

Winter 2018

The MBA Informer

Principal Clay Krevolin



From the Principal's Desk

This year's spread of seasonal influenza is the worst that it has been since 2003 (Fox News). School age children have been hit extremely hard this year. As a school district and at MBA, we continue to work diligently to reduce the risk factors of students and staff getting sick. The information that I am going to share is based on my formal training and having a Master's Degree in microbiology along with the latest information and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention.

I would like to begin by commending the efforts of the MBA custodial staff, our school nurse, and budgetary support from Central Office Administration to address the everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs. Sanitizing wipes, hand sanitizer and tissues are readily available in all instructional places. Our custodial staff is constantly sanitizing door knobs and handles, bathroom fixtures, water fountains, phones, computers and working with our cafeteria staff to clean other surfaces that students and staff come in contact with. Overtime on weekends has been approved to make sure that this has been done thoroughly.

Principal's Message Cont'd.

To minimize the number of people getting sick, it would be beneficial for staff and students to stay home when sick. Students and staff who get sick are sent to the nurse and then home. After being sick, staff and students are not allowed back into school until they are fever free and not symptomatic for 24 hours. We continue to encourage respiratory etiquette (cover your cough). Students have been taught to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or their bent arm. If they use a tissue, they should put the used tissue in a trash can and wash their hands. Proper hand washing procedures for students and staff include washing their hands often, washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, drying hands with a paper towel, and using the paper towel to turn off the faucet. If soap and water are not available, hands should be washed with hand sanitizer. Students and staff are reminded to keep their hands away from their nose, mouth, and eyes. In the event of individuals getting sick, strict protocols are followed in the cleaning up of accidents by the custodial staff.

Flu seasons are unpredictable. The timing, severity, and duration of it depends on many factors that include: which flu viruses are spreading, the number of people who are susceptible to the circulating flu viruses, and how similar vaccines are to the flu viruses that are causing illness (CDC). Many respiratory infections spread from person to person and cause symptoms similar to those of the flu. These include respiratory syncytial virus, rhinovirus, enterovirus and other viruses and bacteria that make adults and children sick. Being exposed to one of these viruses is not only happening at school. Parents can bring home a virus from work, a friend or relative visiting, a trip to the mall, and other people while eating in a restaurant. My purpose for giving these examples is to increase your awareness of what you can do to protect yourself from getting sick.

Studies have shown that the flu virus can live and potentially infect a person for only 2 to 8 hours after being deposited on a surface. Therefore, special sanitizing processes beyond routine cleaning, including closing schools to clean every surfaces in the building, are not necessary or recommended to slow the spread of flu, even during a flu outbreak (CDC).

Symptoms of flu can include: Fever (although not everyone with flu has a fever), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, tiredness, sometimes diarrhea and vomiting. Emergency warning signs that indicate a person should get medical care right away include: (In children) fast breathing or trouble breathing, bluish skin color, not drinking enough fluids, not waking up or not interacting, being excessively irritable, flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and a worse cough.

As a school, we will continue to work diligently to reduce the spread of seasonal influenza and other respiratory viruses. If you haven't received a flu shot, please consider getting one. If you, or your child becomes sick, please see a medical professional as soon as possible. Hopefully, the many preventive actions that I described will minimize the spread of the the influenza and other respiratory viruses that we are currently seeing.

Reflecting on the MBA Mission Statement.... Rob Kapner, Assist. Principal

It is the mission of the Mabelle B. Avery Middle School to place emphasis on the whole child in search of individual excellence, to provide instruction that matches the developmental needs of young adolescents in a mutually respectful environment, and to seek and encourage educational partnerships with the family and the community.

As we enter into the second half of the school year, it is a good time to step back and remind ourselves about the skills and attributes we want our students to develop in these critical middle level years. Since as a school, we feel the pressure of trying to get each and every student to the highest level of mastery in academics as outlined in the Connecticut Common Core Standards, it is important to periodically revisit the “informal curriculum” into which we embed our formal teaching.

