

RLMS Curriculum Corner - December 2017

Counseling/Dean News- December 2017

Even Middle Schoolers Feel the Stressors of the Holidays

<https://www.amle.org/BrowsebyTopic/WhatsNew/WNDet/TabId/270/ArtMID/888/ArticleID/364/Holidays-Are-Stressful-for-Middle-Schoolers-Too.aspx>

According to the National Association of Health Education Centers, the chief stressor for students ages 9-13 is school. That is no surprise to any parent/guardian of a middle schooler. But did you ever consider the effects of the holiday season on our middle schooler?

As the holidays approach, the stressors are compounded. The holidays are filled with anxiety from a multitude of factors; 1.) the anticipated long stretches of time with nothing to do, 2.) interactions with family members are not particularly preferable...they much prefer being with their friends, 3.) sometimes schools deepen the stress by ramping up the schoolwork as a way of keeping kids focused and busy, 4.) preparation for holiday programs and projects change the routine enough to bring on new stress, 5.) shopping and busy weekend schedules, and of course, 6.) viewing and comparing everyone's "fun-filled" holiday festivities via social media.

Parents and guardians can help middle schoolers deal with this stress by doing the following.

Acknowledge that holiday stress does exist.

Preparing for the holidays can be fun if we understand that for the middle schoolers, it's not always as fun as it was when they were "little." This acknowledgement will go a long way for your middle schooler. Letting them know that you know that this can be a hard time for them helps them ease up a little bit and it might allow them to be less hard on themselves for any negative feelings that exist.

Teach stress-reduction techniques.

Breathing techniques, body relaxation, mental imaging, and journaling to reduce stress. This is a good time as a family to model relaxation techniques or to do them together as a family. Introduce yoga, coloring or listening to calming music as part of your daily routine in attempts to slow down the rapid pace/frenzy of the holidays.

Don't let your stress get in the way.

Students who are under stress are going to act out. Kids are going to talk back more, engage in more fights, and be meaner to each other than at other times. You are the adult; work to keep yourself on an even keel. Raising your voice and losing your patience with students only adds to their tension.

Get middle schoolers to think beyond themselves.

Most middle schools encourage students to participate in service projects at this time of year, i.e., our RLMS Student Leadership Club's Annual Canned Food Drive. Incorporate quality time doing something to help lessen the needs of others and focusing on the issues behind those needs. Middle schoolers focused on others' needs is actually a huge stress-reliever for them.

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World Language - Dec Curriculum Update

French/Spanish

6th Grade Level 10A Spanish and French

Students have begun the creation of their “cultural identity” which they will use to explore the target culture. They will further develop this cultural identity by including such things as a typical family, house, and leisure time activities of their target culture. Students are learning how to describe and exchange information related to preferences. They will be learning to describe their physical and personality characteristics, as well as those of family members and friends.

7th Grade Level 10B Spanish and French

We are wrapping up Unit 3- How do I manage my time? Students had an opportunity to view each other's Google Sites to learn about a typical school day in the target culture and make comparisons with student life in Fairfield. 10B students are now beginning to investigate and explore how creativity is expressed through art and music and other means in Unit 4 - How do I use my imagination?

8th Grade Level 20 Spanish and French

In unit 2, 8th grade students will define the meaning of responsible consumerism in order to understand what is required to maintain a healthy environment. They will also investigate how the media influences our perspective and how our habits have impacted the environment. In addition, students will consider ways in which to address the issues related to consumerism.

UA- Art/Computer/FCS/Health/Music/PE- Dec Update

Art

Grade 6 ART

6th Grade art students are in the middle of their first unit in Value. They are learning how to shade with a variety of tones to create the illusion of 3D form on a flat surface. They have been practicing, and are now working on a realistic animal drawing, applying their new knowledge and skills. They will then move to a unit in observational drawing, and applying value with color.

Grade 7 ART

7th Grade art students have begun the marking period with their 3D form unit, creating an expressive clay mug. They are learning and utilizing various clay building methods and techniques to form their mug, make and attach a handle, as well as a relief sculpture of their choice. They will soon be finalizing their mug forms and moving on to a unit in color theory.

Grade 8 2D ART

Students in 2D art are working on their pen and ink drawings. They have learned and practiced a variety of pen techniques to show different textures and values. Students then selected an image of their choice to translate into a drawing using the pen techniques. They will be working on this project for the next couple of weeks.

Grade 8 3D ART

3D art students are learning how to construct a hand built pottery form using the coil building method. They have drawn their forms on paper, and are now translating them into a 3D piece of pottery. This process involves adding coils, knitting them together, then smoothing. Students will continue with these forms up until our winter break.

