

TALENT DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

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by Lisa Gurthie



Talent Development Newsletter

2018-2019

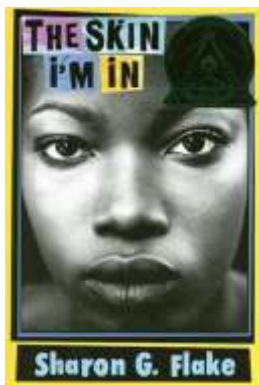
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Quarter 1

6th Grade Language Arts

Hello, Piedmont families! We are thrilled to kick off the new year in our language arts classes. We have started out with bolstering our students with academic vocabulary and diving right in to our growth mindset unit, where we encouraged students to see that they can learn almost anything they put their mind to. Classes completed an infographic in which they were asked to complete a small research project, practicing skills that we will be working on in our nonfiction unit next quarter.

Our IB *Statement of Inquiry* this month asks students to analyze how an author connects character, plot, setting, and theme to create stories that analyze human nature. Our NCCOS standard has students able to cite specific evidence from a text to support those analyses.



We are currently deep into our fiction unit, in which we answer greater questions about how life imitates art—while we speak about basic elements of fiction, such as plot structure and characterization, we will also discuss if stories are obligated to reflect a deeper message about humanity as well. We are thrilled to couch all of these questions within our classroom novel study of Sharon G. Flake's *The Skin I'm In* and our corresponding vocabulary in context before we continue our unit on identity with our first International Baccalaureate grade assignment, the identity map project. Throughout the quarter, students will also have an independent reading book project where they select a book of their choice that is at, or above, their reading level and write a short answer response analyzing the protagonist of the book they have chosen, which serves to differentiate as needed for reading comprehension skills.

Our academic enrichment classes are also focused on supplementing their core language arts content through acceleration and Socratic seminars.

Next quarter, we will be studying from the nonfiction text *Titanic: Voices from the Disaster*. We will also continue to reinforce the International Baccalaureate skills first introduced in our summer reading project about the novel *Wonder*.

6th Grade Math

We are off to a great start in 6th grade math, and Ms. Davis (who started the year for Mr. Kollar), Mrs. Grove, and Ms. Swift are so impressed with the caliber of our students! We started off the year with a unit that focused on area and surface area. This unit was differentiated by providing more academic support for the students that were struggling, and enrichment for students that were performing beyond what we would normally expect. Some of the academic support

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included in-class and peer tutoring, differentiated assignments, providing extra help in academic enrichment, and providing an opportunity for students to re-take their formal exams for up to a 79%. Our next unit will focus on finding prime factorization, greatest common factor, and least common multiple of two numbers, which will take us up to the end of the quarter. Once we start our “Ratios and Proportions” unit at the beginning of the 2nd quarter, we will offer our first choice project, through our “Culture Menu” project. If all the stars align, the 6th grade math team will then host our 7th annual “Culture Meal,” we can’t wait! Thanks for sending your children to Piedmont!



7th Grade Language Arts

In 7th grade language arts the students reviewed many of the skills and topics they learned in the 6th grade. We started by exploring text types such as stories, poetry, drama and nonfiction. They used graphic organizers to help understand the active reading strategies. We also identified key academic vocabulary that they will use in all of their core classes. In preparation for the Unit 1 Test, the students used Kahoot, Decktoys and flashcards as resources for review.



After completing the introductory review unit, students began their unit on Identity and Culture. This unit included interest/choice project-based learning in the form of the Culture Cluster. For the Culture Cluster project, students explored elements of their own cultures and identities and expressed their cultures through poetry and art. Upon completion of the Culture Cluster, students participated in a Gallery Walk which allowed them to explain elements of their culture and answer questions, as well as make connections to the cultures of other students. The final step of the Culture Cluster was the “negotiation conference”, where students meet with their teachers one-on-one and discuss what grade they earned based on the rubric. This was an opportunity for students to advocate for themselves and self-assess their performance.

As part of their Identity and Culture Unit, students will also write a personal narrative essay called, “This I Believe.” This essay is a special part of NPR where writers explore their values and a time in their life when this value established who they are. Students will be part of the authentic writer’s workshop experience where they draft, edit and revise their narrative in order to create a concise and creative essay. We will begin by discussing values to start the brainstorming process of what each student believes in. From there, students will delve into their own memories to explore moments in their life when the value of their choice was established and helped create the person they are today. By scaffolding the writing process, students will be able to focus on elements on their writing. The objectives of this unit are to allow students to explore who they are, what they believe in and strengthen their writing along the way.