In support of the MBA Mission, we operate under a mantra, “MBA ROCKS” to emphasize important character traits all students should embody:

R – Respect for myself, others, and property

O – Ownership for my actions

C – Compassion for all

K – Knowledge and use of my strengths

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S – Success, which comes when you “ROCK”

As I reflect on my daily work with students, I am reminded of the so many important goals that extend beyond the formal academic curriculum. There is much agreement between lists that schools, consultants, authors, and professional organizations generate to summarize these character traits. I share with you my attempt at a simple list of skills and competencies that hopefully captures the spirit of what you as parents and we as educators seek to foster in your children. My intent with sharing this list is to help all of us stay focused on this important joint mission.

In no intended order of importance and certainly not an exhaustive list of life skills...

- develop social skills to build and maintain positive relationships
- develop an appreciation for the value of individual differences
- develop empathy and compassion and to realize that we do not walk in each other's shoes
- develop skills and coping strategies to handle the pressure of everyday life in 2018 and beyond
- develop effective study and organizational skills
- develop a strong work ethic
- develop resilience and grit to power through challenges
- develop a positive self-image and the confidence that goes with it
- develop an understanding and awareness of the way the world works
- develop effective decision-making skills

Reflecting on the MBA Mission Statement Cont'd.

- develop a solid moral compass and good citizenship skills
- develop independence through self-directing, self-initiating skills and guided by personal accountability

Open communication and a strong sense of shared mission are critical to our partnership in fostering these competencies in your children. In the interest of continual improvement, I welcome any suggestions on how we as a community can be more effective in these areas. I look forward to your continued support.

Counselor's Corner with Ms. Bohan

8th grade Transition time!

It's that time for our 8th grade students to discuss high school planning. On February 12th, the high school counselors visited all the 8th grade History classes to review the course selection process. Students learned about 9th grade classes, graduation requirements, and high school life. Following that discussion, there was an open house for 8th grade students and parents at Somers High School on February 13th. Information was sent home by Somers High School.

With this milestone, students often have many questions, and mixed emotions. Ms. Bohan will be meeting with all 8th grade students individually during February, March and April to process this next step. If needed, students will have the opportunity to go visit and familiarize themselves with the high school, in May and June. Parents are certainly welcome to call Ms. Bohan as well with any questions or concerns.



GRADE 6 NEWS

Language Arts -Mr. Maciolek

The Sixth Grade attended the viewing of the movie **Wonder**, on February 14th at the Manchester Parkade Cinemas. The movie makes a direct connection with R.J. Palacco's New York Times best selling novel that centers on the life of the main protagonist, "Auggie." Our PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports) unit will benefit by the big questions the author address: *What does it take to be a good friend? What can you do to support someone who is bullied? And, Is it possible to change the way we act towards others?*



Language Arts - Mrs. Hillebrecht

On Wednesday, December 20th, the sixth grade students attended *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens at the Hartford Stage. This trip has become a much-anticipated annual event. In class students read an adaptation of Charles Dickens' classic novel, as well as, a reader's theater from Scholastic Scope. The story was used to teach key skills in the curriculum. Students discovered that the main character, Scrooge, is the perfect example of a dynamic character and that through his transformation, Dickens teaches his reader the importance of the timeless themes of compassion and generosity.

Math - Mrs. Luginbuhl

Believe it or not we are starting the third quarter of 6th grade! We've covered all the math *basics* and now we'll focus on the application of those concepts. The third quarter intensifies as we introduce higher-level concepts. We've already looked at integers (positive and negative whole numbers and zero) by graphing them and using them to make reflections on a coordinate plane. We've evaluated expressions and found how to solve one-step equations.

The major focus this quarter will be on ratios and proportions, converting fractions, decimals and percents and inequalities. Toward the end of the quarter, students will begin geometry finding perimeter, area and volume of several geometric shapes. As you can see, we are stepping up the rigor in the downhill stretch of 6th grade math.

We've been approached by UConn to be part of a pilot program to test critical thinking/problem solving software. I will know more by the end of February if it is something we want to sponsor in one or more of our classes.

