



# PIEDMONT MIDDLE SCHOOL

an IB World School

## Talent Development News

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

We are off to a great start in 6<sup>th</sup> grade math, and Mr. Kollar, Ms. Suckstorff, and Ms. Hartman are so impressed with the caliber of our students this year! We started off the year by learning about what it means to be a student at an IB school. Informally called the “IB Blitz”, our students learned a lot about the IB lingo, community and service, IB Learning Profiles, and Global Contexts. In Math, this quarter, we have learned about the concepts of *Greatest Common Factor*, *Least Common Multiple*, *Prime/Composite/Square numbers*, *Ratios*, *Unit Rates*, and *Proportional Reasoning*. That is a lot to digest; we can’t wait to see how long this list will be at the end of the year! Our students are having some fun while learning these concepts; some were able to explore proportional relationships by comparing the size of gummy bears, while other students learned the concept of LCM by analyzing Ferris Wheel rides. Students also did a great job on their “Bus Problem” posters which was a 3-day mini-project that was done in class. The math teachers are also excited to see all of the awesome community service hours that our Pirates are doing in and around the Charlotte area. Coming up in quarter 2, we will be learning a lot about percents, fractions, and we will have our big Culture Meal project which is always a student favorite. Thanks for sending your children to Piedmont!

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

The 6<sup>th</sup> grade TD students are learning how to be independent, inquisitive, and principled by using their binders, asking questions, completing assignments and turning work in on time. The students’ first quarter focuses on informational text and argument writing. How is text structured? How do I answer my questions? What is an argument?

Our Middle Years Program (MYP) Unit Question this quarter is, “Can Information be Trusted?” Our IB Learner Profile this quarter is Inquirers. Inquirers develop their natural tendency towards curiosity and naturally enjoy learning. Inquirers are independent learners who can conduct inquiry and research in all content areas. Students practiced this learner profile as they moved through the IB Design Cycle in all their subjects.

Students have been learning their Greek and Latin stems as well as their unit’s vocabulary. The goal of the Greek and Latin stems is to make a “profound and permanent difference in a child’s understanding of academic vocabulary, and to do it in a way that dramatically increases not only the child’s cognitive comprehension of words but also the child’s affection for words.” (*The Word Within the Word*)

Our Unit Goals for this quarter are to learn how to determine a central idea and how it is conveyed through particular details which help provide a summary of the text. Students learned how a sentence, paragraph, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of ideas. In second quarter, students will write an argumentative essay in which they will trace and evaluate the arguments and specific claims in a text.

## **Seventh Grade Math**

In the first few weeks of school, students had many group challenges to accomplish in math class and how to learn to be a leader, but also how to let others lead along the way. One activity they tried was a “Marshmallow Tower Challenge.” Students had to create the tallest tower out of uncooked spaghetti noodles and tape, and then have a jumbo marshmallow steady on it at the top. We measured the towers that were still standing at the 18-minute buzzer and calculated the differences in their heights. We had some towers over 24” tall!

The 7<sup>th</sup> graders have just completed their first unit on the Number System. For the past few weeks, they have been working on how to classify all the types of real numbers (irrational, rational, integer, whole, natural) while learning many rules along the way for how to add, subtract, multiply and divide them. “Same sign, SUM. Different signs, DIFFERENCE. Keep-Change-Flip. Leave it- Change it Opposite.” These are just a few of the rules students have used lately to help them remember the skills we are learning in our first unit. Students first played games to get them to develop the rules, and then they made short-cut sayings afterward.

The honors classes had extended material with an in-depth look at squares and square roots. Not only did they learn all the perfect squares up to 20, but then we took a closer look at how to estimate the values of the irrational square roots, such as the  $\sqrt{45}$ .

All 7<sup>th</sup> grade math students showed off their integer skills recently by creating an original Integer Board Game. They developed the rules, game board, box, and had a minimum of 20 integer questions for their game. We had class time for students to play each other’s games so they could continue to practice their integer abilities.

Unit 2 has begun and we are into our *Ratio and Proportion* content. Math 7 students are looking at ratios, rates, unit rates, complex fractions and unit pricing. The honors students are starting this unit with solving not just one, not just 2, but 3 (or more) step-equations. They will use those extended skills with equations to help them solve more complex ratio and Proportion problems.

We are looking forward to a great year with this group and have some exciting things planned in the upcoming units!

## **Seventh Grade Language Arts**

7<sup>th</sup> grade Language Art’s began first quarter with an Introductory Unit to Literature that includes a Genre’s Workshop, Reading Strategies Workshop, and Academic Vocabulary Workshop. Students explored text types by reviewing the characteristics of each genre, (fiction, poetry, drama, nonfiction and types of media). Students also explored and practiced active reading skills and *strategies, Preview, Set a Purpose, Connect, Use Prior Knowledge, Predict, Visualize, Monitor, Make Inferences*, identifying ones already familiar with. Students will continue with these reading skills and strategies throughout the school year.