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7th Grade Math

CECILIA'S COOKING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE TASK

Cecilia is testing new recipes at her cooking school. She is trying to adjust her recipes to be healthier without losing any flavor. Help her make these adjustments.

RECIPE: Chicken Pot Pie

INGREDIENTS:

- $2\frac{1}{4}$ cups of pastry dough
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups vegetable
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of butter
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of chicken


LOWER FAT

Use half the butter and increase the other ingredients.

Ingredient	Original	Lower Fat
pastry dough	$2\frac{1}{4}$	$1\frac{1}{4}$
vegetable	$2\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$
butter	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{1}{8}$
chicken	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{3}{4}$

Chicken Pot Pie

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of pastry dough
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetable, chopped
- $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of butter
- salt and pepper to taste
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of chicken



"And we're off!" Students have been working diligently on the first unit: *The Number System*. This includes, but is not limited to integers, fraction operations, decimal operations, opposites, absolute value, and many more. We started the year off with a problem-based learning recipe activity which challenged students' knowledge to manipulate fractions. They had to utilize all operations to create perfect portions of recipes. We also assigned another interest project and real-world activity in class that involved students managing their own hardware store. "Timmy's Tool Mart" led students through a self-guided review of decimal operations. This activity also integrated our IB criterion A: *Knowing and Understanding* and B: *Investigating Patterns*. We are continuously asking our math students to collaborate as

they learn this year and these are just a couple of ways we have encouraged them to start working together to build relationships in class with their peers. As we continue into this unit, students will explore constant of proportionality. We are looking forward to a great year with this group and have some exciting things planned in the upcoming units!

TIMMY'S TOOL MART

Budget: \$100

CRITERIA:

- You must have a minimum purchase of 12 wrenches.
- You cannot spend more than \$200 on drills.
- Toolboxes must be ordered in sets of 5.

PERFORMANCE TASK

Order in order to maximize his sales. Use the sheet to devise a plan for Timmy.

Item	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price	Profit
wrench	12	26.75	321.00	\$134.84
screw	1	4.25	4.25	\$2.61
drill	7	18.75	131.25	\$297.15
hammer	1	9.00	9.00	\$4.73
hard hat	1	7.25	7.25	\$12.21
toolbox	10	12.40	124.00	\$236.10
TOTAL	31		536.75	\$699.84

8th Grade Language Arts

For the 2018-2019 school year, 8th grade ELA is providing students with individualized vocabulary programs through Townsend Press. Students took placement tests to determine which vocabulary book they will receive. Once the books are in, students will be working within their appropriately leveled program.

Our literary study began with the question "Is Atalanta an example of a hero's journey?" Students examined the structure of Joseph Campbell's monomyth, *The Hero's Journey*; read selected texts from the *Atalanta Myths*; and wrote essays using textual evidence to support their assertions that a woman can or cannot be a hero.

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In our Honors classes, students are flexibly grouped to build classroom community and establish norms for working through challenging activities. Frequent pre-assessments and assessments aid in establishing where acceleration and extension activities are needed. Students have chosen books to read independently; some have completed reading multiple "choice" novels as we approach the end of first quarter.

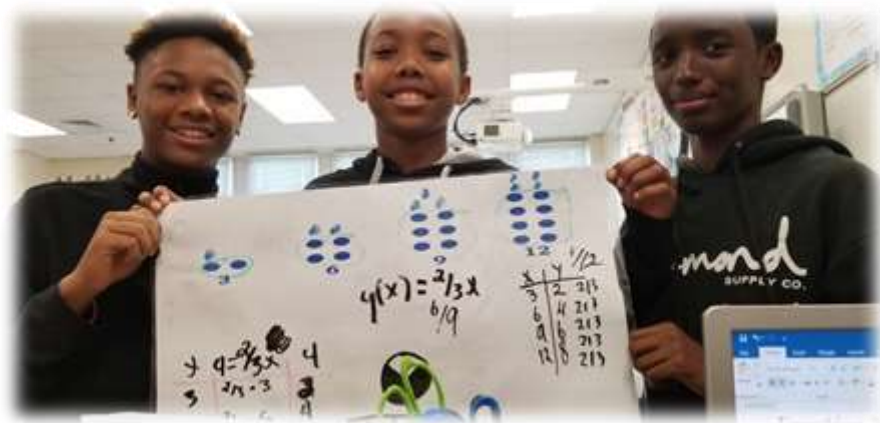
We look forward to working with students on memoirs, personal narratives, and poetry in second quarter.

