

MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

Volume 7 Issue 7

HAMS

April 2013

Principal's Message

Dear Parents,

I can see warmth on the horizon.



As we move into Spring, some of our most important work is yet to be done. That work being our Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) test that reflects student's performance and progress. All students grade 6 through 8 will take the Math and Reading assessments on April 9, 10, & 11 and the 8th graders will also take the Science PSSA on April 23rd & 24th. Our students have shown strong performance in the past and I expect no different this year.

In preparation for these assessments, our teachers gear their lessons each day towards meeting standards set by the state in each subject area. These standards are transitioning to the "Common Core Standards" next year. Our teachers have been reviewing the new standards and aligning our curriculum to the new Pennsylvania Common Core Standards.

The Keystone exam for Algebra I students will be on May 14th and May 15th. Please help us by stating the importance of these assessments to your child and encourage them to do their best.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call.



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Congratulations and Hats off to our Student of the Month!!

Student of the Month

March

Emily Kurtz	Amanda Wentz
Nick Zanic	Tiara Garlock
Carrie Hawbaker	Matt Sellers

Student of the Month

April

Victoria Wiser	Andrew Lewis
Christine Stone	Drew Weglarz
Kim Stratton	Kristen Ewing

MISSION

Working together to inspire all students to become lifelong learners and productive global citizens

VISION

Every day, all students are challenged to develop their full potential and experience success leaving school inspired and eager to return the next day

VALUES

Safety, Respect, Collaboration, Empowerment

Huntingdon Area

Middle School

“Working together so all students can learn”



6-BEARS

What Do You Know About Pennsylvania's Groundwater?

During the last couple of weeks, sixth grade students have been studying groundwater and the issues affecting Pennsylvania's groundwater. To spark students' concern for the quality of our water and to make them aware of various conditions that impact groundwater, the Sixth

Grade Bears read "Groundwater - A Primer for Pennsylvanians" and completed a double entry journal.

In the journal, one side of the page was utilized for writing information from the booklet and directly across from the information, the students wrote their reactions.

Following are some of the reactions the students recorded:

What shocked me was that twenty inches of the 41 annual inches of rainfall gets evaporated. I never knew that so much water got evaporated. Nellie

The article stated that 37% of Pennsylvania's population uses groundwater from wells. Cool! I use a well at my house, so I use groundwater everyday. Taylor

From the information presented I learned that common agricultural practices such as fertilizing and applying pesticides are coming under increased scrutiny, because groundwater samples have revealed nitrates and in some cases, pesticides. In thinking about this, I realized that fertilizer can be washed away into streams and rivers contaminating streams and rivers or it can soak into the ground and become groundwater. While, even worse, pesticides will wash into a river hurting the plants and animals living there or they soak into the soil, hurting living things there, and then become groundwater, hurting us! Bella

I read that on the basis of recent cleanup efforts, some experts are beginning to think that once contaminated, aquifers cannot be restored with the present technology to original purity. I am wondering if the contamination cannot be confined, and cannot be reversed, will we be able to find another source of freshwater that is pure enough to drink? Allison

6-BEARS Cont.

Paved roads, parking lots, and roofs cover the surface of the ground causing water to run off, therefore not allowing groundwater recharge. When I read this, I came to the conclusion that urbanization causes a lot of negative effects on groundwater. Jacob

It is expensive and difficult to clean up and detect contamination of groundwater. DEP is responsible for cleaning up and detecting contaminated groundwater. My idea is that prevention doesn't cost anything, so why can't we do it? It doesn't make sense why people choose to throw trash on the ground when a trash can is right next to them. Catherine

Oil contaminates groundwater. As I read this, I thought that it's hard to believe that when oil and gas are spilled or leak out of cars and trucks that it eventually soaks into the groundwater and contaminates it. Hayden

There is no law that is specifically focused on management of the quality or quantity of groundwater. Can you believe that? It needs to change. Aaliyah

As the booklet said "Public education has a vital role to play in protecting groundwater." I thought, that's why we're reading this! That way we will grow up and learn to care about the environment! Morgan



6-CATS

Making Reading Fun

In order for children to enjoy reading and make it a significant part of their lives, they must be motivated to explore new books and stories. We know that children are motivated to read when they are provided with opportunities to become more involved in the reading process. This is what we have strived to do this year in 6th grade with guided reading. When children feel that they are a part of the action or can relate the action to their own personal experiences, they will develop a very positive attitude toward reading development. At home you may want to try these motivators to help make reading fun:

Be sure your child has plenty of opportunities to see you reading (and enjoying it). Take time to tell your child about some of the things you are reading.