World Regions - Mr. Gieras

The sixth grade students have been busy this year working on the new curriculum. Students have had the opportunity to use their new textbooks and new atlas workbooks. Next week the students will work on a Five Themes of Geography project. Each student will use their chromebooks to complete the project using Google Slides.

After the completion of our North Africa unit, the students will complete their Egypt project. This project will include a written report, a Three Dimensional project, and a presentation to the class. It will be amazing to see all the students bring in their 3 Dimensional creations and see their creativity.



Science - Mr. Lewis

It's hard to believe that we're half way through the year already. The students have covered a lot of ground in science, learning about the Earth's atmosphere and storms as well as the environment and ecosystems. We have carried out some experiments and engineering design projects with more in store. Many of the activities can only be conducted in class due to the materials involved. Keeping a good attendance record is therefore important. When students must miss school, they should make arrangements to come in either before or stay after school to make-up missed work.

Physical Education - Mr. McCarthy

All students participated in our Bowling Unit with equipment borrowed from Shaker Bowl in East Longmeadow. Students were taught how to keep score "the old fashioned way" by using addition and following the rules when adding a spare or strike.

We continue to emphasize "Moving with a Purpose to Improve" during our fitness warm ups and students in grades 6 and 7 will have a mid year assessment on the push-up part of CT Physical Fitness Assessment.

Our popular Volleyball Unit started in January.

After school Intramural Basketball is in full swing with boys and girls each meeting twice a week from 2:30-3:30.

Technology Education - Mr. Keener

In Technology Education, the 6th grade started the term with coding using Scratch, an online game creator program. I was very impressed with the students focus and creativity throughout this project. Next, the sixth grade had an introduction to the woodshop. They learned about safety in this specialized area. I remain pleased to see that the students have been consistently following all of the safety rules. For their first woodshop project, we focused on design. The students saw the connection to the effort that goes into designing a project and the result of their scroll saw product. We will also be doing a variety of Lego mechanism activities which will include tabulating data and calculating rates. Throughout all of the Tech. Ed activities, I am stressing the application of the Engineering Design Process and how the integral steps aid in completing a task. Before the end of the term we will revisit woodworking and have an introduction to CAD, computer aided design.

World Language - Mademoiselle Meyers

Hola los padres. Bonjour les parents. Soon, we will be completing our exciting journey across our Spanish-speaking world. There are 21 Spanish-speaking countries in the world with Spanish as their first language.

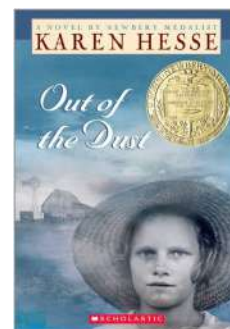
We will be embarking on our expedition to France and all of the French-speaking countries in our world. Your children will soon embrace the French language and culture, and have a rich, new experience with another mystical and sophisticated World Language.

Merci beaucoup et *on y va!*

GRADE 7 NEWS

Language Arts - Mr. Nevins and Mrs. Rivard

In December, we finished the novel *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse. During this unit, we spent time exploring how Karen Hesse depicts concepts associated with the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. We also continued to examine our theme of overcoming adversities through analysis of the character Billie Jo Kelby. After Winter Break, we began a mini research project based on the Gods and Goddesses of Ancient Greece. This examination is in preparation of reading *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare. Target skills for this quarter include theme, author's purpose, point of view, and text-to-text connections.



Grade 7 LA Cont'd.

As a reminder, all materials and homework assignments are posted on Google Classroom. Items you will find on the site include due dates, additional worksheets, the table of contents for reading and writing, as well as copies of notes. Students may submit work via Google Classroom, email, and paper copy.

Social Studies - Ms. Reynolds

Students will begin studying the region of Sub-Saharan Africa. We begin with the political and physical geography of the area. Students will also learn about the troubled colonial past of Africa. As we begin the 3rd quarter, we will continue to investigate the meaning of a group of people's nationality and ethnicity. This will lead us to understand the political development of South Sudan. We will end the unit by following the journey of the "Lost Boys" from Sudan to America, focusing on their assimilation to American culture. The students are also exploring the global use of water and its influence on the global water crisis.

