

# From The Middle

**LEARN. CARE. LEAD.**

Published jointly by the Administration, Faculty, Staff & PTO

December 24, 2018

Dear John Jay Middle School Families,

JJMS Community,

Happy Holidays! Our first trimester has flown by! It looks like the weather has agreed with us so far and we're hoping that continues through the winter. At this point, students should have settled into a routine and be forming lasting relationships with both the friends and their teachers.

We thank all of those students who have participated in our afterschool activities this fall and those who continue to participate into our winter session. These activities are a great way for students to be part of the JJMS community beyond the academics part of our day. Special appreciation goes out to everyone who was part of our fall drama, *The Twilight Zone*. We thank you all for taking us to, "*a dimension not only of sight and sound but of mind; a journey into a wondrous land whose boundaries are that of imagination.*"

As the KLSD moves into budget season we continue to focus on the Learning Commitment as "we strive to create learning experiences for all students that are intellectually engaging, relevant, and take place in an active learning environment." As a staff, we are using what we know about the students in the classroom in order to create the most intellectually engaging classroom environments. We will continue to use our resources and professional learning to continue to enhance this experience.

If you'd like to know about what is happening more frequently in the school, please follow me on twitter @MrSwiatowicz or on Instagram (MrSwiatowicz) or at the school hashtag #JJMS.

In partnership with you,



Jeffrey S. Swiatowicz

Principal, JJMS

# A LETTER FROM THE JJMS PTO

Dear Parents,

It has been a busy few months at JJMS! There have been several successful events that the PTO has been very proud to support. On November 9<sup>th</sup> our own Jeffery Tepper gave a terrific presentation on keeping our Middle Schoolers organized. It was a well-attended event and Mr. Tepper was kind enough to provide us with his presentation, which is now posted on our website for those of you who were unable to attend.

The PTO was honored to be a part of the Veterans Day Assembly on 11/9 as well. 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade parents attended our PTO Curriculum Conversations and we look forward to the 8<sup>th</sup> grade conversations on January 10<sup>th</sup>. The JJMS garden has been prepped for winter and we look forward to see what comes up in the Spring! Our garden coordinator has also provided each home base with a plant to care for during the school year.

The students at JJMS continue to collect *Box Tops* in home base. Students in each home base are competing to receive the "Box Top Champion" trophy and access to several new games provided by the PTO. Home base leaders have decided that the money raised last year will be used to beautify the outdoor eating area in the front of the school. The engineering club will be building new picnic tables for students.

**YEARBOOKS ARE NOW ON SALE!** Yearbooks and yearbook ads are now available for purchase. Please visit [JJMSPTO.com](http://JJMSPTO.com) for ordering information. The deadline for yearbook ad submission is December 31<sup>st</sup>...submit your ad today!

On behalf of JJMS PTO we want to take this opportunity to thank the families who have supported the PTO thus far through directory, bus note and spirit wear purchases and both volunteer and monetary contributions.

Please "save the date" for the following upcoming events and we hope to see you there!

**January 9<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm:** Curriculum Conversations for current 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade parents  
**January 10<sup>th</sup> 9:30am:** 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Conversations

Thank you again for your support!

Warmest regards,

Kristin & Sarah

JJMS PTO Co-Presidents

## IMPORTANT DATES FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2019

### JANUARY

**January 9/Wednesday** 8:00-10:00 a.m. 8<sup>th</sup> grade students visit to HS  
7:00 p.m. Curriculum Night - Conversations for current 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup> Grade parents in the Theater

**January 10/Thursday** 9:30 a.m. 8<sup>th</sup> Grade PTO Conversations in the Theater (Snow date January 15)

**Week of January 14** 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Counselor visits classes to discuss HS Courses  
BOE mtg

**January 21/Monday** Martin Luther King Day – Schools Closed to Students

**Week of January 22** Counselors begin to visit 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> Grade classes to discuss 2019-20 course selection

**January 23/Wednesday** 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Grades 8-11 Curriculum Night JJHS (current 8<sup>th</sup> Graders)