Help your child set up his or her own home library system. Have your child sort their books into different categories (i.e. scary books, fun books, action, etc.) Make signs to go along with each category.

Have your child make up “reviews” for some of his or her own books.

Have your child write letters to some prominent people in our community. Ask them about their favorite books and why they enjoy them. This may be a stimulus for your child to read them, too.

After they are done reading a book have them create an art project that depicts the book or characters in the book.

Finally, give your child lots of praise as he or she is reading. A little praise each day can go a long way toward building successful students and readers.

Helping your child develop the skills necessary to become a successful reader can be one of the most important jobs you do. Setting a good example involves more than giving you child lots of books. It also involves motivating them to read and explore new books and stories. In addition it involves a measure of encouragement and respect for your child as they are becoming young adults.

Happy reading!

7 –BEARS /CATS

Kids, we need to come up with a clever cheer to get us revved up for the PSSA’s in April! That’s your job; mine is to get you ready mentally. Therefore, during the next couple of weeks we will be continuing on with the Literary Terms. We will also be reviewing some very important test-taking strategies. By using practice samples from the Dept. of Ed., you will be ready and hopefully comfortable with the test procedures. It’s going to be an “all work and no play” time of the year.

Keep your chin up and you’ll be just fine! (If you can find one example of alliteration in this passage, you get a bonus point!) Currently in the 7 Cats Science classes, we are studying the six kingdoms of life. Students chose a kingdom of life and created a faux Facebook page describing their kingdom. The next section discusses symbiosis, which is the relationship between two or more species. Students will extract protists from termites to observe the mutualism between the two species. In Language Arts, we are studying paragraph and essay structure. We are also exploring the writing process and students are writing an essay on a topic of their choice. So, far there have been some very interesting topic choices which range from the Titanic to the mystery surrounding Bigfoot. Next month, students will begin their study of poetry.

In Algebra we are studying properties of polynomials and then we will be moving into factoring polynomials. We are also focusing on preparing for the Keystone exam which will be taken at the beginning of May. In Pre-Algebra and Holt 2 we are studying probability, as well as, focusing on reviewing topics for the upcoming PSSA test in April.



7-CATS

In February, the seventh grade social studies classes made iMovies about ancient Greece. iMovie is an application for Mac, and it allows users to create and edit their own videos. For this assignment, students worked in groups, and researched the geography, religious beliefs, government, and culture of the ancient country. After students conducted their research, groups had to take their information and present it to their classmates using iMovie. The assignment required students to demonstrate that they could add photos, video, audio, text, and transitions to their movies. After the project was completed, students presented their movies to their classmates. In order to complete the project, students had to successfully work with their partners. The project also required students to use higher-order thinking skills.

Recently, students finished making Podcasts about the achievements of ancient China. Like the iMovie project, students had to research the achievements of ancient China, and present their findings in the form of a Podcast. 2013 has seen the implementation of technology into the seventh grade social studies classes. By learning how to make iMovies and Podcasts, students are learning valuable skills that will prepare them for the 21st century.

Yearbook

Orders can be placed NOW for the 2012-2013 Yearbook! *Orders are to be placed ONLINE with Jostens, Inc.*

At www.jostens.com

Search Huntingdon Middle School.

Books begin at \$12.00

You can even add your name, an icon or protective cover!

Counselors Corner By Mrs. Miller

On Tuesday, April 23, 2012, there will be an orientation for parents/guardians of fifth grade students. This event will be held at the Huntingdon Area Middle School at 6:30PM in the cafeteria. You will have an opportunity to observe a slide presentation, learn about the scheduling process, and ask pertinent questions involving your child's transition to the Middle School. Your son or daughter is not required to attend, but is welcome.

As the school counselor, I aspire to make your child's transition to the middle school successful. I am dedicated to the academic, personal, and social development of adolescents and believe that communication between home and school is paramount. It will be an honor and pleasure to meet with you. Please come!

How can I help my child prepare for the PSSA?

As HAMS prepares for our state testing, parents often wonder how they can help their students prepare. First and foremost, we ask that you encourage your child and ask them do their best on all portions of the assessment. If you are calm about the test, they will be as well. We understand that testing can be a stressful time for all involved so students will have minimal homework, but are asked to get a good night's rest and eat a healthy breakfast before each testing day.

Please avoid making appointments for your child on those days (April 9th, 10th and 11th) as testing will be going on until noon and interruptions need to be avoided. Thank you for your efforts and support as we move forward with completing the assessments.

8-BEARS

The Wonderful PSSA's

The PSSA tests, ugh. Unfortunately, a lot depends upon these assessments, which is why our school places so much emphasis upon them. This is the one snapshot of the vast collage of work that we do each year that we get to show the state. Good or bad, it's the only picture we get to put on display in the museum.