Mrs. Walker:

6th Grade Computers: Students have continued to learn more features of MS PowerPoint, such as inserting and editing pictures, changing the indent using the ruler, aligning and distributing objects on a slide, and copying formats using the format painter. They have learned all the tips and tricks of MS Paint, and then each student has drawn an original Future Me illustration. Independently, students have continued to practice their keyboarding skills using Typing Pals.

8th Grade Computers: Students are continuing to learn to code. We are progressing through the lessons in Unit 2, using the online program called CODE.ORG. Specifically, students are learning about loops, nested repeats, conditional while, if/else, and functions & variables. At the end of certain lessons, students are asked to create a project on their own. They are provided with specific instructions, as well as a rubric for each project. Projects completed include a Nested Repeat Design Project, Basic Picture Project, and even a Star Wars game.

6th Grade Computers Mr. Boocks:

Students are progressing through the Typing Pal software and will take their first test this week. Additionally students have created collaborative calendars using Google Docs. They will begin learning how to utilize spreadsheets this week. They will continue with Typing Pal.

6th Grade Computers Mr. McAleese:

Students are progressing through the Typing Pal software and have completed 2 tests to date. Additionally students have created surveys and submitted them to classmates using Google “Forms” and their Gmail accounts which were setup with contacts and groups. They will continue with Typing Pal.

Family and Consumer Science

Food Lab - Lori Kempton

6th Grade: Students will begin learning the essential skills of knife cutting techniques and safety in the kitchen. Students will be introduced to the standard units of measuring ingredients with the proper techniques and tools. After they have mastered their knife skills they will make Vegetable Cheesy Quesadillas and enjoy them with their classmates.

7th Grade: : Students are making Breakfast Burritos with peppers and onions. They are so proud of themselves as they practice their knife and cooking skills. Students gain independence in the kitchen as they prepare their Family Meal Projects. They are required to plan, shop, cook and clean up. Students are so proud to complete this all by themselves! Go 7th graders!



8th Grade:

Students above are busy making fresh marinara sauce to top their pizzas along with some fresh sauteed veggies. Later in December, students will learn how to make a healthy apple pie with a lattice crust from scratch. Then we are off to the computer lab to research a country of their choice, find a recipe to make, and then share their creations with the class. Students will present their research findings to the class. After the break we start Chicken Caesar salad.

Sewing Lab Mrs. Flashman

6th grade

In 6th grade all students learn about home and life safety. The focus of the unit is how to put out a small kitchen fire by covering the pan and turning off the stove as well as planning escape routes from the home.

Captain Bill Kessler comes as our guest speaker and he is always a highlight.



7th grade Students use the serger for the first time. It has 4 threads and a razor blade. They seem

to enjoy using it as it sews fast and they don't thread it!

8th grade These collage quilts speak for themselves.



HEALTH - Mr. Dickenson

Grade 6: In December the 6th grade will learn about bullying, sexual harassment, alcohol and bad friendships.

Grade 7: In December the 7th grade will learn about marijuana, bullying, sexual harassment, and conflict resolution.

Grade 8: In December the 8th grade will learn about abusive relationships, love, abstinence, and a review on HIV.

HEALTH - Ms. Maline

Grade 6: We will be finishing up bullying, cyberbullying and sexual harassment. There will be a test that will be announced on these topics including friendships. After the friendship unit we will begin the drug unit that will cover; smoking- vaping, alcohol, marijuana and inhalants.

Grade 7: We will be discussing eating disorders, popularity, and online safety which will include sexting. There will be a test on the above. The next unit will be on diversity.

Grade 8: The *WHO I AM* Projects will be presented the first week in December. This was designed to take steps toward building self- esteem in having a realistic idea of themselves: their strengths and challenges, likes and dislikes. Knowing who we are helps us to like who you are. A sense of self-worth is critical for developing resilience, adaptability and an “I can do it” attitude helps us learn, grow and cope with life’s frustrations and inevitable problems. We have been discussing the importance of boundaries and will continue with sexual harassment/assault, and date rape drugs.

Music

Band 6: The 6th grade band is looking forward to our upcoming concert and working hard to be our best. After the concerts are over, we will view the show on the big screen in the auditorium and critique the performance. Work will resume in our “Standard of Excellence” books and soon enough we'll be getting new band pieces, in addition to working on our 3 major scales (Bb, Eb, and F concert). Students will begin to be tested on those scales starting in January and they need to be performed individually from memory.

