



7th & 8th Grade Friday Letter - March 1, 2019

Dear Willow Creek families,

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

- ★ The 8th graders are headed to their Outward Bound trip to Henry Coe State Park on Monday, March 4th. They will return to campus on Friday, March 8th at approximately 3:00 p.m. If they will be later, families will be notified by email. Any students not going on the Outward Bound trip are expected to be at school!

Congratulations to our Middle School All-Stars!
Seth Wollenberg and Eloise Cappelle

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 **community building**. Next week's topic will be **self-advocacy and proactive communication**. 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:

This week students began reading their nonfiction books in book clubs. The main purpose of this first Bend is to teach them that nonfiction readers read to be fascinated, and that they generate questions and ideas that spark rich conversation. Students brought those questions to their book clubs, resulting in deeper conversations.

Eighth Grade:

Students started reading their independent nonfiction books in book clubs, with an emphasis on discerning central ideas. Students were taught to get an initial sense of their texts' central ideas and then to hold their initial ideas loosely, remaining open to the fact those central ideas may need to be revised in light of new information as they read on. Students also considered the ways in which embedded stories fit with the central ideas in a text.

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

Mathematics with Mr. St. Denny

7th Grade Announcements:

7th graders are 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.

8th grade worked with positive and negative exponents, first coming up with rules by expanding problems, and then extending to simplification of complicated monomial multiplication.

Algebra students are now beginning to work with quadratic equations. They can identify solution sets and lines of symmetry from graphs and tables, and will soon be able to swiftly graph and solve factorable quadratics by building upon their considerable skill in factorization.

sst.denny@willowcreekacademy.org

SCIENCE with Mr. MacDonald

7th Grade:

This week 7th graders took a test on chemical reactions. Students then had an engineering challenge to make the tallest tower with 1 piece of paper. The seventh-grade record was 34.5". We ended the week by using aluminum foil to build the tallest tower that could support an LED Circuit Cube.

8th Grade:

Continuing with our unit on Space & Gravity the 8th graders explored what it would be like to travel to Mars and who would make a good astronaut. We used the movie The Martian as a discussion point to talk about living on Mars with limited resources.

Social Studies with Mr. Baker

7th Grade: Welcome back from Mid-Winter Break!!! Our introduction into Medieval Japan has begun! This week, we thought about what we know about Medieval Japan, and discussed a little bit about what we want to know. Our first lessons delved into how Japan was heavily influenced by the cultures of neighboring civilizations through Cultural Diffusion. We also spent some time working on our Art Auction project, which we can't wait for you all to see at the Art Auction!

8th Grade: Our return from break has been highlighted with some discussions about how Presidents and Vice Presidents were elected, VP's being the runner up vs. a running mate, and other processes defined by our Constitution. We also began discussing the concepts of Manifest Destiny and the Monroe Doctrine and how that kicked off westward expansion. We began a jigsaw lesson about the Lewis and Clark expedition and the Louisiana Purchase, which we will finish when the students return from Outward Bound.

Next week, all 8th graders not attending the OB camping trip can expect to have a lot of fun with a mini-project that will be focused on student choices in U.S. historical study.

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

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