



**GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL  
PRINCIPAL'S NEWSLETTER  
OCTOBER, 2008**

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome back to a new school year! I am very pleased to announce that the 2008-2009 school year has started off with great success. This is a tribute to the diligent planning of the staff and the positive attitudes of our students. We have had a very busy opening school schedule, with a number of exciting things going on.

Our "***Back to School Night***" took place on Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup>. The turnout was phenomenal. It's a wonderful feeling to know how important education is to our parents. Those parents in attendance were able to "relive" the days of their Junior High School by visiting the classrooms of their children and receiving pertinent information (course expectation sheets) about specific topics that will be covered throughout the year.

As I mentioned in my August/September newsletter, I am looking forward to an exciting, productive school year. When home and school work together as partners in education, communication between home and school is facilitated and strengthened. I view parents and guardians as our partners in the educational process and encourage you to become involved in as many activities as you can throughout the school year. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me at school (978-448-6155).

Sincerely,

Steven M. Silverman  
Principal

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**GROTON-DUNSTABLE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION:**

It is the policy of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, gender, disability, sexual orientation, national origin or homelessness in its educational programs, activities, or employment policies as required by Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Also, students will not be excluded for reasons of marriage or pregnancy. Requests for information about these laws and/or grievance procedures should be directed to Dr. Susan Rubel, Director of Curriculum and Staff Development, Groton-Dunstable Regional School District, (978) 448-5505.

### CALENDAR

October 2	Curriculum ½ Day – Half Day Dismissal 11:30am
October 10	Cafeteria Staff Appreciation Day
October 10	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Midterm Progress Reports
October 13	Columbus Day – No School
October 14	School Council Meeting – 4:00pm – MS North C/R
October 14	MSPTO Meeting – 5:30pm – MS North C/R
October 14	Destination Imagination Information Meeting for Parents - 5:30pm - MS North C/R
October 15	Johns Hopkins Gifted & Talented Program – Parent Information Night 7:00pm – MS South PAC
October 17	Month of the Young Adolescent- Parent Shadow Day
October 17-24	Middle School Fall Book Fair
October 24	Kids’ Night Out (Grades 5&6) – 7:00-9:00pm- MS North
October 27	Principal’s Coffee – 8:30-9:30am – MS North Cafeteria
October 29	Curriculum ½ Day – Half Day Dismissal 11:30am

### LOOKING AHEAD

November 4	Curriculum Day – No School
November 7	End of 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter
November 10-14	National Education Week
November 11	Veterans’ Day – No School
November 14	Custodian Appreciation Day
November 17	Parents Bullying Presentation – 7:00-8:00pm – MS South PAC
November 17	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Report Cards Mailed
November 25	School Council Meeting – 4:00pm – MS North C/R
November 25	MSPTO Meeting – 5:30pm – MS North C/R
November 26	Thanksgiving Recess – ½ Day Dismissal 11:30am
November 27-28	Thanksgiving Recess – No School



## MSPTO and SCHOOL COUNCIL NEWS

The MSPTO is looking forward to another great year! All parents are encouraged to attend our monthly MSPTO meetings to hear about some of the great things being planned for the year and to offer ideas and suggestions. Meetings take place on various Tuesdays of each month at 5:30 PM in the MS North Conference Room. Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>. We hope to see you there!

Our first School Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 14<sup>th</sup> at 4 PM in the MS North Conference Room. The School Council is a group of parents, teachers and community members who work with the principal in planning and implementing goals and practices that enhance the achievement of all students. The School Council also reviews the annual school building budget and works with the principal in developing the annual School Improvement Plan. All meetings are open to the public.

### 2008-2009 SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Steven M. Silverman, Principal	Mark Branco, Assistant Principal
Joyce Bennett, Teacher	Scott Plausse, Parent
Karen Gartland, Mathematics Coordinator	Lisa O'Connell, Parent
Susan Bessolo, Teacher	Laura Yanchenko, Parent
Sue Daugherty, Teacher	Shiela Donahue, Parent
	Joe Twomey, Community Liason

## GDRMS CELEBRATES THE MONTH OF THE YOUNG ADOLESCENT

October is the **Month of the Young Adolescent**, an annual national collaborative effort of education, health, and youth-oriented organizations. Initiated by National Middle School Association (NMSA), **Month of the Young Adolescent** brings together a wide range of organizations to focus on the needs of this important age range, 10-15.