Students learned the meaning of Academic Vocabulary and used a chart to become familiar with some of the academic vocabulary terms in the Literature book. Students also learned other vocabulary strategies that work, such as use of context clues, structure (stems) and how we make new words our own.

Students have explored IB Unit Question: “What makes you...you by reading, and analyzing multicultural Literature that included Amy Tan’s short story, “Fish Cheeks,” Langston Hughes, short story “Thank You, M’am,” and the German Folktale, “Ashputtle.” Student activities for these stories include compare and contrast, response to literature, class discussions on culture, and class mini projects.

## **Eighth Grade Language Arts**

Eighth grade TD students are being challenged in Language Arts in numerous ways. Students receive weekly vocabulary lists. The list includes Greek or Latin roots and vocabulary words that correspond with the roots. The vocabulary program helps students improve their reading comprehension, writing, communication, and test-taking skills. This quarter, we focused extensively on commas. We learned rules and applied what we learned to our own writing.

Over the course of the year, students will explore identity through a variety of lenses. We begin our study, first quarter, by exploring friendship and how friends impact our identity. Students read a variety of texts—short stories, personal narratives, non-fiction pieces—to gather information about friendship. They also read *The Outsiders*, by S.E. Hinton. Students closely read the text to look at how friends and society influence our lives.

This quarter is writing intensive. We started with analyzing paragraph structure. Students end the quarter by demonstrating their knowledge of *The Outsiders* with a writing analysis assessment. This assessment demonstrates skill development in paragraph structure, locating appropriate evidence from a text, and creating an argument. These skills are extremely important in the IB curriculum and the Common Core Standards. We will track students' writing development over the course of the year. We are already very excited with the progress!

We are also creating more opportunities for our students to participate in creative writing. The final creative writing assignment of the quarter is a narrative writing piece. After reading *The Outsiders*, students self-reflected on life lessons they have learned. Using *The Outsiders* as a model, students are crafting personal writing "theme essays." We are using writing as a way to explore, entertain, persuade, and explain. We are truly a classroom of writers!

The eighth grade Language Arts team looks forward to a challenging and rewarding year!

## **Eighth Grade Math**

First quarter 8<sup>th</sup> grade math TD students were introduced to the Real Number system. Students were able to locate an irrational number on the number line and estimate its value. Students also learned how to tell the difference between a function and non-function which will help us with our next unit – linear equations.

In Math I, students have learned about infinitely many and no solutions to solving equations. Students also learned about functions and how to write a function. TD students in Math I have just completed the Pirate Park activity of graphing equations of lines.

Students in Math I/II are half way through the course of Math I. They have studied solving equations, writing equations of lines and systems of equations. Students used their knowledge of systems of equations to "Rescue a Princess". Ask them about their wonderful maps and artwork for this project. Students also learned of the concept Linear Programming and it does not have anything to do with computers. Students learned how to maximize and minimize profits or earnings and costs given constraints. They used systems of inequalities to solve.

All students took their summer math project seriously and did very well. We will continue to quiz them on their math facts. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade math team looks forward to much more computing during the year!



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### Talent Development News

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#### **Mission Statement**

Piedmont exists to inspire in its students a passion for learning and a commitment to personal integrity and academic excellence. Students demonstrate self-confidence and creativity, are open-minded and inquisitive, and display a sense of social responsibility and global awareness.

*Piedmont ... You Know ... We Care!*

#### **What is Talent Development?**

The **Talent Development Program** for gifted services is based on consultation and collaboration between the talent development and classroom teachers. They work together to meet the needs of the high achieving student.

##### **Program Benefits**

- Gifted education and general education are related, connected and integrated.
- Out of class sessions are scheduled when needed most.
- The pace of learning is enhanced.
- High achieving students receive more challenging tasks within the classroom.
- Classroom and TD teachers work together to maximize student learning.

##### **Did you know?**

- Research on the TD Program indicates that students receive at least three times the amount of services using this model compared to the old pullout, once a week program.
- The TD model is most effective when high achieving students are flexibly grouped together based on their instructional needs.
- Every school has a Talent Development teacher.
- The TD teacher at your child's school can tell you how they work with your child and your child's teacher.

#### **TALENT DEVELOPMENT TEAM**

- **Academic Facilitator**

Dawn Johnston

- **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Team**

##### **Language Arts**

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Molly McCarthy  
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##### **Math**

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- **7<sup>th</sup> Grade Team**

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##### **Math**

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- **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Team**

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##### **Math**

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