Band 7: The 7th grade band is very excited about our upcoming winter concert on Tuesday, December 5th - students should report to the band room at 6:30pm, concert begins at 7pm. We had a fantastic trip to the Rose Theater, Jazz at Lincoln center on November 17th - the 7th and 8th grade band students had the opportunity to learn first hand about the life and music of the great bandleader and clarinetist Benny Goodman, and listen to the Lincoln Center Jazz orchestra perform some of his works. It was a fantastic experience and we hope to return again, next year!

Band 8: The 8th grade band is working on multiple projects. 9 students will be auditioning for the Western Region Band Festival. The auditions are being held on December 2nd at Ponus Ridge Middle School in Norwalk. If our RLMS students are accepted they will be attending the Western Region Band and Chorus Festival on March 16-17th.

The 8th Band students are working on their concert performance December 11th.

Chorus

6- The 6th grade chorus was excited to perform in our first middle school concert on Monday December 4! In December, students will review concert performance etiquette and will reflect on their performance by viewing a recording of it and through class discussion. In music theory, students will learn how to read notes on leger lines in treble and bass clef.

7- In December, students will review treble clef and bass clef note names and notes on leger lines.

8-The 8th grade chorus is putting the final touches on our musical selections for our winter concert on Monday December 11! Students should wear black pants/skirt and a white shirt (boys, with a tie.) No sneakers, please. Chorus students should meet in the chorus room at 6:45 pm. The concert starts at 7:00. In December, students will review notes that move up or down by step in treble and bass clef staves. Students will be introduced to the term interval and how to read and sing intervals of a second.

Keyboard Music 6, 7, 8

Grade 6 -

In December, we continue studying Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, Eroica (Heroic). Our Piano Suite song for this month is *Twinkle, Twinkle* - level 1. Listening Drills, Rhythm Dictations, Rhythmic Equations, Time Signatures and Counting become more challenging, combining elements we learned in September, October, November.

Grade 7 -

Our Piano Suite song for December is *Are You Sleeping* - level 2. We will continue working on Rhythm Dictations, Rhythmic Equations, Listening Drills, Time Signatures and Counting. Elements we learned in September, October, November are combined and become more challenging.

Grade 8 -

Our Piano Suite song for December is student choice: *Away In A Manger* **or** *The Candles of Hanukkah* - level 2. We will continue working on Rhythm Dictations, Rhythmic Equations,

Listening Drills, Time Signatures and Counting. Elements we learned in September, October, November are combined and become more challenging.

Orchestra - Mr. Kroqi

Grade 6 orchestra: After the concert, in the month of December we will review the concert and will start working on “I Can Read Music” book. Reading and technique will be our main focus.

Grade 7: After the concert, in the month of December we will review the concert and will restart working on “I Can Read Music” book. Reading, technique and scales will be our main focus.

Grade 8: Orchestra students are very excited about their performance on Monday December 11th. Students must report in the orchestra room by 6:30. Winter Concert starts at 7pm. Please refer to the concert info letter regarding the dress code and all other important information.

After the concert, in the month of December we will review the concert and will start working on new music. Reading, technique, scales and solos will be our main focus.

Technology Education Department

Technology Education 7th (Mr. Boocks):

Students have learned how to create orthographic projections and are currently learning how to create stop motion films. They will be moving into notepads and then the woodshop portion of the class next week.

Communication (Mr. Boocks)

Students are creating stop motion films, SCRATCH video games and photo blending utilizing Photoshop. They will continue with these three labs (switching between labs) for the next two weeks.

Transportation (Mr. Boocks)

Students have learned how to safely use the scroll saw, drill press, miter saw, miter box and hot glue guns. Students have also learned how to create a set of blueprints to complete the planning stages of development in our labs. They will continue to use these skills to build vehicles throughout the semester.

Technology Education Department Mr. McAleese:

7th Technology Education (Mr. McAleese):

Students have drawn a 3D model of the Memo-Holder box which will be the first project fabricated in the Materials Processing Lab. Students used Sketchup CAD software to accomplish this and have discovered the interesting and difficult things about working in a 3D environment. We have also begun safety lessons in the Lab and used the Chop Saw to rough cut material to start fabricating the box.

8th Transportation Tech (Mr.McAleese):

Students have begun to explore the world of transportation by discussing different aspects of flight, the forces involved and the ones to overcome in both rocketry and Lighter Than Air equipment (Hot Air Balloons). Students fabricated their rockets and are halfway through the balloons. Weather permitting we will be outside this week launching both.

8th Manufacturing (Mr. McAleese):

Students have designed three plaques using Microsoft Publisher software. After selecting one design, students moved into the Materials Processing Lab to learn about machine and tool safety, followed by discussions about proper layout, relief cuts, and use of the bandsaw to rough cut their plaques. Next steps will involve finish cutting, sanding and staining and polyurethaning. All of this gives students a taste of the Design Process as it is used in Manufacturing from beginning to end, including a brief lesson on packaging.

