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Second Trimester Ends - Highlights!

It is hard to believe that our second trimester has come to an end. The 6-3 Knights continue to demonstrate their growing maturity and hard work as they enter the last phase of their sixth grade year at Marquardt Middle School. We also welcomed three new students to our team this trimester: **Genaro Caltenco**, **Austin Nguyen**, and **Aislyn Schaub**. All three students are acclimating well to MMS and the 6-3 Knights Team.

According to Assistant Principal Jon Pokora, many students on our team showed marked improvement in their achievement levels. We are confident that there will be a significant number of our Knights on the honor roll based on their final, second trimester grades.

Another special event that took place in February was the annual Rebecca Caudill voting. **JoLynn Bofah**, **Maria Shenny** and **Eden Dolinski** from our team were all eligible to vote for this year on the most popular young adult novels within the state of Illinois. In order to vote, Jolynn, Maria and Eden each read at least three of the 2009 Caudill nominated books. The book winner at MMS was ***Dragon Slippers*** by Jessica Day George. We will let you know the state winner in our next newsletter.

Maria Shenny also was recently awarded second prize in the “Plumbing and Mechanical Contractors Authority of Northern Illinois” poster contest. The theme of the contest was “*Do Your Part – Be Water Smart*” Maria’s poster showed how to better conserve one of planet’s most important natural resources – water! Maria won a \$175 US Savings Bond and \$50 for MMS! Maria, at Assistant Principal Pokora’s suggestion, has decided to use the \$50 prize money to purchase books for the 6th grade library. High on Maria’s list of needed new books

for the LMC, was ***The Hunger Games*** and its sequel ***Catching Fire***, by Suzanne Collins. So if you happen to check out either of these two books from our LMC, be sure to thank Maria!

On February 17, three 6-3 Knights were recognized for their outstanding ‘character counts’ attributes, at the second trimester “Character Counts” breakfast: **Vincente Gaytan** for his academic achievement, great work ethic and willingness to help out.

Iasha Patel for her academic achievement, great work ethic, and willingness to go above and beyond.

Estefany Carillo for her academic achievement, respectful demeanor, and all around great character.

Another fun event that recently took place was the annual MMS Valentines Dance. On Friday 12, 2010 over 100 sixth-graders came to the event and enjoyed dancing and socializing. In addition to the enjoyable social time, MMS students raised \$450 that will be donated to Haitian relief.

Finally, many students enjoyed another grade level reward time on February 19th. Students without any Ds or Fs or without multiple detentions were eligible to participate in a variety of activities during the last hour of the school day. Activities included open gym time, movie watching, video games, and arts and crafts! Other team and grade level reward times for eligible students are being planned for dates during the third trimester.



ISATs are coming!!

The very important Illinois Student Assessment Tests (ISATs) are coming up very soon. Tests will begin on Monday, March 1st and continue through that entire

first week of March. ISATs are a series of standardized tests that all students (Kindergarten through 8th grade) are required to take every year in Illinois. Students will take these tests only in the morning each day during the week of March 1 – 5. For our sixth graders, they will be taking two writing tests (narrative and persuasive), and three math and three reading tests. As these tests are vital assessments of your child’s yearly progress, it is imperative that your student attends school during this testing week. In order for you child to achieve his/her best results on these ISATs, we recommend that you do the following:

1. Make sure your child goes to bed early each night, and gets a good night’s sleep.
2. Make sure your child has a good breakfast, full of proteins.
3. Be sure your child comes to school with multiple sharpened #2 pencils with erasers.
4. Have your child bring his/her calculator (a ‘scientific’ one is needed, such as a TI 30). Some school-owned calculators will also be available.
5. Impress upon your child the importance of these tests in his/her academic career, as well as a reflection upon MMS. Please instill in your child the determination and confidence to try his/her best on every test.

MMS 6th grade Sports!

Just another reminder to encourage your child to participate in the upcoming spring sport of TRACK! Starting right after spring break the track season will begin. The track team at MMS is a non-cut sport and is open to all grade levels. Track has many different components that include not only running competitions, but also jumping and throwing events, too. It is a wonderful sport to improve

strength, stamina and coordination... so we hope we’ll have a lot of Knights participating on the track team come spring!



