven National Labs on March 16th the team placed 1st and 2nd in self-propelled motorized, 1st and 3rd place in wind powered, 3rd place in gravity and 3rd place in the appearance/to scale category. This was an amazing sweep.

SADD: SADD just celebrated the schoolwide Friends for Life campaign. SADD members are busy talking about ways to keep themselves and others safe and happy. Good decision making is what it is all about. Friendship Day bracelets were sold to help celebrate this campaign. This week the club made a donation from the proceeds to the Make A Wish foundation. This was the 21st year that Make A Wish received a donation from SADD. We are really proud of the work of our students.

GREENHOUSE CLUB: The spring flowering bulbs outside the greenhouse are just beginning to bloom. The greenhouses were shut down, and one hydroponics system moved indoors for the winter. Students recently planted tomato, basil, lettuce, marigold and petunia seeds and have watched them sprout. They are hoping to hold a plant sale just before Mother’s Day weekend to share their successful cultures that accentuate the cultural fabric of the South Middle School family.

WORLD LANGUAGES

The World Language and ENL department participated in another successful Cultural Heritage celebration! As part of this weeklong celebration, the World Language and ENL department held a Trivia contest with questions of cultures from around the world. There were three winners a day from each grade level. In addition, World Language and ENL teachers collaborated interdepartmentally to hold a Cultural Heritage Poster Contest. This was a challenging selection process since all posters were unique and culturally powerful in diverse ways. There were winners under two categories:

Artistic Poster
Grade 6 - Joonhyuk K.
Grade 7 - Irene L.
Grade 8 - Veronica K.

Computer Generated Poster
Grade 6 - Jongwon K.
Grade 7 - Michelle K.
Grade 8 - Andrew W.

This was a week of celebration and recognition to all the cultures that accentuate the cultural fabric of the South Middle School family.

CHINESE A: 6th grade students enjoyed their first Cultural Heritage Celebration at South Middle and we took advantage of this event to explore some cultural aspect of the Chinese culture as well. Our 6th graders made red envelopes, learned and role played the story of 12 zodiacs, sang celebration songs, observed and discussed the holiday traditions after watching various video clips. For many of the students, it was their first time learning about the Lunar New Year traditions. Following the special New Year unit, 6th graders started the “Animal Unit.” Students expanded their vocabularies from 12 zodiac animals to many other animals, as well as their common behaviors like: jump, run, bark, swim, etc. This was as being a culturally enriching unit!

CHINESE A: As part of the “My School Unit,” 7th graders watched two BBC documentaries: “Chinese School” and “Are Our Kids Tough Enough for Chinese School?” Students reflected upon their own school experience in South Middle and compared it to the school life of Chinese students. Together we discussed, debated and wrote feedback. Some of the feedback was really deep. For example, students wrote: “These two totally
different cultures and environments shape these two types of students very differently. Without the safety net, Chinese students must race to the top and put in their everything, but both sides can take away valuable skills from each other to create a more universal and sustainable schooling system.” “Constant nonstop revision does and will sometimes completely destroy the beauty and joy in learning new ideas and other things.”

Later in February, we started the “Health Unit.” Students had fun learning body parts vocabulary while creating their own monsters! Students also acted as “doctors,” identifying common illness symptoms, and role-played being the patient and doctor/dentist.

**French 8:** The 8th graders had the opportunity to celebrate Cultural Heritage Week by having a Chinese style “New Year Flea Market” in class. They brought their toys, school supplies, snacks, and clothing items to the class, set up booths, and used Chinese monopoly money to buy and sell. They had a great time bargaining in Chinese! All deals were made using the target language. Students participated enthusiastically. Before the class ended, they had already started to ask for another “lea market” activity.

Also during this quarter, 8th graders started the “House Unit” where they learned to describe their house/apartment using various vocabulary words and sentence patterns. They drew their house floor plans, designed interior details and carried on conversations about their living environment with classmates.

**French A:** 6th grade students enjoyed their first Cultural Heritage Celebration at South Middle and we took advantage of this event to explore some cultural aspect of the French culture as well. Each day, students researched each day some facts, whether political, cultural, or relating to literature, cooking, and sports, without forgetting science. They also learned a few odd facts about France, namely that there is only one Stop sign in all of Paris or that in order for trains to remain on schedule, kissing is not allowed on the train platforms, and yes it is an actual law! We learned how to express and ask questions about what one likes or does not like to do and students created a short iMovie project about their own favorite activities, as well as that of their best friend. Studying surprisingly enough was not rated #1, but video games was a winner!!

