



Painting by  
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# Southwest Middle School



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HOME OF THE PATRIOTS | CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS

IN THIS ISSUE: CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

## Focus on Professional Development

Teachers of gifted scholars participated in a training at Southwest Middle School facilitated by a CMS Talent Development Specialist to discover additional ways to challenge gifted learners.

Each content area explored talent development resources available at our school such as *Advanced Curriculum from Vanderbilt University's Programs for Talented Youth* (ELA Lessons); *The College of William & Mary Center for Gifted Education's Science series*; *Problem-Based Learning the Social Sciences*; *The Art of Problem Solving* (Math).

While teachers have flexibility in which resources to incorporate as a supplement to the Common Core Curriculum, it is still a school-wide focus this year to continue to increase the rigor in all honors classes. Several teachers have already accepted the challenge of implementing

lessons from the aforementioned resources.

In addition to identifying resources to use, the specialist also explained how to use the instructional strategy of curriculum compacting. Each teacher was provided a template to use for planning and scholar accountability.

**Congratulations:** Our AIG program would like to recognize Shail Patel, a seventh grader from Ms. Pohlig's English language arts class, for winning the South Learning Community Spelling Bee.



### 8<sup>TH</sup> Grade

Nicole Scotti

Fran Mayer

Olivia Robinson

Beth Kohlhoff

Marilyn Bollinger

Grant Huether

Deborah Baysinger

Grant Joreid

Anna Marcello

Deborah Nahikian

### 7<sup>TH</sup> Grade

Charlotte Pohlig

Katrina Maurer

Lisa Johnson-Ritchey

Ray Adams

Alecia Bryant

Barnetta Boston

## Teachers of Gifted Scholars

### 6<sup>TH</sup> Grade

Jordan McMullen

Melissa Busteed

Jordan Wilson

Geoffrey Reckerd

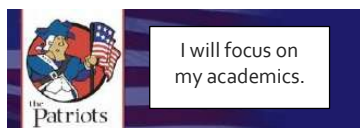
Kelly Mayreis

Luke Eller

Jeyna Minnick

Kenifer Vega-Prieto

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Math



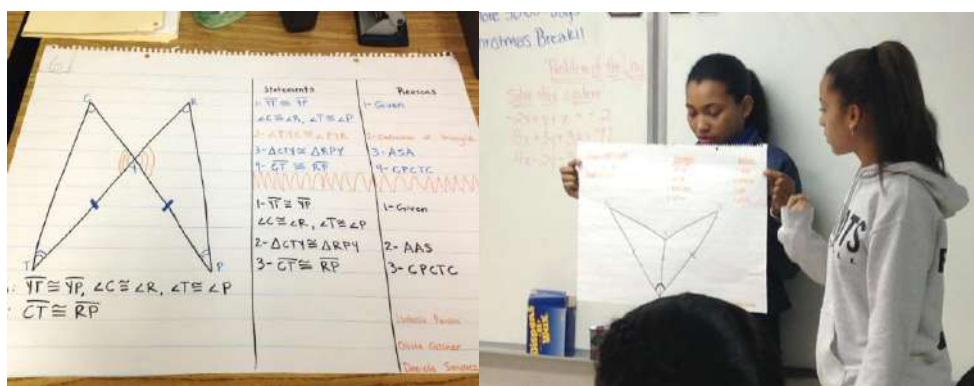
In this unit, students continued with an inquiry-based approach to learning about expression, equations, and inequalities. Scholars clarified important terms and refined key understandings and they explored the differences between arithmetic and algebraic equations and discovered appropriate problem-solving strategies for equations.

They were guided through a series of investigations in which they defined, translated, and graphed inequalities in various real-world contexts. Through a series of investigations and activities, the class gained experience in differentiating between dependent and independent variables in real-life contexts. They also learned to analyze the relationships between the variables in these situations, and use equations, tables, and graphs to represent the relationships they discovered.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Math

During second quarter, NC Math 1 scholars learned to solve equations and inequalities with more than one variable simultaneously. Throughout this process, students explored real-world applications in which these systems of equations and inequalities are used. Ask your scholar- *Two trains are driving toward one another. The first train leaves Town A at 5 AM traveling at 60 miles per hour. The second train leaves Town B at 7 AM traveling at 70 miles per hour. The distance between Town A and Town B is 455 miles. What is the EXACT time that the collision will occur?*

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math



AIG students in NC Math 2 have been studying Congruent Triangles and proofs concerning them. They have listed corresponding parts, studied various theorems for proving them congruent and now are creating 3-10 step proofs to validate their learning. This "proof process" helps them think critically, analyze given information and make a strategic, well-thought-out plan to arrive at the end result, their conclusion.

Honors math students spent quarter two exploring proportionality. Their understanding of equivalent ratios and unit rate was expanded as we graphed and wrote equations for proportional relationships. We also connected our understanding of proportions to percents. Students learned to calculate sales tax, tips, discounts, simple interest, and percent of error. These skills were then applied to their on-going financial literacy project. Scholars are beginning to furnish their small businesses with supplies and are ready to start making sales.