**Science - Ms. Lyver**

We have begun exploring matter and its interactions. Students started this unit by learning about atoms, elements and their chemical symbols. Students will then be exploring the role energy has in changing states of matter (solid to liquid, liquid to gas etc). From there, students will learn about the relationship between elements and compounds. Students will be performing a lab that had 6 different experiments. Students will need to be able recognize if there was a chemical reaction that happened and why. There is no textbook for this unit, so it will be very important for 7th graders to keep an organized notebook and up to date table of contents.

**World Language - Ms. Kunzelman**

The end of Quarter 2 brought with it a new experience for all Spanish A and French A students: Mid-term Exams. These exams were designed to assess the long-term retention of the material learned during the first half of the school year. It is important for students to remember to study through a variety of methods, on all topics, on a consistent basis. The consistent review and practice helps



Grade 7 World Language Cont'd.

to improve the length of retention, which will of course help support the learning and understanding of the material to follow. The score on the mid-term exam will not alter the individual quarter averages, however it will impact the final average of the school year. It is worth 10% of the final average. Students can expect a final exam in June, which is designed to cover the material from the entire school year.

Math & Pre-Algebra - Ms. Scholes

During the second quarter, we focused on geometry and began our unit on ratios and proportional relationships. Students spent time learning about unit rates, how to solve proportions, and learning how proportional relationships appear in tables and graphs. To culminate the unit, students will work in small groups on an art and math project where they will be designing a scaled down version of a city. For this project students will use their knowledge of measurements, proportions, perimeter, area, volume, and scale factor to create their model.



To start the third quarter, we will be moving on to our expressions and equations unit, where students will learn how to combine like terms and solve equations.

Art - Mrs. Koullisis

The trimester for art started in late November and will run until mid-March. The students are off to a great start! They have completed their first sketchbook assignment along with several art projects using a variety of art mediums. We have used media such as printing ink and styrofoam plates for the reduction printmaking project, tempera paints and markers were used to create beautiful paintings of white birch trees. This project was inspired by the artwork of the Impressionist painter, Claude Monet. The students had the opportunity to design their own skateboard using drawing techniques, colored pencils, and markers to add color. All 7th grade students are creating clay boxes that are decorated and designed with a theme of their choice! I am looking forward to seeing the creative ideas that the students will come up with.



All of the art projects focus on one or more of the *Elements and Principles of Design* (line, shape, color, form, space, value, texture, balance, rhythm, unity, contrast, pattern, movement, and emphasis). The students learn how to use these in their own artwork effectively. The students self-assess and reflect/critique each of their art projects.

Looking toward warmer weather days, the art teachers at Somers Elementary School, Mabelle B. Avery Middle School, and Somers High School are starting to prepare for the annual district

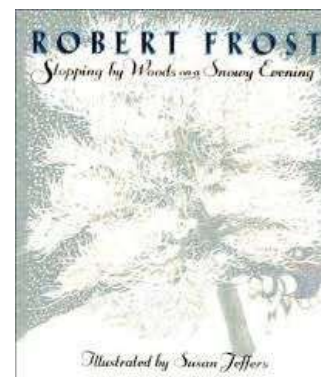
Grade 7 Art Cont'd.

art show. This art show will be on display in the spring at the Somers Public Library. All are welcome and encouraged to attend! It is a wonderful art show that showcases the many talents of the students of Somers.

GRADE 8 NEWS**Language Arts - Mrs. Wilson and Mrs. Jacques**

Eighth graders in Language Arts will analyze the work of several American poets. For example, in the poem, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," by Robert Frost, students will analyze the rhythm, rhyme, rhyme scheme, imagery and what the speaker of this poem might mean by the following lines in stanza four:

*"The woods are lovely, dark, and deep,
But I have promises to keep
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep."*



As we read each piece, students will compose an original poem using the same style of the poet. The poem must include poetic elements covered in the unit.