**January 25/Friday** 2<sup>nd</sup> Trimester Interim Ends

**January 28/Monday** 7:00 p.m. JJMS Band Concert in the Theater (Snow date January 31)

### FEBRUARY

**February 1/Friday** Parent Portal Opens

**February 2/Saturday** Math Counts Competition

**February 4/Monday** 7:00 -9:00 p.m. PTO Parent Teacher Discussion Series

**February 7/Thursday** BOE Meeting

**Week of February 11** 8<sup>th</sup> Grade (Rising 9<sup>th</sup> Grade) Confirm Course Selections

**February 15/Friday** Superintendent's Conference Day – School Closed to Students

**February 18-19/Monday-Tuesday** President's Day – School Recess

**February 21/Thursday** BOE Mtg  
7:00 -9:00 p.m. 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Game Show Night

**February 22/Friday** Spirit Day!  
7:00 p.m. 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Rec & Roll

**February 27/Wednesday** 2:15 – 4:15 p.m. Science Fair

# COUNSELORS CORNER

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

In 6th grade, Annemarie MacSweeney presented the second lesson from the Counseling Curriculum regarding Character Strengths. Prior to this lesson, ELA teachers introduced the Character Strengths definitions and reinforced them through lessons by identifying Character Strengths in characters from short stories. The lesson focused on students identifying their top three Character Strengths and sharing examples of how these strengths have helped them. Knowing our strengths, and how we can use them in our daily lives, can help develop a stronger sense of identity and help us navigate challenges. Parents were also asked to participate by getting their own homework assignment that students brought home. The assignment entailed having parents identify what they thought their child's top three Character Strengths were. The goal was for parents and students to reflect upon this task as an opportunity to begin to initiate conversations about the role character strengths play in our lives. For those parents looking for more information, we encourage you to check out the website below to use the survey and resources developed by the VIA Institute on Character Development.

<http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths-Survey>

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

The 7th graders are continuing to work on using their Character Strengths to enhance their everyday life at the middle school.

**Jen Makover will be visiting classes the week of January 22nd to discuss course selections for the upcoming year and will be highlighting some of the differences students can expect in their 8th grade schedule.** She will also be explaining the accelerated vs. non-accelerated course options. As indicated in the recent Connect Ed message, please make note of the following dates:

- **February 1** - Second trimester interim report -7th Grade students will receive an initial recommendation for 8th Grade Math & Science accelerated classes.
- **March 22** - Accelerated recommendations indicated on the second trimester report card.
- **April 12** - *Parent Waiver Deadline*

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Hello all 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents!

It seems like our kids were just starting middle school last week and now, we are talking about them going to the high school. I can share with you that they will be excited about the opportunities at the high school. When we come back from winter break, we will start the transition process to the high school; a big part of which, is the creation of a 9<sup>th</sup> grade schedule.

Below are important dates. Please make a note of these dates and ask your child about what we are doing in school and the scheduling process. As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

I am excited about this upcoming process for our kids!

Thanks,  
Jeff

Some dates specific to 8th Grade Students in the Scheduling Process:

- **December 21, 2018- 8th Grade Only**- Last day to drop accelerated classes for 8th grade students. Please contact your child's teacher or Mr. Tepper if you would like to make that decision.
- **January 10 - 9:30am JJMS - PTO 8th Grade Conversations** - opportunity for 8th grade parents to ask questions of JJHS staff before students begin to sign up for classes in early February.
- **Week of January 14** - Mr. Tepper will visit classes to discuss JJHS courses. Students will be given a scheduling worksheet of courses for which they are recommended.
- **January 23- 7:00 - 9:00pm JJHS- JJHS Curriculum Night.**
- **February 5** - Parent Portal opens for course electives for incoming 9th graders. *Open for six days.*
- **February 10** - Portal closes to students for course selection.
- **Week of February 11** - Mr. Tepper will meet individually with 8th grade students (rising 9th graders) to confirm course selections made online the previous week.
- **April 12 - Parent Waiver Deadline** (Verification required from school personnel). Schedule closes for all course request changes.

Have a restful holiday break!

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

### Unified Arts

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Unified Arts Character Education Unit

All 6<sup>th</sup> grade students are participating in an interdisciplinary unit on Character Education in their Unified Arts classes taught by Jean Capuano, Carolyn Kelly and Laura Woelfel. This unit will focus on values based decision making. The goal of this unit is to help students understand how the decisions they make in their daily lives impact themselves and others. Students will explore a central question, "How do the values we live by make our school community a positive environment for everyone?" This theme will permeate instruction in the three subject areas: Art, Technology, and Home and Careers.

This interdisciplinary unit will embrace middle school philosophy and the social and emotional development of the whole child. The unit will help students understand that every action has a consequence. Students will be encouraged to think about positive character strengths including kindness, honesty and responsibility as they make everyday decisions. The goal of the unit is to help 6<sup>th</sup> graders develop both a personal and social conscience as they gain a better understanding of how their actions and decisions affect others. The unit will be exploratory in nature and encourage students to come to their own decisions on the values they feel are important to incorporate into their lives.

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

### Team Grit

The year continues to go well for the Team Grit students. Here is a glimpse at what they have been doing in each subject....

Throughout the month of November during Science students have been learning the skill of using a microscope. All students have demonstrated the ability to prepare wet mounts, properly focus on a specimen and to explain what each part of the microscope does. Students had the opportunity to look at a variety of specimens and practice the skill of drawing their observations so that their work is an accurate reflection of the specimen. By the end of December students used their microscope skills as they entered the world of cytology and had the opportunity to view their own body cells. From there, students learned about the parts and functions of cells, modeled how cells move substances into and out of their cytoplasm, cycle energy between cells and describe the processes by which cells produce more cells through

mitosis. In addition to gaining fluency in drawing and using models, students have also focused on using the CER format to analyze data.