Also unfortunate is the fact that the eighth grade class must take the reading, mathematics, writing and science PSSA's all in about a month's time. For this, we thank all of eighth grade students who cooperate and perform your best on these tests. We hope that you represent our community well, in this one chance to show how hard we have been working all year long.

Are there flaws to this testing system? Of course, but how else can you fairly and efficiently evaluate each individual student in the state? Imagine that you are the owner of a business, and your number one goal is to constantly improve your business so you can be as successful as possible. One way to ensure this is to supervise and evaluate all of your employees. You fill out an evaluation form as you observe your employees working, and if any of them perform poorly over a period of time, you fire them. Then you find someone who can do their job correctly to ensure you maintain a healthy bottom line. It is a simple idea until you consider a business that has 1,787,351 employees... and you cannot fire anyone who performs poorly and you cannot hire anyone that may work harder and/or better. With 1,787,351 students enrolled in Pennsylvania schools, this is the dilemma faced by the state's Department of Education.

It is impossible for the Secretary of Education to check in on every single student in the state each year. Working with 180 school days, he would have to evaluate about 9,930 students each day. Since some funding does depend upon school performance, you cannot trust individual schools to report about themselves. They would obviously make themselves look good. This is why the state has developed the PSSA tests to evaluate its nearly two million students.

The state has determined what concepts each student should learn respective to their grade level and these concepts make up the PSSAs. To ensure all districts in Pennsylvania are evaluated fairly, each district receives identical, grade specific tests to administer to their students between determined dates. These tests measure how well the students have learned the necessary concepts and the results help schools identify what they must improve upon when teaching.

It is true that these tests have dictated much of what happens in school. In order help students become successful on these tests; we have introduced 4-sight and CDT testing, enrichment classes, Collin's writing, Power Teaching, online study programs, after school help, etc. As overwhelming as it may seem, the goal is to help students set, achieve and exceed goals which is a valuable life lesson. Many people complain about the inconvenience and unfairness of the PSSA's, but it has brought accountability, among other positive things, to our school and our students.

8-CATS

"Johnny shocked me!" Actually, he did. During Science In Motion demonstrations, held before Spring Break, students were able to (safely) hold the end of a Tesslercoil and "zap" each other. Don't worry, the shock was just like static electricity - nobody's hair even stood on end! This process showed students how electrons travel and at which point they would leave an object or body. After learning the basics, students were able to light a fluorescent bulb by doing the same trick. Students learned to complete the circuit by having one person at each end to make the bulb brighter.

Other demonstrations were done using different alkali and alkaline earth metal salts. These salts were set ablaze to show different color combinations used in fireworks. The highlight of the presentation was going outside to hear – and feel – the hydrogen/oxygen balloon set on fire. If you live near the Middle School, maybe you heard it, too!

Science in Motion Director and Mobile Educator Leslie Leckvarcik conducted all demonstrations for both eighth grade teams. Science In Motion is a well-known program that brings hands on science labs and opportunities to member schools. A special thanks goes out to the Huntingdon Area School District Educational Foundation and local EITC contributors for making this program available to Huntingdon Middle and High School students!



Tasty Tidbits

BY: Mrs. P. McNitt
Food Service Director

Variety is the name of the game in today's school cafeterias. Encourage your child to take advantage of the healthy offerings, such as salads, fresh fruit, whole grain breads, and vegetables.

In addition, drinking fat-free milk will add extra protein and calcium to their meal. Encourage your tween or teen to drink three cups a day. Keep the milk fat-free, but it is okay to add chocolate or strawberry flavoring—the benefit of drinking milk outweighs the added sugar. If your child is allergic to milk, try calcium enriched soy or rice milk. If they are lactose intolerant, get lactose-free milk. And, water is the best all-day drink. It has no sugar or calories and is low-cost. Take water bottles in the car and to sports games and practices. Try serving water with meals at home and asking for it when you eat out. You can add flavor with a lemon slice.



Computer Literacy

BY: Mrs. Buckley

As the end of the year approaches in a new school, we have learned to adapt to our new surroundings and meet the challenges faced by anything that involves change. The computer room that I teach in is full nearly every period of the day - including our enrichment time. Technology is no longer something new that has to be learned but a part of our everyday lives that our students embrace with ease.

With the use of "smart" technology in the homes and hands of many of our students - working with technology in the classroom is a comfortable transition. When I talk about applications like Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, and Microsoft Excel - the students don't necessarily know what to do with the programs but they understand "apps" are useful parts of technology that make it easier to do things. Students understand "apps" for navigation, social networking, calculating, saving money, and of course gaming. Now they are applying the concept of "apps" in the classroom and making a positive connection.

