

RLMS Curriculum Corner - December 2018

7LMS - Dec 2018

Language Arts: Within book groups this month students are independently practicing their analytical reading and growing within their ability to discuss literary analysis in small groups. From here we will be moving towards editorial reading and looking at how structure and author's craft can help develop a powerful argument.

Math: Pre Algebra 7 - Students generalize their knowledge of proportional situations to linear relationships and connect the constant of proportionality seen in tables and graphs to the rate of change (slope). They also represent linear relationships using tables, equations, and graphs. They will write equations in $y=mx+b$ form and learn how the slope (m) portrays the relationship between the variables.

Math 7 - Students will use variables to represent quantities in a real-world or mathematical problem and construct simple equations and inequalities to solve problems by reasoning about the quantities. Students will be focusing on solving one and two step equations and inequalities.

Science: In December, 7th grade science will be embarking on a genetic journey! Students will explore the difference between dominant and recessive traits and determine the genetics of Smiley faces and SpongeBob using Punnett Squares. The month will culminate with a case study project on genetic disorders.

Social Studies: In December the Geography team at RLMS is busy building islands and applying all that we have learned since September. SimuNation is a hands on learning experience that culminates months of learning about the physical structure of the Earth. We will finish 2018 with a project examining the way we rebuild from Natural Hazards. Should we continue to rebuild in areas that are affected by storms, fires, or floods. In January we will ring in the new year with a celebration of culture and diversity.

8LM Dec Update

Language Arts: This month, students in our language arts classrooms will be analyzing how various perspectives in texts create appreciation of the human experience as it relates to the real event depicted in the text. Students will be considering how the choices that an author or artist makes affects the way we understand and interpret texts and art.

Math PA: The Pre-Algebra students have begun a unit on functions, with a focus on linear functions. We will discover what it means for a relation to be a function, how to represent functions in different ways, how to identify if a function is linear or nonlinear, and how the different elements of linear relationships can be analyzed in order to create equations, tables, graphs, and word descriptions.

Math Algebra: In Algebra, we are in the midst of studying Systems of Linear Equations and Inequalities. After this unit, we will begin to learn about the Real Number System, including classifications of real numbers, square and cube roots, and fraction and decimal conversions.

Math Geometry: Students in Geometry are studying triangle congruence and the accompanying properties of these figures. The following unit will be looking at properties within a single triangle when special segments, such as bisectors and altitudes, are constructed. We will continue to write two-column, flow, and paragraph proofs, and we will even be introduced to the concept of indirect proof, otherwise known as proof by contradiction.

Science: In Science students are finishing a unit on Newton's laws before moving on to study energy.

Social Studies: In Social Studies this month students are learning about the institution of slavery after having just finished 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.

Crew 6 LMS- Dec Update

Language Arts Grade 6 - 6th graders are continuing to develop their grammar and writing skills as they begin a unit on writing a literary essay based on character change. Using mentor texts, students will learn the prerequisite skills necessary for crafting a well-written literary essay. Some of the skills that will be modeled in class include writing a clear controlling idea, integrating direct quotations, and culminating with a strong conclusion.

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 -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.

World Language - Dec 2018 Curriculum Update

French/Spanish

6th Grade Level 10A Spanish and French

As we begin the 2nd ½ of Unit 1, (Who Am I?) students continue to express likes and dislikes as they relate to extra-curricular activities. Students are discovering a new range of such activities across cultures and they are beginning to add detail using prepositions and connectors in their writing. Later in this same unit, students will learn how to describe their personal and physical characteristics before describing family and friends in Unit 2.

7th Grade Level 10B Spanish and French

Our students will begin Unit 4 answering the essential question *How do I use my imagination?* They will investigate art and music in the target culture and explore how creativity is expressed through art, music, and other means. The learners will give examples, investigate artwork and music, and express their opinions on these topics as well as compare them to art and music from

the United States. Additionally, we will be discussing popular instruments and genres of music from the various countries we are studying and the United States.

8th Grade Level 20 Spanish and French

Students have begun Unit 2 answering the essential question *What do we really need?* We have started to define responsible consumerism and are looking at how the media influences what we want and what we buy. We have compared Black Friday and Cyber Monday shopping in the US to the target cultures and learned about #GivingTuesday, an international movement to promote giving.