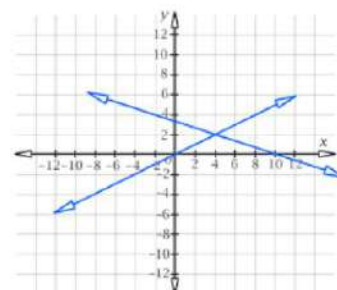
Section three will culminate with a research project related to a great American poet and students will be using Cornell note taking strategies to narrow the scope of their research. The biographical information will be used to develop a blog on the poet which will include an analysis of one of the poet's works.

What part of speech indicates a mental or physical action or state of being? If you answered "verb," then you know the grammar unit our eighth graders are beginning. Students will study verb tenses, principal parts of verbs, subject and object complements, and voice.

Additionally, students will continue their weekly editing practices that emphasize the use of proper punctuation, usage, spelling, and sentence structure. Each week eighth graders work on editing and revising materials from the *Holt Handbook*.

Grade 8 Math - Ms. Czyzniak

All 8th-grade math students will be studying some very difficult content in quarter 3. All math students will be focusing on systems of linear relationships. Here's an example of a system of linear equations: *If $8a - b = 9$ and $4a + 9b = 7$, what are the*



values of a and b ? The equal-values, graphing, substitution, and elimination methods will be put to use to solve systems.

Grade 8 Math Cont'd.

Algebra students will also work on scatter plots and trend lines in this quarter. Included in the

unit is the standard deviation formula: $s = \sqrt{\frac{\sum(x_i - \bar{x})^2}{n}}$. No worries . . . it's not that bad when it's broken down!

FYI . . . Our 8th-grade math students are usually provided homework "practice" assessments in preparation for actual assessments. As we review these practices in class, students have an opportunity to ask questions to clear up any misunderstandings. Students . . . please take these practice assessments seriously. Do the work in an environment similar to your test environment and treat the practice assessment as though it were the actual assessment. While it's corrected during class, you will be in a perfect position to ask for clarification on topics on which you were stuck! *To go to the head of the class . . . make extra copies of these practice assessments before they are assigned so you have plenty of sheets to use as "rehearsals" for the assessment! Math practice makes perfect!*

History - Mr. Szafir

Students in 8th Grade US History spent second quarter learning about the formation of the Constitution of the United States. They have explored not only the process of establishing it, but also how the Constitution impacts a citizen's everyday life.

Students also researched and learned about early Presidents and the formation of political parties. They learned about the precedents set by George Washington and how he shaped the role of the President of the United States.



The eighth grade will travel to Boston at the end of March to experience first hand what they learned about the American Revolution. The field trip will include an IMAX movie at the science museum, tour of Boston on the Duck Boats, and a visit to the Boston Tea Party museum.

Third quarter students will learn about Westward Expansion in America.

Second quarter history trivia:

- What article of the Constitution outlines the powers of the President?
- How many amendments are in the Bill of Rights?
- Who was the Vice President under George Washington?

Science - Mr. Estes

Why are some populations of elephants becoming tuskless? Aren't tusks helpful for elephant survival and reproduction? We explored this phenomenon second quarter through a lab simulation to understand how humans have changed the inheritance of elephant traits around the world. Biodiversity on Earth, the fossil record, human genetics, and embryology, helped us to unravel the concepts within our heredity and evolution unit. By studying their own traits such as earlobe shape, tongue rolling, and finger hair, students determined their genotypes the class was able to represent the diversity of traits within their class.



We just started our forces and stability unit. Students are investigating motion through a variety of activities in the lab and by graphing motion on their chromebooks. I'm encouraging each student to see Newton's laws play out as they go about their daily lives.

World Language - Mme/Sra Sawtelle

As we approach the mid year of world language study, students will be selecting courses for ninth grade in the not too distant future. It is important for you to understand the progression for their language study at the high school level.

World language students with a final average of C- or better will proceed to the French/Spanish 2 course at the high school. Some students who have a solid B+ or better and teacher recommendation may proceed to Honors French 2 or Honors Spanish 2. In the event a student receives below a C-, their options at the high school would be to repeat Spanish 1 or French 1.