As the Computer Literacy teacher, I am teaching the basics of Microsoft applications but the students also have access to educational apps on our iPads in many of the classrooms.

With the addition of the MacBook cart to our school last year, students are also learning to work across the Mac platform as well. Students have been using iMovie as a great presentation tool in my classroom and in their core classes.

Students often come to me with even more complex questions about how to use their own smart devices to make school subjects easier to understand or to do work at home and transition it to the classroom. I welcome the questions and want to work with our students to effectively use their knowledge to enhance their learning and allow them to apply what they learn in school to being successful in their lives now and in the future. Technology is no longer a "learned" subject, but truly a part of everyday life and is used in every subject of our Middle School classes.

Celebrating Learning

By: Kathy Botteicher

Pablo Picasso, Anne Frank, synesthesia, the Large Hadron Collider, endogenous retroviruses, the atom, lobotomies, nutrition, Nelson Mandela, Fallingwater, synthetic life, Navajo Code Talkers, hydraulic fracturing, Albert Einstein, Seal Team Six, the Dead Sea Scrolls... What do these topics and many others have in common? They represent the vast spectrum of research conducted by middle school students in Room 111 during the month of February.

Students located sources of information, took notes, created outlines, wrote reports that included MLA documentation, created visuals, and presented their projects to the class. It was exciting to share the learning, and the listeners had many questions for the presenters.

As the state of Pennsylvania transitions to the Common Core Standards for academic excellence, skills in interpreting and analyzing non-fiction, research, informative writing, speaking and listening, and technology are at the forefront; and these students demonstrated strengths in all of these areas by the completion of their projects.

The researchers celebrated their accomplishments with a party, but the real benefit was the sense of accomplishment and the knowledge gained.



Spring Health Tips

By: Nurse D. Felton



Please continue to take precautions against the flu.....**wash hands**, cover mouth with elbow when coughing or sneezing, drink plenty fluids and get lots of rest.

Reminders: 7th grade dental screenings are due by the end of April for all 7th graders. I will be scheduling screenings with Dr. Oakman, School Dentist, for those students that didn't hand in a dental form.

Exciting Events: We will be holding a Health Fair at the Middle School this year on May 24th 2013 for all the students to enjoy!!!

Ark of Learning

On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of each week, students from Juniata College provide tutoring in all subject areas from 6:00PM-8:00PM. The location of Ark of Learning is 2514 Shadyside Avenue (Salvation Army), Huntingdon. Tutoring services are free of charge. Sandra Altman, Federal Community AmeriCorps representative, may be contacted at 641-3364 for additional information

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at school is necessary for a good educational experience. If a student is under the compulsory school attendance law, proper steps will be taken to enforce that law. Unexcused absences will result in no credit for the day and no opportunity to make up work that was missed.

When a student returns to school after an absence, the student must report to the office during homeroom and present a properly signed written excuse. If you have obtained a written doctor excuse, please send this excuse also. The student has 3 days after his/her return to school to bring this note. Failure to bring a proper excuse within 3 days will result in 1 illegal day.

The Huntingdon Area School District attendance policy provides that a claim of continual or repeated illness in excess of 10 days per school year requires a physician's statement regarding illness. If a student has absences in excess of 10 days with no medical excuse, the absences will be considered illegal. Students whose absence is determined to be illegal will not be allowed to make up their work.

Parents will receive an attendance letter in the mail after 10 days of recorded absences and doctor's excuses will be required. State legislation stipulates that students (and/or their parents) may be fined for excessive absences.

TARDY TO HOMEROOM

Students are responsible for being in class on time. A reasonable amount of time is provided for changing classes. Teachers will keep appropriate records and work with students to resolve problems of tardiness. Disciplinary consequences are listed below:

Procedure for handling tardiness –

1. Student/Teacher conference – 1st tardy
2. Student/Assistant Principal conference – 2nd tardy
3. Letter sent home – 3rd tardy
4. After School Detention – 4th tardy
5. Two After School Detentions – 5th tardy
6. Administrative discretion – 6 or more tardies

Feel Free To Contact Us

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Phone: 814-643-2900

Fax: 814-643-6513

Website: www.huntsd.org

Events At HAMS

April 4th—End of the third marking period

April 4th—HAMS county Band—at the HS

April 8th—Spring Photos (students MUST have the form in order to have their picture taken)

April 8th—School Board Work Session –HS Lib. 6:30pm

April 9th—11th– PSSA Math/Reading for all grades

April 15th—School Board Meeting—HS Lib.—6:30pm

April 22nd & 23rd—PSSA—Science for 8th Grade only

April 25th—Proress Reports



8-BEARS

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