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

Art Department

ART 6th:

6th Grade art students are working on their graphite animal drawings, learning about how to apply shading techniques to show the illusion of 3D form on a flat surface. They have completed the introductory grid drawing stage, and are now really using shading and values to make their drawings come to life! We will be moving on to our unit in design with linoleum block printing by mid December, with a focus on creating a graphic image using carving techniques.

ART 7th:

Students in 7th grade art are deep in the middle of their color theory unit, learning about how color is organized, how to mix various colors, and they have explored a little bit of the science and psychology of color as well! They are working on their kaleidoscope paintings using this color knowledge, and their work is coming along very nicely! Next, we will begin our sculpture unit, using clay to sculpt animals in the style of the Oaxacan artists of Mexico.

2D ART 8th:

2D art students are working hard on their pen and ink drawing unit. They have finalized their initial grid drawings and are now applying ink to their final drawings. Students are using stippling, hatching, cross-hatching, or a combination of techniques on their drawings. Next, we will move on to our painting unit, in which students will create an acrylic painting on canvas based on a reference photo.

3D ART 8th:

3D artists are in the middle of their coil pottery unit, focusing on constructing their clay forms and smoothing them. They will continue to build for another few weeks, and also add

embellishments to their forms to enhance them. Pottery forms will be completed before our winter break, and will be bisque fired in the kiln in January, at which point students can apply glazes to their pieces.

Computers

COMPUTERS: Mrs. Walker

6th Grade Computers: Students continue 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 will be learning all the tips and tricks of MS Paint, and then students will each draw an original Future Me illustration. Independently, students continue to practice their keyboarding skills using Typing Pals.

8th Grade Computers: Students continue 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 to be completed include a Nested Repeat Design Project, Basic Picture Project, and even a Star Wars game.

COMPUTERS: Mr. Boocks

6th Grade Computers :

Students are progressing very well in Typing Pal. They have learned proper posture, proper finger placement, and are typing at an excellent rate. The next few weeks will see us manipulating graphics, learning the MS office suite and focusing on combining computer skills to produce projects.

COMPUTERS: Mr. McAleese (Mr. Mac)

6th Grade Computers :

Students have progressed well, using the Typing Pal program to learn and reinforce computer keyboarding skills. Students set-up their Gmail accounts with contacts and groups, and then created surveys which were submitted to classmates using Google "Forms". They will continue with Typing Pal progressing through 8 Steps (levels). While this is happening we will do other projects using both Microsoft products and Google products. The next one is letter writing. Students have selected someone famous to write a letter to as a way of learning about how to structure a proper letter, with return address, greeting, body of the letter and signature. I will mail these to the subjects, provided I receive back SIGNED letters from parents as a sign of approval.

We hope to receive a reply that can be displayed on our wall of fame, currently exhibiting one letter from the White House as a reply to last year's student writing.

Family and Consumer Science

FOOD LAB: Mrs. Kempton

6th Grade:

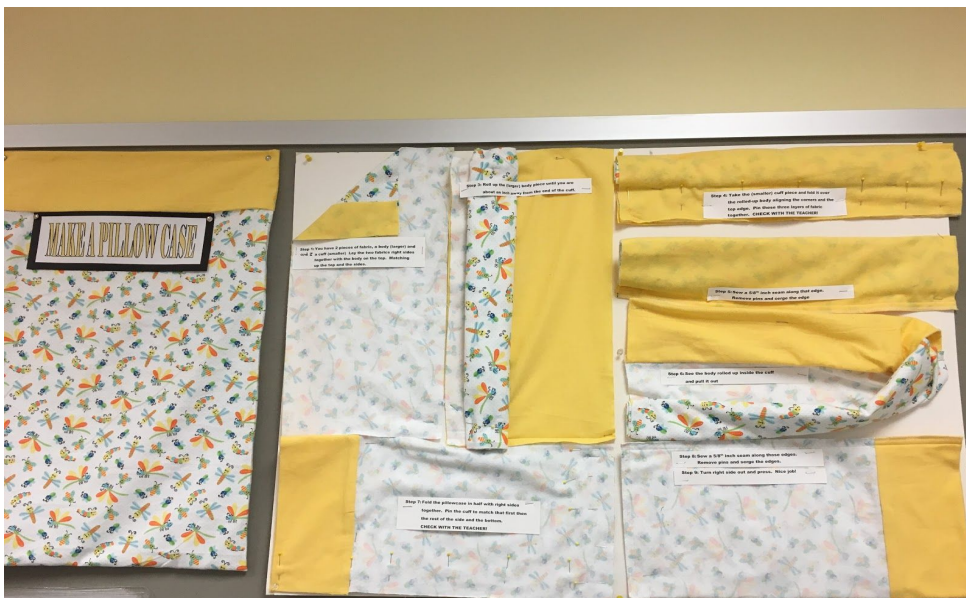
Students begin foods by learning proper measuring techniques while exercising their kitchen math skills. Students will then bake a tasty and healthy cookie with their lab teams. Next students will then be introduced to knife skills as they prepare veggie quesadillas.