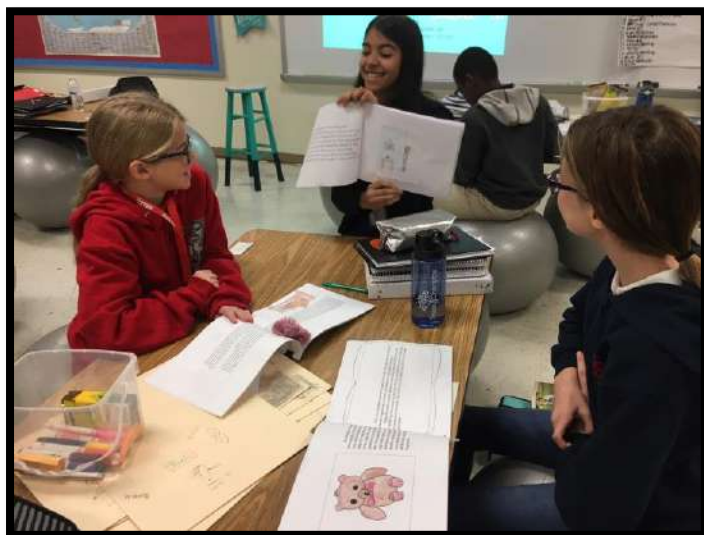


# English Language Arts



## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

In language arts, students learned about conflict, theme and writing skills. Students learned how to correctly write a five-paragraph essay through the “Do the ‘Write’ Thing” essay contest that SWMS participates in annually. After returning from Thanksgiving break, we read *The Nutcracker and the Mouse King*. We were fortunate to have the opportunity to go on a field trip to watch a performance of the *Nutcracker* ballet. Students were also able to hone their creative writing skills by developing their own storybook. The storybooks created by the students needed to have two of the most important elements of the *Nutcracker*: a child and an inanimate object that comes to life. Students loved being able to demonstrate their strengths in a creative way! Below are photos of some of the students sharing their creations.



## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

Seventh grade honors English language arts students have finished up their novel study and are focusing on nonfiction reading strategies. Students continue working at becoming critical thinkers, readers and learners.

This quarter, students used research articles to write a paper on youth violence and ways to prevent it. Some students produced Anti-Bullying PSA's while others worked on allegory projects.

Scholars in some 7th grade honors classes are blogging about books. The students are sharing their comprehension and evaluations of novels with the world. Students continue to post new blogs on their current novel every Friday.

Students had the opportunity to attend and critique a production of the *Nutcracker* ballet.

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

AIG students in language arts are working toward completing their “Think Tac Toe” Fiction Unit Projects. The end result of this will be student created projects that detail the Common Core Standards.

They will work independently and cooperatively to address all levels and abilities of learning styles. They will analyze, perform, and create these projects and present them to their classes, complete with student-created rubrics to go with each one.

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science

Students are finishing up their unit on the Earth's history. We demonstrated convection currents in the mantle to show how plates move in the lithosphere. Also, activities included simulation of the rock cycle using Starbursts.



## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Science

In science class, the second quarter has covered content from energy that travels in waves, Earth composition, to ecosystems. All of our units taught in sixth grade are intertwined and students made connections to content taught in first quarter. Students have experienced the content with all of our units through hands on labs including identifying Earth's rocks and minerals and investigating microorganisms in different ecosystems.

Sixth grade scientists have created musical instruments that demonstrate how sound travels in waves and how frequency and volume is affected by different materials. They assembled the structure of the Earth, showing its different layers by composition, and researched an organism to discover how abiotic and biotic factors play a role in its ability to grow and survive in its habitat.

*Photo (Below): James-David B. and Jacob M. investigating an igneous rock.*



## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Science

Scholars are performing exceptionally well this academic quarter. They displayed their exceptional creative talents with their cereal boxes in our study of Earth's atmosphere and weather. Scholars went beyond the expectations set forth. They followed up the Human Biology Unit by constructing a paper that demonstrated how the body works together to help us sustain life. They are able to identify the main organs and elaborate on how the body maintains homeostasis. Scholars were given the task of collecting materials that they might have

around the house or in the refrigerator to construct a plant/animal cell of their choosing. Each item represented an organelle contained within the cell.

To conclude their academic semester, scholars have been given the task of teaching their peers on our Energy unit. They will create and design their own lesson and include guided notes to be completed during the presentation, a product that will display the information, with no more than 5 minutes to present and answer questions. This year scholars have exceeded expectations set forth at the beginning of the semester.



# Social Studies Spotlight: Ms. Bryant's Class



## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

Students started off second quarter with a historical murder mystery investigation. Students had to use their historical analyzation skills to solve a murder that occurred during the Industrial Revolution.

Using their close reading and annotating skills to read several primary resources, evaluating different witness videos, and interpreting the crime scene all played a part in helping them solve the murder! I'm proud to say not only do these students excel in their academics they'd make great detectives too!



## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

Greetings again from sixth grade social studies! We've been hard at work during the second quarter exploring India, China, Greece, Rome, and much more from Ancient Civilizations. During these units of study we've continued to improve our writing skills and the art of completing a DBQ.