**French B:** During Cultural Heritage Week, our French class explored some of the culture of France and other Francophone countries, Africa being the continent with the greatest number of French speaking citizens. Interesting trivia question if anyone tries out for Jeopardy! As for French literature trivia, Google searches led the students to believe that the creators of the Broadway musical “Les Mis” also wrote the book “Les Miserables.” Victor Hugo, I am certain, would take offense, no matter how popular the play is today!

This quarter we also studied clothing and accessories and learned how to describe what one is wearing, and to comment on the style. We had some interesting conversations about fashion, discussed the importance of fashion in France and compared it to the United States. It is most interesting to learn how kids perceive style. Students also learn to shop for clothing and to recognize the European size system as well as the value of the currency. A reminder that tax on clothing in France is 20% which gave students food for thought!

We closed the Unit with a project that enabled students to review prior grammatical structures, such as the near future, and other thematic verbs and expressions. Students imagined a fictional “Mini Tour du Monde” or around the world mini tour, and picked five different places they would like to visit. They described where it is located, the weather, as well as what they would do there and what clothing they would bring. They collected and displayed images and recorded narration. Paris was one of the top destinations, but so was Antarctica, even though the shopping is less than adequate for these eloquent French speakers!

**French 8:** Eighth graders had the opportunity to celebrate Cultural Heritage Week by having a “Crepe party” and learning a few fun facts about France while enjoying a competitive game of Jeopardy. We also started to introduce the use of the past tense and how to express and relate things in chronological order. The use of French podcasts in class has allowed the students to review and listen to different real-life situations, and to realize, that, even if they did not know how to grammatically form the past tense, they could understand its use in contextual conversations.

We also watched a short award winning video that put in action a famous poem by Jacques Prevert that makes wonderful use of all the irregular forms of the past tense. Although the premise of the poem is, as so often with the French, a love story gone wrong, the students very much enjoyed the artistic aspect of the video, as well as the poem.

**Latin A:** Students in Latin A have come a long way since the second marking period! We learned a new case of nouns (the vocative case), and we can form and translate adverbs. In addition, students’ ability to complete translation passages has skyrocketed now that they can identify, form, and translate the imperfect and future tenses for first conjugations of verbs and the irregular verb etre (“to be”). Students have enjoyed studying the legendary story of Rome’s founding and learning the basics of how much ancient Roman civilization has impacted our own. For example, they learned in both Latin and Social Studies the meaning of the “Ides of March” on March 15th, the anniversary of Julius Caesar’s assassination. In the near future, we will be studying more about the Roman gods and goddesses, and progressing with our grammar curriculum, as we are now gearing up to learn the remaining past tenses.
LATIN B: Students in Latin B can now count all the way up to one thousand and have mastered the Roman numeral system! We also learned demonstrative pronouns and adjectives, which our students quickly picked up because of their ability to recognize important grammatical patterns in Latin declensions. We are ending the marking period by studying the different types of Latin clauses in preparation for our upcoming unit on relative pronouns, which we will start once the fourth marking period begins. Our seventh graders were the first students to try the app EdPuzzle, something that we have decided to keep using and spread to other Latin classes in the spring. During Cultural Heritage Week, we learned a new myth a day, and we have continued with our culture lessons by studying more mythology and the daily habits of the Romans.

LATIN 8: Latin 8 is almost done with the entire curriculum for Checkpoint A! We have completed all the grammar and are now brushing up on our knowledge of Roman history and culture. We recently reviewed Roman fashion, residences, dining, and architecture in preparation for the National Latin Exam, which we took on March 9 during class. Students left the exam feeling very confident, and are excited to get their scores in late April. In addition, we are working through our course textbook and starting to cover topics that they will see when they move to high school. We most recently completed our unit on comparing adjectives and adverbs in the positive, comparative, and superlative degrees. Soon, we will finish our textbook and start practicing advanced translation and reading comprehension passages both in preparation for June’s proficiency exam and for Latin 9 in high school.

INTRODUCTION TO SPANISH: Our students have been learning to write and speak about their families and began to investigate differences between growing up in our local communities and those communities in Spanish-speaking countries. Students also had the opportunity to share their pride in their families with the other members of their class when they interviewed each other about their favorite relatives. As they began their study of “the rooms of the house/apartment and furniture,” our students went shopping for things to buy for each room of the house. They got to take a virtual trip” to a department store in Madrid and had fun buying furniture for an entire apartment on the “budget” that they were given.

SPANISH B: Seventh grade Spanish B classes took an imaginary trip to Central America to visit a clinic there. They learned and used expressions to help them during a visit with the doctor. We also did some research into natural remedies for common ailments through the Spanish channel’s Univisión website and began to write and film a commercial for a medical product. They are making videos using iMovie on their iPads. Such a creative group of seventh graders!