7th Grade: Students learn the importance of a healthy breakfast while preparing whole wheat pancakes, breakfast burritos, and scrambled eggs. Students will collaborate and use their teamwork skills for each lab. Students begin planning a healthy breakfast menu for their Family Meal Projects. They are required to plan, shop, cook and clean for their family breakfast and present to the class with their new chromebooks! Students are so proud to exhibit their independant cooking skills to the class.

8th Grade: Students now focus more on independent cooking skills as they prepare a multicultural dish with their lab teams. Students choose a country, a recipe, and then execute the dish to share with the class. Students will prepare a corresponding visual and present their research on their country and explain why their country eats what they do. Next, students begin their cake decorating unit and utilize a food processor to prepare a healthy cake to take home.

SEWING LAB: Mrs. Flashman

6th grade: Sewing class is construction. Students learn planning and process. To assist in this they have well written and illustrated directions, demonstration, and samples. Here is an example of the directions for making a pillowcase extra project.



7th grade: After students finish the step I've demonstrated they may make extra projects. These projects reinforce what they've already learned such as right sides together and accurate seam allowances.

We are trying something new this year. We have 13 new, digital sewing machines. The students learn to thread the machines but do not thread/unthread at the beginning and end of the period. This has given them additional time to sew. Also, these new machines jam much less easily which lessens frustration. The students may rotate on and off the digital machines as they complete their pinning. It seems to be working well so far. If your student seems to be getting a lot out of the class, **please** encourage them to sign up for it in 8th grade. This quarter, 8th grade students are making quilts, pajama pants and large pillows.



8th grade Fabric Art

Sewing in 8th grade is very different than in 6th and 7th. It is creative design using improvisation. This is possible now that students have learned the process. Working together, we collaborate to make something meaningful for the student.. We are connected to textiles from birth to grave yet they are underappreciated; in recent history fabric has become a disposable item. Most students make a quilt. A quilt represents security and warmth while historically conveying a message which often was the only voice some people had.

Health Department

HEALTH - Mr. Dickenson

Health 6th: For grade 6 in December we will be learning about sexual harassment, alcohol, and healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Health 7th: In December we will be learning about marijuana, bullying and sexual harassment.

Health 8th: In December we will be learning about love, abstinence, coping with depression, and suicide prevention awareness.

HEALTH - Ms. Maline

6th Grade : We will begin the drug unit which will include; Tobacco/vaping. Marijuana, Inhalants and Alcohol. At the end of the drug unit we will have a class discussing our “Natural Highs”. (*What floats our boat and toasts our bagel.*)

7th Grade : On Tuesday, December 4th ; students will take the Eating Disorder test that will also include: Self Talk, Self Esteem, Body Image and Online Safety. The unit on Diversity will follow.

8th Grade : We are finishing up Unhealthy -Abusive relationships. There will be an upcoming test that will include Sexual assault, Date Rape drugs, Abstinence, HIV and Love and Infatuation. The upcoming date will be posted on messenger. Afterwards we will begin our Alcohol unit. The Who I Am project will be given out next week and the due date will be sent in messenger.