Of course, you and your child should discuss the recommendation made and please feel free to contact me with any questions.

It is important to note that the January-February recommendations may change as a result of third and fourth quarter work and final exam results.

Life Skills - Mr. Brown

The 8th Grade Life Skills classes are currently covering Drug Education. Vernon Police Department Lieutenant William Meier with specialization in drug enforcement will be visiting and meeting with MBA students. His presentation and question-answer session is an annual tradition here at MBA. The emphasis of his visit will be to better inform and connect students with law enforcement and strengthen efforts to help student make healthy choices.

Parental Information: What are Warning Signs of Drug Use?

It's not always easy to tell if your child is smoking, drinking or using other drugs. But no child is immune from substance abuse so it's important to know what the warning signs are and what

Grade 8 Life Skills Cont'd.

to do if you suspect a problem. We all want our kids to be healthy and drug-free, but it's often difficult to spot the signs of drug use.

Learn more at [Yes Safe Choices Website](http://www.yessafechoices.org)

Or

<http://www.yessafechoices.org/parents/tips-and-tools/know-what-do-if-you-suspect-problem>



MBA MUSIC DEPARTMENT

What has the MBA Music Department been doing lately?

Our Music After Dark (M.A.D.) concert went really well! We had solos by Allison Carra, Katiya Zawrotny, Jacob Avery, Cadence Schneider, and Kaya Donah with a duet by Renee Hoague and Kaija Hjelm. The 7th and 8th grade bands and choruses performed songs of love including their favorites: "I Will Remember You/I Will Always Love You," "Only Hope," "Joy" and "Selections from *Titanic*." High School senior Mary Clark was our accompanist. For the assembly the following day, the 6th graders joined in the celebration of music with student Emily DeNucci at the piano, as the chorus performed "Captain's Mate" and the 6th grade band performed "Furioso."

Upcoming events:

- 8th graders are preparing for the All District Concert March 27th up at the high school
- Spring Trip April 18th
- Spring Concert May 17th
- Many of our students are in MBA Drama rehearsals
- Two of our students are in SHS Drama rehearsals

We are busy creating and performing!



Tour of Symphony Hall

April 18th

7th and 8th grade Music Department

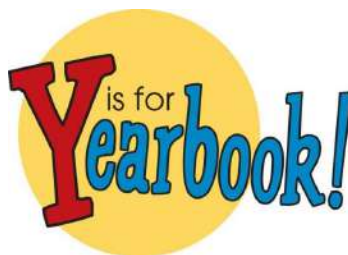
CLUBS

Ski Club - Mr. Estes/Mrs. Lyver

It's hard to believe the ski-club season is almost over. Despite Mother Nature's lack of cooperation providing real snow, we have successfully made each scheduled trip. Students spent time building friendships and learned new skills from learning to ski or board for the first time to landing their first rail in the terrain park. While the nature of skiing and snowboarding comes with a level of inherent danger, we've been fortunate not to have any serious injuries. For the few incidents that did occur, the students responded quickly and followed the safety procedures in place – they should be commended for their responsibility and quick thinking! All in all, another fun year for the ski club.



Yearbook Advisor - Ms. Remington



With all of the cold weather, it's hard to believe that June will be here soon. On the last day of school, yearbooks will be passed out to the students who have purchased one. Yearbooks can now be ordered online or in person. If you order a yearbook online, you may go to www.jostensyearbooks.com. If you order in person, have your child come see me. The deadline for ordering your yearbook is February 28, 2018.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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| Feb. 19 & 20 | No School; President's Day/Prof. Development |
| Feb. 28 | Yearbook Order Deadline |
| Mar. 27 | All District Concert, SHS 7 PM |
| Mar. 29 | Grade 8 Field Trip - Boston, MA |
| Apr. 4 | Jr. Beta Club Induction - MBA Gym 7 PM |
| Apr. 18 | Music Dept. Field Trip - Boston, MA |
| May 17 | Spring Concert - MBA Gym 7 PM |