Four key messages will be promoted throughout the month of October. They are:

- The importance of parents being knowledgeable about young adolescents and being actively involved in their lives;
- The understanding that healthy bodies plus healthy minds equal healthy young adolescents;
- The realization that the education young adolescents experience during this formative period of life will, in large measure, determine the future for all citizens; and
- The knowledge that every young adolescent should have the opportunity to pursue his or her dreams and aspirations, and post-secondary education should be a possibility for all. Why should we focus on a collaborative national campaign regarding young adolescents? The general public has lacked an adequate understanding of youth in the transition period between childhood and adolescence. As a result, young adolescents often have been "growing up forgotten."

Unfortunately the English language contains no single word for this life stage, having only the terms infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood to designate periods of life. Yet it is during the period of early adolescence, generally between the ages of 10 and 15, when young people leave childhood and move toward full adolescence that they make major decisions about their values, standards, attitudes, and personal beliefs. Many of these decisions direct their behavior throughout their lives.

Through the **Month of the Young Adolescent** celebration, we are focusing on the developmental needs and characteristics of young adolescents and how these impact parenting practices, health conditions, and educational programs for this age group. Working together, we can highlight the need for strong educational partnerships among the school, parents, students, and community members so that every 10 to 15 year old will have the opportunity to become all he/she can and should become.

All of us are mindful that the issues we are celebrating during the Month of the Young Adolescent deserve year round attention and commitment if we are to accomplish what we must to ensure the well-being of all young adolescents. Therefore, as an outgrowth of this special month, we believe the following things will occur:

1. Parents and communities will become more knowledgeable about the needs of young adolescents and how they may appropriately respond to them.
2. There will be increased linkages developed between home and school with the common goal of implementing high quality education for every young adolescent.
3. There will be an increase in mutually supported activities between the school and community. A foundation of common understandings will be developed to enhance further community involvement in the education of young adolescents.
4. Parents, educators, and community members at-large will better understand the need to help young adolescents make wise decisions on a day-to-day basis, as well as help them become healthy, productive, and ethical adult citizens.

This collaborative approach continues to be important to the success of this initiative because it will take all of us working together to make a real difference in the lives of 10 to 15 year olds.

With this in mind, Groton-Dunstable Regional School will once again celebrate the Month of the Young Adolescent by incorporating some special activities into its school program. NMSA is suggesting that schools throughout the United States, Canada, and other nations designate one day in October as Student Shadow Day. On this day, parents are invited to attend school with their child(ren). The purpose of this day is to promote awareness of the changes that have taken place in schools over the past few years. **Parents will be invited to attend a full day of school to get a first-hand account of what a typical day is like for a middle school student.** Groton-Dunstable Middle School will hold its Parent Shadow Day on **Friday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008.**

The following activities will also take place on October 17<sup>th</sup>:

1. **Student Essay Contest** – Students may choose to write an essay on a given topic listed for their grade level. Students should submit their essays to their homeroom teacher by October 10<sup>th</sup>. Homeroom teachers will then forward them to the principal who will then read them. Based on a rubric, two (2) essays will be chosen from each grade level. The names of the winners will be read over the PA and these students will have their essays displayed on hallway bulletin boards. Each winner will also receive a \$15.00 gift certificate.

**Topic Sentences for essay:**

Grade 5: Certain choices have consequences that can affect you for the rest of your life

Grade 6: What adults need to understand about young adolescents

Grades 7& 8: The decisions adolescents make can help them become successful adults