Music Department

Music-BAND:

Band 6th: Mr. Jeffries

Students are getting ready for their very first middle school band concert coming up on Tuesday, December 11th at 7pm. Music will include a dramatic opening work entitled Antagonist. This is followed by Escapade which is a quirky composition containing unusual instruments and close harmonies. The Band will conclude with a seasonal arrangement of Winter Wonderland in traditional swing style. The students have worked very diligently on these pieces and much more. Please come and hear your children perform during this very busy time of the year. We hope to see you there.

Band 8th: Mr. Bilotta

The 8th grade band is continuing to prepare for our winter concert on Thursday, December 13th at 7PM. All students (and parents) have received a concert information letter including where to be and when and also what to wear. [Click here for another copy of the concert letter.](#) If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

We also have four students auditioning for the Western Region Middle School Music Festival this month at Ponus Ridge Middle School in Norwalk. We are so happy and excited to see our students going above and beyond!

Jazz band auditions at RLMS have also taken place. Congratulations to the many 8th grade band students who made it and will be a part of the RLMS Jazz Band!

The next few weeks are the final push as we approach our winter concert. After that, we'll begin the process all over again as we begin to work on new music for the spring concert.

Contact Mr. Bilotta: mbilotta@fairfieldschools.org

Band website: rlmsband.weebly.com

Music-KEYBOARD: Mr. Albright

Keyboard 6th: In December, we will have another *Rhythm Dictation*, continue to work on learning how to *Sightread*, and a new level 1 Piano Suite Song, *Twinkle Little Star*.

Keyboard 7th: Our focus for December in Music Theory is the *Grand Staff, Ledger Lines, Low & High Pitches*. We will continue to work on Sightreading. Our level 2 Piano Suite song for the month is *Jingle Bells*.

Keyboard 8th: Our December focus in Music Theory is *Key Signatures* - the sharp keys of G and D Major, and the flat keys of F and Bb Major. *Sightreading* practice expands to include 4 beats in a measure and 8 measure phrases/exercises. *Melodic Dictation* begins with 4 tunes; Mary Had a Little Lamb, Are You Sleeping, Twinkle Little Star, and Yankee Doodle. After recording each tune, we will add chords, a bass track, and drums. Our level 3 Piano song is *Jingle Bells*

Music - CHORUS: Mrs. Lafond

<https://sites.google.com/a/fairfieldschools.net/rlms-music/chorus>

Chorus 6th: The 6th grade chorus is gearing up for their first middle school concert! In December, students are going to rehearse together as a full chorus for the first time. They will practice singing posture, concert etiquette and following the conductor in a large rehearsal setting. The concert is on Tuesday, December 11th at 7:00 pm. Students will meet at 6:45. The period 7 class will meet in the chorus room and the period 6 class will meet in the cafeteria. Please open the link above and read the Parent Concert Letter 2018 for additional information.

Chorus 7th: The 7th grade concert is around the corner! All 246 7th grade chorus members will rehearse as one in the auditorium before the big night. They will practice choral skills including singing in three part harmony for the first time as an ensemble, concert and rehearsal etiquette and following a conductor in a large rehearsal setting. The concert is on Wednesday December 12th at 7:00 pm. Students will meet at 6:45. The period 1 class will meet in the chorus room. The period 2 class will meet in the cafeteria. Please open the link above and read the Parent Concert Letter 2018 for additional information.

Chorus 8th: Have you seen “Bohemian Rhapsody” yet? Well, no need to go to the movies! Just come to the 8th grade winter concert to hear our rendition of Queen’s “Somebody To Love.” Students are putting the finishing touches on their concert repertoire, and in early December auditions were held for soloists in two of the selections. The concert is on Thursday, December 13th at 7:00 pm. Students will meet at 6:45. The period 4 class will meet in the chorus room and the period 5 class will meet in the cafeteria. Please open the link above and read the Parent Concert Letter 2018 for additional information.

Technology Education Department

TECH ED: Mr. Boocks

Technology Education 7th:

The students just started with me this past week. We are learning the offset and printing process, and then learning how to properly set and bind as part of the printing process. Students will be looking at stop-motion films, the systems model, and designing and completing small labs over the course of the next few weeks.

Communication 8th:

Students are finishing their stop-motion films. The class will be moving on to Photoshop and image manipulation, and then to board game creation for the final lab. Please ask your learner to see their movie in the next week or so!

