



A Memo from the MS Class Dean



Dear 6th Grade Parents and Guardians,

Congratulations are due to all the sixth graders as they wrapped their TREPS projects! The marketplace -- result of all their energy, creativity, and efforts -- was a tremendous success.

This week math, English, science, and history (MESH) subjects also finish up various units, as those teachers are getting ready to launch our next big project right after the winter break: the **Interdisciplinary Food and Identity Unit**. You will learn more about the unit after the winter break in a letter from the MESH team, and parents are all invited to attend the closing celebration on January 28th. In fact, we are hoping many parents will help by contributing to the international food festival that caps the celebration of student presentations of work completed for the unit. The celebration and food fest is an annual, fun tradition in the 6th grade year, and we hope you will be able to join us.

This week also includes the posting of the first 6th grade “**report cards**” to myDE. Sixth graders do not receive cumulative letter grades in any subject. Instead, at this point in the year, subject-specific feedback takes the form of detailed checklists from MESH subjects as well as visual art, music, health & wellness, world languages, and ASK. Starting in middle school, “report cards” are written to students as well as to you. Students read and reflect upon the reports during advisory period the day before they are posted to parent portals, putting the students “in the driver’s seat.” Over the course of the next several advisory periods, each student participates in a goal-setting conference with their advisor, using the checklists and their own reflections as a guide. We hope they also will take the opportunity to enjoy sharing their plans with you and discussing their ideas about each of their subjects as they look forward to school starting up again in January.

Dates of Interest

- **Tuesday, December 17 -- Checklist Reflection for Students.** During advisory period, checklists from all subjects will be opened to students on their portals in myDE, and advisors will guide students through a reflection process. Over the next several advisory periods, advisors also will have individual conferences with each student to discuss points of special pride and goals the student plans to focus on in the coming months.
- **Tuesday, December 17th -- Holiday Gift Drive Concludes.** Advisory groups collaborate to write holiday cards, wrap their gifts and send these together with their good wishes to their group's recipient. The gift bags will be collected on Tuesday so they can be delivered to the charitable organization that forwards them on to our recipients.
- **Wednesday, December 18 -- Checklists Posted to Parent Portals.** You should be able to access your child’s “report cards” on your own myDE portal in the morning. Note that Health & Wellness has its own page and reflects just the first two units of the year, while the checklists for MESH, arts, and world languages reflect the entire year up to this point. Sixth graders do not receive cumulative letter grades in any subject.
- **Friday, December 20th -- NO SCHOOL.** Happy winter break!
- **Monday, January 6 -- First Day of Classes.** Welcome back to school!
- **Tuesday, January 7th -- Food and Identity Interdisciplinary Unit Kick-Off.** True to its theme, the unit begins with a special, midmorning, multicultural breakfast for students, followed by concept-launching activities as a full grade level. After the winter break, look for a letter from the MESH team that describes the opening events, and the unit as a whole, in more detail.
- **Tuesday, January 28th -- Food and Identity Unit Celebration.** Parents are invited! As it began, this unit ends with food: a pot-luck-style international food festival highlighting samples of foods special to our students and their families as well as some presentations of student work from the unit. Look for an email, after the winter

break, from our wonderful Parents Association Representatives. They will be organizing the Food Festival component of this celebration -- and offering you the opportunity to get involved!

- **Wednesday, January 29th -- NO SCHOOL.** Happy Lunar New Year!

Around the Dinner Table...

- **Checklist Reflections.** As part of reflecting on their “report cards,” all students meet with their advisors to confer. Ask your child what goals they have set for themselves after discussing their checklists with their advisor. What are they proud of?

Reminders

- **Planning an Absence near the Winter Break.** If you plan to extend the winter holiday, please let me know as soon as possible, in addition to emailing MSattendance@d-e.org or filling out SchoolPass. Absences that extend a regular school break are “excused without extensions” which means students are expected to take the initiative to discover what they will be missing and make up that work on time. This might mean submitting work electronically while they are out or bringing in work early or the first day they are back to school. We at school can support your child with the planning process during TAGs if we have enough notice, and students should use the MS “Planned Absence Form” I can give them to help keep track of which teachers they have talked to. (Please see the MS school student handbook for more detailed information about planned absences and absence types.)

Have a happy holiday!

Tasha Urbanowski
Sixth Grade Dean