2. **Team Color Day** - Students will be encouraged to wear our school colors – maroon and white
3. **Principal for the Day** – One of our students will be shadowing the principal for the day. Students who would like to be principal for the day will have the opportunity to put their name in a drawing during one of their lunch periods.
4. **Akeelah and the Bee** –The movie, **Akeelah and the Bee** will be shown to all of our students and parents. This movie is about an 11-year-old girl named Akeelah Anderson (Keke Palmer) who has a love for words. Spelling words was a way for her to connect to her father who was killed when she was six. Akeelah is a bright student, but she has been skipping class and is barely passing. Akeelah's principal is about to put her in detention when he persuades her to enter the Crenshaw school's spelling-bee. Akeelah wins the spelling-bee and now she can go to the state contest. Dr. Larabee (Laurence Fishburne), a college professor and former national spelling-bee contestant, enters the picture. The principal has asked Dr. Larabee to help coach Akeelah. At first, Akeelah is stubborn and hardheaded that she doesn't need any help to win the next spelling-bee. However, Dr. Larabee shows Akeelah that she doesn't need to know all of the words to win. During the summer, Dr. Larabee is a tough taskmaster teaching Akeelah as much as he can. He then gives her 5,000 new words to learn and tells her to do it on her own. With the help of the whole neighborhood, Akeelah learns all the words, and makes it to the national spelling-bee in Washington D.C.

**At the completion of the movie, JR Villarreal, one of the student actors in the film will be making a guest appearance at our school!**

Parents: Please note that the rating on the movie, “Akeelah and the Bee” is PG due to some language. Our technical crew will make an effort during the performance to silence those words. If you prefer that your child not view this movie, please send in a note to your child’s homeroom teacher indicating this request and we will have an alternate activity planned for your child.

**If you are planning on attending this event, we strongly recommend that your child(ren) arrive to school with you. Please make every effort to be at school no later than 8 AM to give you ample time to sign in, get a visitor’s badge and report to your child’s first period before 8:10 AM. *Akeelah and the Bee* will be shown to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students and parents at 8:30 AM. 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and parents will be attending the 11:30 AM performance. Please note that no one will be allowed to enter the PAC once the performance has begun.**

**Due to limited parking, we encourage parents to carpool. We ask that you do not bring other siblings.**

### **KIDS’ NIGHT OUT (GRADES 5 & 6)** **7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> GRADE DANCES**

Groton-Dunstable Regional Middle School will be sponsoring these outstanding events! Kids’ Night Out gives students an age-appropriate opportunity of participating/choosing a variety of activities during the course of the evening. Some activities include: dancing the night away with DJ Greg, playing basketball/volleyball in the gym, watching a video movie, playing a variety of board games, making arts and crafts, and other activities which will change from time to time. The nice part of Kids’ Night Out is that it allows students to choose and rotate from a variety of activities throughout the evening. Students are free to circulate from activity to activity.

Students can dance a bit, then shoot some hoops, then watch a movie, and then hit the dance floor again! All Kids’ Night Out Dances will be held in MS South from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. **Admission to KNO is \$5.00.** Soda, water and candy will be available for students to purchase for \$1.00.

Grades 7 and 8 students will have two special dances. One is the **Back to School Bash** in September and the other is the **End of the School Year Bash** in June. Being that these are special dances, they will run from 7:00 – **9:30 PM**. All other 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade dances will run from 7:00 – **9:00 PM**. **Admission is \$5.00.** Soda, water and candy will be available for students to purchase for \$1.00.

Proceeds from these dances will go toward bringing in some educational cultural assemblies.

Other dances/activities will also be planned by our Class Advisors throughout the year.

Please note that only students enrolled at Groton-Dunstable Middle School are invited to attend these after-school events. There will be **no exceptions**.

For the safety of all of our students, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade parents are required to come into the school building at 9 PM to pick up their child(ren). Carpools will be permitted. Parents of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are **encouraged** to come into the building to get their child(ren). All students are to enter and leave through the Main entrance of either school. Parents are asked to arrive promptly at 9:00 PM.

Students are expected to follow the same rules at dances that they follow at school. Appropriate dress and behavior are always required. Any student who comes to an event dressed inappropriately or who causes any behavioral problems will be sent home after his/her parents have been notified to pick them up. Refunds will not be given.

## **BULLYING, CYBER-BULLYING AND HARRASSMENT**

As part of our ongoing initiative to promote a zero tolerance of bullying and harassment at our school, the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center at Bridgewater State College will be presenting two separate assemblies (one for grades 5 & 6, and one for grades 7 & 8) on bullying and cyber bullying on October 20<sup>th</sup>. A follow up assembly will be held for parents on November 17<sup>th</sup> at 7PM in the PAC.