This is a challenging but fascinating curriculum in social studies as the students learn to understand resources and how to properly use them in an argumentative essay. Connected with our writing and research assignments are unique engagement exercises such as drawing Mandalas (Buddhism), Tai Chi (China), and Yoga (India). These meditative crafts engage students in a personal way and bring a level of involvement that ignites curiosity

and excitement.

We are currently hard at work on our final project exploring Ancient Rome. Students will have an opportunity to research and create a variety of projects, including things such as building their own versions of Roman Architecture (such as an Aqueduct), acting out a play as characters from ancient Rome, interviewing a famous Roman Emperor, making an advertisement for a Roman coliseum event, etc.

The Roman Empire had a huge impact on the world as we know it today and the results of this project are always varied and creative.



*Photo (Above): Alexa H. and Ava C. act out a play of Greek gods/goddesses*





ENCORE: Ms. Mayreis's science class (from P. 4) and Mr. Eller's social studies classes (from P. 5)



Photos (Left to Right): Malcolm B. demonstrates his Roman Aqueduct. Samantha G., Kayla K. and Jackson N. demonstrate Yoga. Matthew R. with his Roman Coliseum project

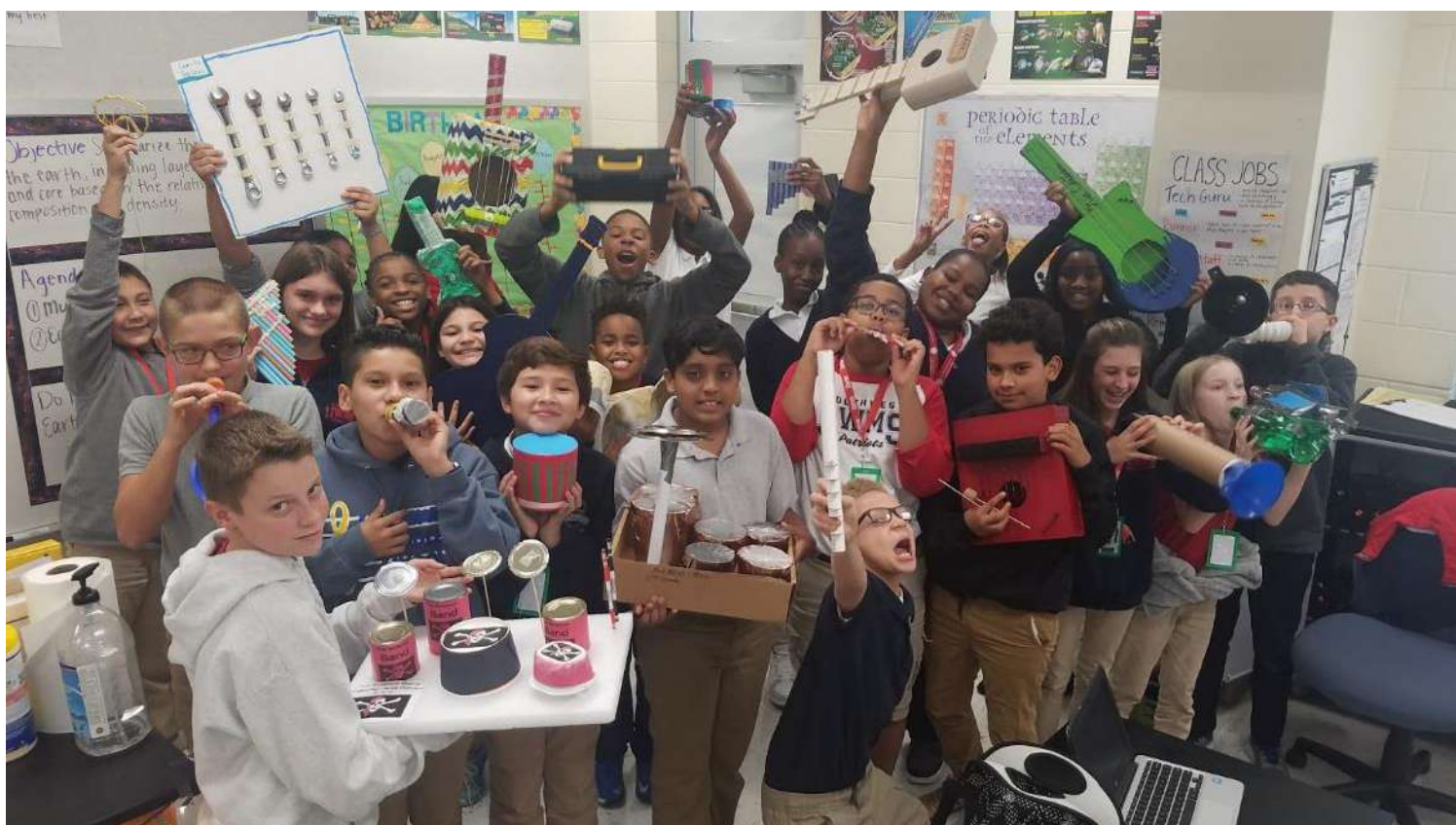


Photo (Above): Ms. Mayreis's science class during third block showcasing their musical instruments

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