



MS 6th Grade Dean Update

Dear 6th Grade Parents and Guardians,

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the international food festival that capped off our January Identity Unit -- especially our PA reps! What a wonderful celebration! And a shout out to all the sixth graders for also completing their beautiful 3D tile relief projects. If you are on campus in March, be sure to swing by the display cases outside Schenck Auditorium to see their work. Kudos are due, as well, to the MS Chorus for their wonderful "Around the World" performance February 5th!

February has been buzzing with many new unit launches. As we are coming up on spring break, students are preparing for assessments and major assignments in just about every subject. This is typical for the time of year in middle school, and the academic ramp-up coincides with a new sports season starting and rehearsals for the MS spring play. Maintaining structure with HW routines at home, and avoiding unnecessary absences, should be helpful for students during this exciting and challenging time.

Dates of Interest

- **Monday-Tuesday, February 16 & 17 -- No School: President's Day Weekend/Lunar New Year.**
- **Thursday, February 26th -- Sign Up for Spring Clubs.** Advisors will go over with students the descriptions of available clubs on the 26th and ask them to fill out the usual google selection form. Coaches will hold short meetings about spring clubs during the same time frame.

- **Monday, March 9th -- Spring Sports Try-Outs Start.** Mr. Vettoso has e-mailed a google form sign up to all the students, which they can use to indicate their interest to join a sport. However, it's not too late! Practice and try-out schedules will be posted on the athletic page of the school website, and students can still fill out the interest form or show up at try-outs on the first day.
- **Wednesday, March 11th -- Rome Presentations in History Class.** Parents will be invited to attend student group presentations of their research projects for this History unit. Please keep an eye out for an upcoming email from Mr. Wallman with details and an RSVP form for parking for that day.
- **Thursday, March 5th -- Diversity Day.** We have a special day of programming for all MS students on Thursday, March 5th organized by the DEIB department. Students will be offered a choice of workshops prior to the day and also participate in some full-division educational and celebratory experiences.
- **Friday, March 20 -- No School, Eid Al-Fitr**
- **Saturday, March 21 - Sunday, April 5th -- No School, Spring Break.**

Around the Dinner Table...

- **Assemblies for MLK Day, Lunar New Year, and Black History Month --** Ask your child what role Stevie Wonder played in making MLK Day a national holiday or to share about their favorite performance from our Lunar New Year celebration or student-planned Black History Month assembly!
- **Class Meeting on Boundaries and Sensitive Topics --** During a "FLEX" period in late February, we gather with Mrs. Levitan and Mrs. Henry-Agblonon to discuss how the developmental and emotional needs of 6th graders change as we move into the spring, and what that might mean in terms of considering the tone and topics of casual conversations with our classmates. We will also get guidance on navigating conversation topics with sensitivity and kindness that might cause big feelings and how to support our friends when they are struggling. A list of discussion questions you may want to explore with your child will be added [HERE](#) after we have had the class meeting at the end of next week.
- **Submitting to *Open Roads*** -- the Middle School literary magazine accepts both writing and artwork, and everyone is encouraged to submit work! February and March are good times to do this. Interested students can ask Ms. Sanford for details.

Reminders

- **After School** -- Once buses "roll" at 3:40, sixth graders should not be on campus unless they are enrolled in a supervised activity, or with you or another parent attending an after-school event. If your child is waiting for the late bus after play rehearsal or sports practice, please remind them they should check in at the library and stay there until you or the late bus come to pick them up. This way we can be sure they are accounted for and reachable in case of an emergency. I do not recommend leaving your child on campus after school to "hang out" since, once MS teachers leave, there is no adult oversight of their activities if they are not engaged in Homework Help Club.
- **Planning an Absence?** -- If you know in advance that your child will miss a day of school, please email your dean **A WEEK IN ADVANCE**. This will allow us to help your child plan ahead, get extra help, and often lessen the burden of catching up by completing some work before they go. (Starting in middle school, students are responsible for catching up both missed classwork and homework on time for planned absences. Extensions are not generally granted for absences that extend a school holiday. Teachers do not prepare "packets" of work or email instructions to parents, so the students need time to confer with their teachers and make individualized notes and plans about missed classwork. See the [student handbook](#), for more details about the attendance policy.)