## **DESTINATION IMAGINATION VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED!**

As you are aware, this year GDRMS is hoping to offer all students the opportunity to be part of Destination Imagination. Destination Imagination is a place where kids take what they know and what they are good at, and learn to apply it to solve challenges while working together and cooperatively with a team.

Destination Imagination builds participants' creativity, problem solving, and teamwork in enjoyable and meaningful ways.

Teams of five to seven members work together to apply creativity, critical thinking and their particular talents to solve a **Team Challenge**.

The Destination Imagination **Team Challenge** is a challenge that is solved over a period of eight weeks or more. There are five competitive **Team Challenges** from which teams may choose, each with its own educational focus. Each **Team Challenge** is designed to be open-ended and solvable in many ways and on many levels.

Destination Imagination meetings will take place on certain days each month from 2:30 – 4:00 PM. Competitions are usually held on Saturdays.

**If you are interested in helping out with this terrific program, please attend an informational session with the DI coaches at our October 14<sup>th</sup> MSPTO meeting at 5:30 PM in the North Conference Room.**

This program can only run with the support of parent/staff volunteers.

## **JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY – CENTER FOR TALENTED YOUTHS** **2008-2009 CTY ACADEMIC TALENT SEARCH** **Gifted and Talented Program**

The Center for Talented Youth seeks students of the highest academic ability through its talent search and offers them challenging educational opportunities that develop the intellect, encourage achievement, and nurture social development.

Those students in grades 5-8 who have scored in the **advanced category on either their Math or English Language Arts** MCAS test (Spring, 2008) will be eligible to participate in this program. Letters will go home to those parents whose child qualifies.

I have set up an informational session on **October 15<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM in the PAC** for parents of those students who qualify. Representatives from CTY will be present to answer questions and to give a presentation of what the program entails. There is a \$25 charge to apply to Talent Search (CTY). The SAT (grades 7 & 8) test is between \$45-55 and the SCAT (grades 5 & 6) is \$50.

To be nominated to the CTY Talent Search is an honor. Students in grades 5 & 6 who are nominated may take the School and College Ability Test (SCAT), which is an above-grade-level test. Students who qualify in grades 7 & 8 may take either the SAT or the ACT, the two most popular college admission tests in the United States. Upon completion of the test(s), students in grades 7 & 8 who score at an advanced level on the SAT or the ACT will be eligible for a rigorous, stimulating academic experience in CTY's Summer Program where they can actually live on a college campus and take courses! Students in grades 5 & 6 who are eligible can take on-line courses at school! In addition, there will be other programs offered for students who qualify.

**Letters will be sent home to those students who qualify in early October.** We hope you will join us on October 15<sup>th</sup> to hear more about this program. Handouts and brochures will also be made available to take home.

### **SNACKS**

Research has clearly shown that middle school students perform better and have greater concentration when they have proper nourishment. With this in mind, all students will have a designated snack time on a daily basis within their classroom. Teaching and learning will continue to take place during this time. We ask for parents' cooperation in adhering to the following: students are **not allowed** to bring in soda, large bags of chips or any type of food that is not conducive for a morning snack. Snack is not a time for the sharing of food. We encourage all students to bring in an **individual portion** of a "healthy" snack. Due to food allergies, students are asked **NOT** to bring in any snack that contains **peanuts/nuts**. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.



### **SOUTH BUILDING**

For the safety and well-being of our students and staff, parents are reminded **that vehicles are not permitted to drive around the back of the South Building**. Please park your vehicle in the main campus parking lot or in the side lot between the South Building and Flo Ro. Thank you for your cooperation.

### **HAVE YOU SEEN YOUR CHILD'S AGENDA, PLANNER HANDBOOK?**

All students have been issued a custom-designed GDRMS Agenda Planner Handbook. If you have not seen it, please ask your child about it. This planner serves as a handbook, planning guide, resource for various subject areas, daily calendar, time manager, goal setter and parent communicator.