8th Grade Math

8th Grade Math We learn to *do* by modeling! Students will mimic what they see. Therefore, modeling first starts with the teachers. During first quarter, the 8th grade TD math students first hit the road running with their summer math project. Students were expected to start the year off knowing their squares (1-12) and cubes (1-10) and their roots. This prepared our students for problems based upon area and volume. It also allowed students to appropriately represent non-perfect squares and cubes on a number line. Exponent rules were given using visual displays of the rule and students were asked why to perform each operation with the exponents. Scientific notation was the next section of the unit.

Year-long Math 1 Students extended their ability to solve equations and inequalities to include special cases and complex equations with variables on both sides. They then explored what it means to be a function, how function notation is used, and how to represent real-life scenarios with function rules. To wrap up this unit students were presented a choice project that involved differentiated levels of understanding. Levels ranged from one to four, with level one being the easiest and four being the hardest. Students were given a set of

dots and within the dots, they were asked ten questions. The most important question was, "What is the function rule (the equation) that makes the dots and how can they see the function rule with the 'layout' of the dots?" Students were stretched in their understanding of the math and how that translated to their peers who they presented the project in front of. It was astounding to see the creativity that came from their reasoning.



Math 1/2 Students, taking both Math 1 and Math 2 this year, took an integrated approach to the Math 1 curriculum and spent significant time comparing and contrasting linear and exponential functions in context. Students analyzed data to determine whether the data demonstrated linear or exponential behavior and wrote the equation that best modeled the behavior. Students also integrated their algebra and geometry knowledge by using the principles of slope and distance to prove geometric theorems. Throughout all of our math courses, we are encouraging students to be able to explain the "why" of their math. Many times students want to get to the final answer without a full understanding of "how" to get there and "why" we are going. When students can explain why, they have a better sense of ownership and perform better overall.

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Making is at the Core of Piedmont's Culture 10/23/2018

By Lisa Gurthie, *Piedmont's Professional Development Facilitator*



WE MAKE SO MUCH, IT'S HARD TO HYPERLINK IT ALL! Every day is #GlobalMakerDay at Piedmont! Well, maybe not EVERY day, but it IS extremely rare to walk the halls of Piedmont and not see students planning or building something across the curriculum and at all grade levels. Students are even making and creating during standardized test times, the time usually known as the least creative of the year.



Making is a given in our interdisciplinary passion projects, in Ms. Newburger's excellent Library Makerspace, in clubs, and in encore classes like Art, Band, Drama and Orchestra, but what makes me love Piedmont so much is how common it is in our core classes as well!



Consider Mr. O'Neill this week alone, from spears to swans his students were making. Props to him and all to the Individuals and Societies teachers whose students recently built their own tools when studying the stone age. They then created marketing campaigns for the tools and sold them to classmates.



The Social Studies classroom making tradition continues in the upper grades as students design build earthquake resistant structures and make period costumes living history exhibits, industrial revolution inventions (yet more industrial revolution), civil rights museums, (another Civil Rights museum) etc.

Teachers model making at Piedmont. Mr. Egnot models this by transforming his classroom into a war zone of trenches and the media center yearly through his maker skills and Ms. Frilot transforms her classroom to a poetry cafe with soft lighting, colors, and seating.



In World Language and Language Arts classes, students write songs for the Harlem Renaissance, compile playlists and record their own podcasts, design and build whirligigs (both with wood, and with Minecraft redstone) and recreate setting layouts and film their own movies based on their novel studies. They make culture clusters that make manifest their own poems.

In Math, students make large and small designs for the famous Scale Model Project. They also create their own board games and of course there's the yearly giant Prism-palooza!

In Science, they design their best protective egg case then test it out by catapulting the egg using a homemade catapult.

What does this culture of making lead to? It leads to kids who think creatively and make for special occasions and for no reason at all! They spend their free time building and making everything from towers to ASMR videos.

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Stay tuned for more as we celebrate active learning and creating today and every day at **#PiedmontIB**



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