Spring Musical – *The Buddy Holly Story*

We are very pleased to announce that many of our 6-3 team Knights will be participating in the upcoming MMS Spring Musical, *The Buddy Holly Story*. Including our own **Ethan Kemperman** who will be starring in the title role! Ethan is a born showman and will be fabulous in the role of the legendary rock-and-roll icon. Ethan will be sharing the role with a former 6-3 Knight, 7th grader, Kyle Lieberum! Along with Ethan, other 6-3 Knights who will be in or helping with the show include: **JoLynn Bofah, Anna Bac, Daniella Digulio, Noemi Chalcakova, Austin Nguyen, Andrew Perez, Danielle Kaplan and Gia Tsonkonas.**

So be sure to mark you calendar to attend a performance for this show. The show will be having evening performances on April 29th and 30th!

News from the Classroom!

Mrs. Gentry’s English Classes

Mrs. Gentry’s English class has successfully wrapped up their unit on writing extended responses to literature. After being trained on the five parts of a well-written extended response, students interacted with a model composition to identify the parts. From that point, students wrote their own response to a story relating

to the immigration movement called “A Boy Comes to America.” Following this task, students wrote a class extended response with the teacher as an entire group after reading “The Great Chicago Fire.” We were able to compare the characters from each passage and also understand the common themes of courage, hope, and bravery that were revealed during these two impactful pieces. Students did an outstanding job of sharing their thoughts and input to create a very noteworthy response. Way to go!

We are heading toward persuasive writing and have begun our unit with reading multiple examples of persuasive essays that were written by previous sixth-grade students. Persuasive essays are very structured and follow a specific format. Students will be brainstorming ideas during the prewriting stage for our class paper. Period 2 will be writing to persuade the audience to consider giving MMS students monetary rewards for high grades. Period 3 will be writing a class persuasive to convince the readers to consider assigning a personal laptop to each student at MMS for educational purposes. We are looking forward to putting our thoughts together and creating some fantastic and convincing essays, which we intend to submit to our MMS Literacy Magazine that will come out at the end of the year.

Congratulations to both of Mrs. Gentry’s English classes for reaching their class reading goals. Both classes set out to read 60 books by February 12, 2010, and the goal was exceeded by both sets of students! Classes will be joining Mrs. Gentry for an ice cream lunch to celebrate their success! We look forward to setting a new class reading goal for Trimester three; of course we will aim high knowing that we are great readers!

Mrs. Becker’s English Classes

Mrs. Becker’s students wrapped up their work on how to infer important ideas, conclusions and predictions from texts. Most students showed improvement in

their inferring abilities as seen when comparing their pre- and post- test results. Way to go!

Students then turned their focus to that very important reading strategy of 'determining importance' within a text. Knowing how to read the 'clues' in a text that point to the main idea was something that students practiced with a variety of non-fiction articles. The article included topics on the ancient Mayans, to alternative energy sources, and even the worrisome "flu bug." We also spent some time discussing how to find the 'big idea' or theme in fictional writing and enjoyed watching a screenplay in our textbook come alive as a video movie. We used this screenplay-story, "*Words on a Page*" by Keith Leckie, to discuss 'theme'.

As mentioned last month, students completed their work and practice on writing effective extended responses to literature using the S.E.E.C.T. method. Mrs. Becker was very pleased to see the improvement that many students showed in writing about their ideas related to a written text. This skill will be one tested in the upcoming ISATs.

Currently, students are busy learning how to write an effective persuasive essay. We had fun talking about our favorite advertisements and 'arguing' for our favorite season of the year. Now students are taking their knowledge on persuasive communication and incorporating it into their own essay on such topics as cell phones in school, new classes for MMS, or a field trip to a professional sports game!

As we look toward the beginning of the third trimester and beyond, Mrs. Becker's students will explore poetry and figurative language, learn and practice other reading strategies such as 'questioning' and 'visualizing', and hopefully begin a novel study by springtime!

Mr. Grimmer's Math Classes

All Math classes have been preparing for the upcoming ISAT test that we will be taking the first week of March. The Honors class has wrapped up Bits and Pieces II and the regular math classes just

finished Bits and Pieces I. Both groups have moved back in to the world of Geometry and are currently working out of the book Covering and Surrounding. In this book we work on two-dimensional measurement, i.e. Area and Perimeter of two-dimensional shapes. We will be working with rectangles, triangles, parallelograms, circles, and irregular shapes; while The students get to have a hands on experience in some of these investigations with trying to find the best set up for bumper-car floor plans, dog pens, and much more.