The objective of the agenda book is to help middle school students become more organized in their school work. It is also designed to gain parent participation by providing an excellent vehicle to communicate with the teacher and the school. All students are required to have their planner with them at all times. Our expectations are that:

1. Students carry their agendas to each class.
2. Teachers check agendas and require students to use them.
3. Parents check on student use and communicate with the school via the agenda.

**GDSTEM****Uncovering Ancient History - A Case Study of One Local Site****Martin Dudek, John Milner Associates****2 October 2008, Middle School North Team Meeting Room, Groton MA****Refreshments at 6:30pm, Presentation at 7:00-9:00pm**

What does it mean to do archaeology in Massachusetts and why is it done? We live in the midst of 12,000 years of human history, most of which cannot be studied from historic records. Most archeological work conducted in New England is not done by universities, but by businesses that are contracted by developers in accord with legal permitting requirements. Professional archeologists are hired to determine whether important archeological sites will be damaged or destroyed by a project. Sometimes important archeological sites can be avoided; but if they can't, we get to dig and learn some important information about past peoples, one site at a time.

Martin will discuss recent archeological work in Concord, Massachusetts on an ancient Native American site that included some curious discoveries, including chipped stone tools, tool-making areas, and burned animal bone dating back several thousand years.

The talk is aimed at high school and advanced middle school students, and is free and open to the public. Martin will also mention career opportunities and career paths in his field, and there will be time for open discussion.

Martin Dudek is Principal Archeologist/Project Manager for John Milner Associates, Inc. in Littleton, MA. Martin has twenty-six years of professional experience in North American archeology. He received his BA in Anthropology from University of Maryland and an MA in Anthropology from Brandeis University. Martin has field experience at ancient cities in Mexico, a Paleoindian site in California, ethno-archeological work in Honduras, and coastal surveys in Alaska. Over the last sixteen years, Martin has participated in numerous archeological surveys and excavations in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. He served as data manager and laboratory supervisor for several of the most significant of the archeological projects conducted for the Central Artery/Tunnel. He has authored or co-authored over sixty archeological reports for New England and directed excavations at Native American sites in New England spanning every time period from 12,000 years ago through the seventeenth century and at historic American sites covering the seventeenth century through the early twentieth century.

**REMINDER – SCHOOL DIRECTORY FORMS DUE**

If you haven't already done so, please be sure to submit your child's School Directory Form to the office by October 6<sup>th</sup> in order to be included in this year's new book, coming out later this fall. If you've misplaced the directory form that was sent home, extras are available in the office.

**GROTON PUBLIC LIBRARY PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG ADULTS**

Looking for something to do on a ½ Day? The Groton Public Library is the place to be! From 11:30–3:00 PM on every Middle School ½ Day the library hosts the Llama Lounge. Bring your friends to play Wii games, board games, do a craft, go online on our laptops, enjoy some treats, listen to music, and get your homework done. This drop in program is free and open to grades 5-8.

Hot Books! Hot Chocolate! Enjoy lively talk and some yummy treats at this monthly book discussion group for grades 6-8. Next meeting is Thurs., Oct. 9 at 7:30PM.

Anime & Manga Night - Tues., Sept. 30 at 5:45 PM. Enjoy pizza and talk & watch the classic anime movie "Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind."

Celebrate Teen Read Week - Oct. 12-18 by reading "Books with Bite" and come to a cooking class on Wed. Oct.16 or catch a free movie on Sat. Oct. 18.

For details about all of our upcoming events go to [gpl.org](http://gpl.org) and click "What's Happening" or call the library at 978-448-1167

## GRADE LEVEL SUPPORT TEAM REPORTS

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE



Fifth grade students have made a smooth transition to the Middle School. They are learning how to juggle teams of teachers, switch classes, and manage lockers. In their academic classes, they have applied themselves and are learning lots of new things.

In Math, students are learning about data and graphs. They have collected samples of graphs from magazines, graphed information about the number of siblings, and how long they can balance on one foot. In Science, subjects vary between the teams. Most students began by exploring their ideas about scientists. Some classes are concentrating on the scientific method, while others are beginning a unit on ecosystems. Students have been studying US government in their Social Studies classes in anticipation of our upcoming election. In Language Arts, students are discussing how they choose (or abandon) books. Everyone has been given their reading requirements for the quarter, and after establishing routines, classes will move on to literature circles.