SPANISH 8: This quarter, the eighth grade Spanish classes, taught by Sra. Paez and Sra. Ramos-Velita are busy exploring cultural themes in diverse parts of the Spanish-speaking world. Our students have virtually attended concerts, celebratory events, as well as theater and film! They went on a virtual tour of the Prado museum in Spain to immerse themselves in Spanish art from Velazquez to Dalí. In order to become familiar with a traditional Spanish performance, students viewed a zarzuela.

In addition, students have been exposed to authentic conversations through podcasts of native speakers from Latin America, as well as common core read to write activities which includes students’ exposure to authentic texts, such as magazine ads, emails, letters, mobile texts, etc. where students have to invite a friend to a social event or persuade someone to go with them to do a leisure activity.

ENL: The ENL students have been busy getting to know pen pals in a middle school in Texas. Students have exchanged emails with their partners, shared information about themselves and asked questions to learn more about each other.

In the ENL/ELA classes, students are honing their writing skills with the use of a workbook that systematically breaks down short response answers. It has helped them to incorporate the SLAMS acronym into their writing. Ask a student what that stands for! Their writing has already shown great improvement!

In ENL/Social Studies, students are completing projects that involved researching abolitionists and learning about the struggles of the North and the South. Presenting this information will be a great opportunity to gain confidence in public speaking while teaching the rest of the class about some of our bravest and heroic Americans.

SPANISH A: Students conducted peer conferencing with their paragraphs entitled “Mi familia” (My Family). They wrote a 5-sentence paragraph about the characteristics, the number of family members, jobs, ages, physical description and more. They created their own “Family Trees” in Spanish and designed their “dream houses” for the purpose of selling them in a local real estate market. The students also had the opportunity to look at some of the cultural aspects of “la familia” in Hispanic culture such as last names, typical milestone celebrations and where they live.
Feb. 4: Cultural Heritage Performances

Italy

Hispánico

China

India

Greece

Armenía

China

Japan

Korea

Hispánico

China

Korea

USA
Feb. 4: Cultural Heritage Displays
South Middle’s students successfully produced the musical Oliver in mid-March. The cast and crew began working in early January to prepare the show, which included such familiar standards as “Consider Yourself” and “Where is Love.” As always, this was a “full-up” Broadway show; South Middle has a rich theatrical history that is based on the idea that our students are capable of anything, so we have never done a junior version of any show.

The cast and crew were able to negotiate the weather-related havoc that came up during the rehearsal season and still thrill and entertain our audiences. The teachers who supervise the production (Mr. Carras, the director, Mr. Schwartz, the musical director, Ms. Conley, the choreographer, and Ms. DeLuca, the stage manager) worked especially hard to bring this challenging production to life.

South Middle’s theatre program will continue with the Theatre Workshop shows on Friday, June 3 at 7:00. These are short, “sketch” shows (5-10 minutes each) that involve acting, but not any singing or dancing; they are a perfect opportunity for students who would like to test their acting “chops.” Eighth graders will also have the opportunity to write and/or direct their own shows. Theatre Workshop rehearsals begin on Tuesday, April 12.
March 17-19: “Oliver!” School Musical

BLUE CAST

ORANGE CAST
Spaghetti Dinner was a huge success, thanks to our wonderful parent and staff volunteers and everyone who bought tickets. We raised nearly $4,700 for the GNSMS Service Scholarship Fund. Please thank the following establishments for their generous donations the next time you are there:

Alessio  
Angelina’s  
Angoletto’s  
Anthony’s Coal Fired  
Antonino’s  
Bagel Hut  
Bevanda  
Café Continental  
Centre Pizza  
Cipollini  
Eddie’s Pizza  
Everfresh  
Supermarket  
Fairway  
Francesca’s  
Giardino’s  
Gino’s Great Neck  
Gino’s Manhasset  
Gino’s New Hyde Park  
Gourmet Bakeshop  
Great Neck Diner  
Grimaldi  
Iavarone Brothers  
Il Bacco  
Il Toscano  

Joanne’s Pizza  
La Bottega of Great Neck  
La Bottega of Roslyn  
La Pizzeria  
La Rosa’s of W. Hempstead  
La Rotunda  
Luigi’s New Hyde Park  
Mario’s  
Martha’s Country Bakery  
Napoli  
Papa Ciro’s NHP  
Piccolo Gourmet  
Ponte Mollo  
Rainbow Variety  
Richer’s Bakery  
Seven Seas Diner  
Stop and Shop  
Stresa  
Tavern 18  
TJK Café  
Umberto’s  
Uncle Bacala’s  
United Floral  
Villa Milano  
Whole Foods