



7th & 8th Grade Friday Letter - March 8, 2019

Dear Willow Creek families,

We hope you had a good week! Here's the news from our middle school team:

- ★ 8th graders returned from the Outward Bound Camping trip. These students will be VERY happy to be home, and will need a lot of rest this weekend. Really try to give them that time to recover from the week, and be ready for a LOT of good stories.
- ★ Parent Teacher Conferences will be held on Friday, March 22, 2019. Please look for sign-up instructions in an email coming soon.

Congratulations to our Middle School All-Stars!
Alex Dries and Nick Tapia-Martinez

Class Meetings and Film and Lecture Series

Each week, we include a description of our middle school class meeting topics for the preceding and upcoming weeks. Middle schoolers meet with their homeroom teachers for class meeting on Monday and Friday afternoons to talk about important social-emotional learning topics and build community. On the last Friday of each month, our 7th and 8th graders come together for a college lecture-style series focused on civil rights, current events, and social issues.

This week's class meeting topic was **proactive communication**. Next week's topic will be **empathy**. Please check in with your students about their class meetings and assemblies. We want to keep these conversations going!

If you have questions about class meetings or social-emotional learning in grades 7 and 8, please reach out to Mr. Baker: rbaker@willowcreekacademy.org.

English Language Arts with Ms. Powers

Seventh Grade:

As we launch Bend II of our *"Tapping the Power of Nonfiction"* unit, students will be invited to work in small research groups, with each group researching a topic chosen from a list of fascinating options. I will provide groups with a starter set of articles, trade books, and multimedia texts. This Bend will support students in lifting the level of their nonfiction reading skills. Students will learn to preview texts to notice repeating subtopics, and they will get exposure to critical vocabulary and concepts.

Eighth Grade:

This week students have been using CommonLit. This is a unique and comprehensive program that supports literacy and critical thinking. The program provides built-in tools to improve reading comprehension. Students are able to access high-quality reading passages that allow them to engage deeply with big ideas and make meaningful connections between texts and their lives.

As always, feel free to contact me with any questions: jpowers@willowcreekacademy.org

Mathematics with Mr. St. Denny

7th Grade Announcements:

7th graders continued learning the 5D process, which is a very strong way to organize information and solve complex word problems. This process is the bridge that helps lead us from guess-and-check to algebraic solutions.

This week they strengthened their skills in naming variables and translating complex phrases into equations. Sarah is 3 fewer than 4 times as old as Mischa, would translate to $S = 4m - 3$.

8th graders who weren't on the field trip worked on shoring up skills in combining like terms and reducing algebraic expressions that include exponents.

As always, please feel free to reach out with questions: sst.denny@willowcreekacademy.org

Science with Mr. MacDonald

7th Grade:

This week 7th graders learned about the temperature scale Kelvin and how very low temperatures affect the way molecules move. We also reviewed endothermic and exothermic reactions. We ended the week by using the wind tunnel to explore aerodynamics.

8th Grade:

With the eighth graders who did not go on the Outward Bound camping trip, we built two wind tunnels for the STEAM Lab. Students did a combination of projects in the STEAM Lab this week from making electric toothbrushes to using CAD to make t-shirts and stickers. Students also had time to use the wind tunnel.

Social Studies with Mr. Baker

Art Auction Projects: This week and last, 7th and 8th grade have been finalizing their efforts for the Art Auction projects! A Big THANK YOU to Eve Weinsheimer, Dawn Agnew, and Alicia Cannon for supporting our efforts and coming up with really fun ideas for the project! We can't wait to show the WCA community what we've done!!!

7th Grade: Our first look at Medieval Japan included learning how Japan collected many cultural ideas from China, India, and Korea. These concepts ranged from aspects of government to written language and religion. Next week, we will spend some time learning about the Heian Period, one of Japan's Golden Ages, to get an idea of how Medieval Japanese culture viewed art, literature, nature, and religion.

8th Grade: The students who did not attend not attend the Outward Bound trip took a step back and decided to create a comic book about the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Next week we will focus on the Monroe Doctrine and how that shaped Westward Expansion.

As always, if you need to reach a teacher for any reason, email is best.

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