As we move forward, we encourage students to keep working on organization of their materials (in their binders, backpacks, and lockers).

### 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE



The 6th grade math teachers are all working in the Prime Time, Factors and Multiples book. Many important arithmetic problems involve breaking a whole number into equal-size pieces, or finding a number into which a given number will divide evenly. Solving problems like these involves finding factors and multiples. Prime Time is a series of investigations that allow students to understand factors and products, whole number patterns and relationships, common multiples and common factors, and prime factorization.

Some 6th grade Science teachers are exploring the Earth's system; one team is working on measurement and inquiry, while another team is studying matter.

Language Arts classes will continue to focus on literary elements through reading short stories and individual novels. This will include setting, characterization, plot, and theme. The spotlight is on realistic fiction as a reading requirement for the first quarter and narrative writing to complement the genre.

Students will time travel back to the dawn of man in their Social Studies' classes to learn about early human ancestors and how they lived. By becoming a member of a prehistoric band, students will learn firsthand how these hominids survived as classes complete simulations called "Bones & Stones." They will hunt, gather, and learn with their fellow clan members the truth about cavemen.

## 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE



Our school year has barely started, and we are already getting ready for our first two field trips of the school year in grade 7. We will be going on our annual canoeing trip on the Squannacook River in West Groton, but are adding a second site on the Nashua River near the Watershed offices. These field trips connect to our freshwater ecology unit in science, our sensory and non-human point of view writing in language arts, and an investigation of water issues on a global scale in geography.

For the first time, we are going to the YMCA in Hopkinton to participate in their challenge course using low ropes and group, as well as individual activities to promote self-esteem, personal growth, and team building. Groups of students will be combined from both teams in an effort to allow cross teaming activities.

Students have been busy getting back into the swing of school; learning when it is OK to go to your locker or which teacher wants a 3 ring binder and which wants a notebook, which friends are in my classes, which are not – all very important information.

Language Arts classes are working with daily oral language, short stories, and biographical writings in an attempt to get to know one another. Some classes will be reading biographies and mysteries and will be writing book reports.

Math classes are reviewing fractions, decimals, and percentages in order to better facilitate CMP lessons that assume students have this information down pat. A little review is welcome by many students and allows teachers the opportunity to assess if any students need extra help.

Geographers have been seen in our classrooms, reading atlases, maps, even writing letters, and connecting poems to geography. WOW!!!! Who would have thought? What else is coming?????

## 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE



In American History we are starting out with a bang by examining the events leading up to the "shot heard around the world." Both the Pequot and Groton Graveyard tour are still in the planning phase. The field trip to the Pequot museum provides students with a unique opportunity to explore the culture and history of the Pequot people through classes and exhibits which include a visit to a life size village where students will make anthropological observations. The Graveyard tour highlights the roles of Groton citizens in the Revolutionary time period. Notices for both field trips will be sent out once the logistics are finalized.

In ELA, we've begun the year with varied "getting to know you" activities. These have the dual goals of reviewing curriculum and seeing how students work in groups and on their own. The next few units are: Self-Awareness, where students are involved in completing questionnaires and surveys, and begin to understand who they are as learners; reading groups which include the genre of Science Fiction, *Pigman*, and *Nothing But the Truth* are read; and a science fiction unit

that focuses on short stories by Ray Bradbury, as well as non-fiction readings which communicate similar messages are read and compared. There are also on-going writing assignments.

Science began the year with a Data collection project. Students researched a topic, used data collected from classmates, and interpreted it to draw conclusions about their class. They communicated their findings by making and presenting a poster on the topic. We are now studying Earth Science and will watch the movie "*The Core*." Students will use science facts to distinguish the facts from fiction in the movie.

All eighth grade math classes are working on strengthening skills necessary for their future success. The students have come in with a lot of prior knowledge and are eager to learn more. Throughout these first few units, there will be limited calculator use, as we are encouraging students to show their work. Please help us in reminding them that the process is as important as the answer. We are looking forward to appropriately challenging each child and building on what they already know.