Transportation 8th:

Learners have finished their first project and just began their second. They have now gone through the entire design process and will be utilizing knowledge from the first go around to design and build a mousetrap powered vehicle.

TECH ED: Mr. McAleese:

7th Technology Education (Mr.McAleese):

Currently, students are creating wooden boxes to hold the notepads they will design in their next rotation with Mr. Richards. Students have now used the chop saw, band saw, miter saw, miter box and various sanding machines and tools. The final steps are staining, assembly and packaging. They will be finishing their boxes this week and switching with Mr. Richard’s students to do more computer based Technology Labs.

8th Transportation Tech (Mr. McAleese):

Students completed fabrication of both their rockets and hot air balloons, while we are awaiting good weather to launch both. Along the way we learned about various forces, potential and kinetic energy, friction, drag, etc. Next we move onto land transport in the form of mousetrap powered vehicles.

8th Manufacturing (Mr. McAleese):

Students have all completed their introductory manufacturing project, the letter plaque. Following computer based design of their letters, students selected, measured and cut their rough wood using various hand tools and machines such as bandsaws, jig saws, etc. They then did the detail cutting with similar tools, and finally moved on to sanding, staining and polyurethaning of the finished project. They are in the process of researching something to fabricate for their final independent work. Students must present a completed detailed drawing with dimensions as well as a materials list. If approved, they may start work on the project to be completed by the end of the Marking Period.

Physical Education: Mr. Cunningham, Ms. Delahunt, Ms. Glogan, Mr. Syrop

This month the PE department will be rotating their classes through 4 separate units, The units will be floor hockey, soccer, team handball, and Project Adventure. During their time in the three team sports, students will spend the first few classes working on the skills related to that sport. They will do lead up games that use this skills to prepare them for game situations. Emphasis will be on teamwork, team concepts of offense and defense, moving to open space, and sportsmanship.

Project Adventure will focus primarily on cooperative games and initiatives. During this time student will be led through a variety of activities aimed at teaching them the skills of cooperation, communication, and problem solving. Activities are meant to challenge the students, both physically and mentally to achieve a common goal.

Counseling/Dean Curriculum Corner- Dec 2018

December is here, and with it, that all too familiar holiday frenzy... and the stress that comes with this time of year. Add in a forgotten assignment, a poor grade, a missed bus, whatever it is, stress is also a familiar experience for middle school students. In fact, our young adolescents

experience academic and social challenges and learn to deal with disappointment, which in and of itself, can trigger the stress response.

“Stress” is partly rooted in the word “distress” and is related to the latin word for something that is tight, drawn together and compressed, the internal emotional experience is similar. When there is too much stress in our system it can also be hard to stop and regroup. It’s never too late to improve our ability to manage when the stress response takes over.

Common signs that the mind-body is stressed:

- Cravings for sweets or starchy foods
- Not sleeping well
- Irritated, angry or frustrated more often
- Trouble concentrating and remembering

There is an old adage “You are what you eat” .. new studies in brain science tell us ***we are what we think***. In order to gain a better understanding of how our body responds to stress, there are ways to be intentional and help slow down the stress response.

1- **Develop awareness** which is one of the most important skills for healthy coping. When we become intentional in our awareness of thoughts feelings, habits and behaviors, then we can assess them, keep what works and change what doesn’t. The ability to recognize and make sense of thoughts, perceptions and feelings requires self reflection and mindfulness.

2- **Self-management** is how we regulate our needs and feelings, including minimizing our reactivity to negative emotions and lowering their intensity.

3-. **Check the facts and problem-solving** are useful for changing or reducing stress. Emotions often fuel our thoughts, talking through situations/problems can help.

So before the holiday frenzy takes over, consider the following:

- Listen to what your body is telling you; acknowledge the positive feelings and discomfort
- Adhere to healthy eating habits and avoid overindulgence.
- Take a breather - make time to refresh, spending just 15 minutes alone without distractions is one way to refresh.
- Exercise - it is one of the most effective ways to achieve significant mood enhancement, anxiety and stress reduction.
- Engage with others in social/community activities, avoid isolating.

The RLMS Counseling team extends wishes for a low-stress and happy holiday!

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