Mrs. Drager's Science Classes

Now that the second term is completed science in the sixth grade will be looking very unified. Second term had students in both Part A and Part B of our science curriculum, third term has all the science talk in the same field areas: Electricity, Magnetism, Sound and Light. We will be spending about three weeks in each of these areas, so the concepts will be more intense with less repetition. This will mean that students need to spend time on a daily basis in review of what knowledge was being taught for the day. All students are responsible for having a notebook, or binder to keep their written notes in, and they will be issued a total of two textbooks that are to come to class each and every day. Being prepared to take in class information is important to your student's understanding of these science areas. We look forward to an exciting conclusion of our science curriculum.

Mrs. Gentry's Social Science Class

Mrs. Gentry's social studies class has just completed our unit on Ancient Rome. We have learned about the early settlers of Rome and the influence of the Greeks on Roman life and culture. A highlight from the unit was when the class performed a mock debate as an official Roman Senate. Even our Principal, Mrs. Cimaglia, was eager to join us during this exciting event. Each side of had *orators* and were given opportunities to rebuttal and earn points for their debating skills. We concluded the Roman Unit with the various factors that contributed to the fall of Rome. The last week of trimester 2 in

social studies will involved an investigation of life in the Middle Ages. This will included a popular video series, Readers Theatre, crossword puzzles, and much more!

Mrs. Becker's Social Science Class

February was full of ancient Egypt, and we ended our unit with a day known as in Mrs. Becker's room as "stations" day. Students circulated around the room to work on a variety of tasks such as writing in hieroglyphs, designing a sarcophagus, voting for the most influential Egyptian god, and examining the various 3-D projects that students completed. For the most part, students did a great job on their projects and it was fun to see the creativity that went into creating the objects. Moreover, the learning was apparent in many of the write-ups! Way to go Egyptologists!

We then turned our focus to learning about the civilizations of ancient India, and primarily the two major religions that came from ancient India: Hinduism and Buddhism.

End of Reading Incentive Program – Six Flags READ to Succeed!

Congratulations to all 6-3 Knights students who earned their free tickets to Six Flags - Great America Amusement Park. These students earned their free ticket by reading at least six (6) hours *at home* between the beginning of January and the end of February. Students also completed a reading 'log' that documented the books and amount of time read which was signed by a parent. As of the time of this newsletter, the following students have earned their free ticket to Great America: **Anna Bac, Jennifer Leanos, Alexander Glascoe, Brenda Castillo, Jorge Rodriguez, Jonathan Deeds, Sammy Gonzalez,**

Angel Colon, Josh Luedtke, Brandon Rodriguez, Eden Dolinski and Elizabeth Huerta.

Way to go... have a GREAT time at GREAT America!!!



6-3 Team Teacher Highlight - Will return in our next issue – Mrs. Becker (the last of our 6-3 Team teachers to be highlighted) was unable to make our interview for this issue, but look for her highlight next time!

Parent Teacher Conferences: Monday, March 15

Monday, March 15, 2010, will be a non-attendance day for students, instead it will be day set aside for parents to meet with teachers and to pick up their student's report card between 1 – 8 pm. While conferences are optional, some parents may be notified to schedule a conference with one or more teachers to discuss a student concern. Of course, parents are welcome to set-up a conference, by simply calling one of your student's teachers to select a time. If no conference is needed or requested, we still want you to drop by and pick up your child's report card. Any questions regarding conferences, please contact a 6-3 team teacher or the sixth grade office:

M. Becker: mbecker@d15.us 630-858-3850, ext. 6107

C. Drager: cdrager@d15.us 630-858-3850 ext. 6108

N. Gentry: ngentry@d15.us 630-858-3850, ext 6110

J. Grimmer: jgrimmer@d15.us 630-858-3850, ext 6109

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES:

February 26: Teacher Institute Day – *No student attendance*

March 1: First day of the Third Trimester – New Student Schedules

March 1 – 5: ISAT Testing in the mornings

March 4: Character Counts Raffle

March 15: Parent Teacher Conference and Report Card Pick-up from 1 to 8 pm. **No Student Attendance**

March 18: Parent Visitation Day at MMS

March 27 – April 4: Spring Break – **No attendance.**



is coming!!!!