Physical Education: Physical education classes are continuing with units in our nine week rotation. Activities include project adventure, handball, and floor hockey. Some classes are beginning a new unit in indoor soccer. We will conclude our rotation at the end of the month and we will begin our winter rotation.

Crew 6 LMS-December Update

Language Arts Grade 6 - We are wrapping up our whole class novel study of *Tuck Everlasting*. After students finish reading the book, they will enjoy viewing the movie version of the novel to compare/contrast the two types of media. Students will also begin writing a literary essay on character change as the culminating assignment.

Math Grade 6 - Math 6 will be finishing the unit on algebraic expressions and properties and begin to explore geometry. Students will build on prior knowledge of area and perimeter and see how these concepts are applied to non-rectangular shapes. Students will explore different polygon shapes and learn how to use formulas for finding area and perimeter of these figures. Parallelograms, triangles and trapezoids will be studied.

TPA students are continuing the unit dealing with ratios, rates and proportions. Students will start writing, graphing and solving proportions. They will then begin to look at slope and direct variation. We will also begin to look more deeply into percent. Students will work with percent proportions and percent equations, percent increase and decrease, discounts, markups and simple interest.

Social Studies Grade 6 -

In Social Studies, we are in the midst of learning about the North Africa and Southwest Asia region. The focus has been on physical geography, culture, and history. Students are connecting modern day issues to the countries in this region. We will be connecting the characteristics of a civilization to Ancient Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt. Students will understand that these civilizations were advanced and had a stable food supply, government, specialized labor, social levels and a highly developed culture.

Science Grade 6- We have started studying the fundamental principles of meteorology and weather forecasting. The students are learning about the water cycle, clouds, air masses and fronts, and weather forecasting. They will use this knowledge to analyze weather maps as they develop their own understanding of the relationships between air pressure and clouds, factors that influence climate, weather fronts and the jet stream. The students will use real time interactive weather maps to complete their research and then present findings to the class.

7LM - December 2017

Language Arts:

Students are either in or moving toward book clubs this month. Within this unit they will independently practice, with the assistance of their small group, the close reading skills of the last unit. They will engage interactively throughout the 3 week unit to strengthen their verbal and written analytical skills. When these activities are done the classes will be moving on to an opinion writing unit.

One thing parents can do, if they'd like, is ask their child their opinion about a book they've read or a current event that's of interest to them.

Math:

Pre Algebra 7 - Students will continue to learn about Linear Relationships and Functions. This unit will continue through December and then students will enter into the unit of two dimensional geometry.

Math 7 - Students will finish up solving multi-step equations. (distributing, combining like, isolating a variable) The next step for students will be to learn about inequalities.

Science: In December, 7th grade science will explore the cell nucleus with our unit on genetics. Students will determine their own dominant and recessive traits as well as how to determine offspring traits based on their parents. There will be practice problems with aliens, SpongeBob and even celebrities!

Social Studies: In December, 7th grade Social Studies students will be learning about Climate Controls. Students will learn that these 5 factors have an affect on our climate. After learning about these factors, they will then apply what they have learned and create a new layer to their Simunition Island. They will also learn how to interpret a Climograph , how to make one using Google sheets and why they are useful tools. Toward the end of the month we will be working on a short research piece in the LMC on Natural Hazards.

8LMS December Update

Language Arts: This month students in our classrooms will be considering how various perspectives in texts create appreciation of the human experience tied to the real event. They will be considering how the choices that an author or artist makes affects the way we understand and interpret texts and art.

Math PA: In Pre-Algebra, students have begun the unit on linear relationships and functions. This includes representing relations and functions in a variety of ways, with a focus on tables, equations, and graphs. Students will apply these concepts to different real-world situations and discover similarities and differences between linear and nonlinear relationships.

Math Algebra: Students in the Algebra classes have begun the unit on systems of linear equations and inequalities, building on concepts from previous units. At the end of the month the students will revisit and expand on some concepts from previous math courses, namely square and cube roots, the real numbers system, and fraction and decimal conversions.

Math Geometry: The Geometry class is studying triangle congruence and the many postulates, theorems, and corollaries that can be applied to prove two triangles are congruent. Later in the

month the class will start looking at properties among the parts of a single triangle, including its midsegments, angle and perpendicular bisectors, medians, and altitudes.

Science: Eighth grade science students are completing a unit on gravity and will begin studying Newton's laws of motion.

Social Studies: In Social Studies this month students are learning about the institution of slavery and reading the novel *Day of Tears* by Julius Lester. After the novel students will investigate how economic, cultural, and political differences between the North and the South led to the Civil War.