In ELA, the students concluded the "Choices and Consequences" unit of study with a process piece essay on "All Summer in a Day" by Ray Bradbury demonstrating how writers convey message through the use of literary elements and aid in the interpretation of character motives. Thereafter, the students enjoyed the shared reading of *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton, focusing on how stereotypes can impact a person's ability to stay true to themselves. We concluded the unit by viewing the film as a team in the theater.

In the accelerated math classes, we have transitioned from algebra and rational numbers to some proportional reasoning. We will rely heavily on previous learning in expanding into more abstract algebraic concepts, such as graphing and creating linear equation. Ultimately, we will look to use these algebraic tools to solve real-world situations efficiently.

In the standard math class, we have moved on from rational numbers to explore proportionality, solving proportions and using proportional reasoning to apply to percents. The next month brings on some real-world applications, such as percent savings, tax, percent markups, and simple interest.

In social studies, students have finished up studying the American colonies by looking at how their development was a result of European governments trying to encourage economic growth in their own countries. The next unit looked at the geographic, economic, and cultural factors that caused the three colonial regions to develop differently, and the latest unit is examining the factors that led to the American Revolution. In this last unit we will use the history to learn how people can try to change public policy. Throughout these units we have been learning new social studies skills, such as analyzing continuity and change and cause and effect, as well as continuing our work with writing inference-based answers to short-response questions.

## Team Unity

In social studies, students are completing their study of the causes of the American Revolution. We read excerpts from Thomas Paine's Common Sense and wrote essays using a quote from the pamphlet to explain the causes of the American Revolution. The students enjoyed our indentured servitude simulation where they had to barter their way onto a ship or find people to sign a contract to come to America as an indentured servant. We are now using our knowledge from this unit to create comic strips, newspapers, or story lines on events that caused the Revolutionary War.

In science, we recently completed our Classification Unit. In it, we learned how life is organized— from the three major Domains down to individual species. A high point was the study of Kingdom Animalia in which we conducted our Yummy Pickled Animals activity, looking at preserved biological specimens to identify different phyla. Ask your child about cephalization and symmetry! During our Cell Unit, we turned microscopes on ourselves and looked at our own

cells. Sampling from the insides of our cheeks, we saw ourselves in a brand new way, identifying organelles inside our very own cells.

In math, students finished their first trimester with a culminating trimester exam. For many students, this is their first experience studying for a larger test, which can be stressful. We continually focus on the process of learning and not on the grades. An important study skill that they need to learn is that cramming does not work. Daily homework completion is much more effective than any studying. Studying 20 minutes a day for 5 days helps the memory and learning much more than an hour or two on one day, Math 7 students are in the midst of the Percent Unit and Math 7A students are beginning an 8<sup>th</sup> grade topic of graphing linear equations.

In ELA, students have been enjoying reading *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton. We began the unit with an anticipation guide that asked students to agree or disagree with a series of statements that relate to topics and themes of the novel. At the end of the novel, we revisit the same series of statements to see if reading the novel has caused any of our original opinions to change. As we have been reading, we have been working to closely analyze the main characters in order to deeply understand character motivations. We are also looking at the important choices that the characters are making, and the consequences of these decisions on the individuals and society. Furthermore, we have been discussing the character strengths that are demonstrated throughout the novel and identifying specific evidence that supports the presence of each. As a culminating writing assessment, we will be writing about the major themes of the novel.

## Team Inspire

Team Inspire **Math** students finished their first trimester with a culminating trimester test. For many students this is their first experience with studying for larger unit tests, which generally means stress. Overall, the students did well, and they should be proud of their efforts. *Now for what really matters*, students are learning how to learn. We are continually focused on how to be resourceful math students. What do you do when you're stumped? Give Up, Never! We continually share and explore strategies for becoming life-long learners. Our findings include: take good notes during lessons, correct your homework carefully in class, correct assessments, ask friends and parents for support, and come to extra help when necessary. When all else fails, google it!!! There are a myriad of ways to improve as a learner. *We frequently discuss the importance of learning verses the grade one receives.* Many students display signs of stress over grades. By emphasizing growth, I try to mitigate or reframe their mindset. As for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade topics we've recently studied: ratios, unit rates, proportional relationships, and percent's. For the accelerated students we have learned additional topics including slope, and algebraic equations. It is a full year of math topics!

In **Science** class we have been learning how to use a microscope. We used the microscope to look at various specimens and make detailed drawings. Students were engaged in understanding why microscopy is important and recreating a famous book written and illustrated by Robert Hooke

called "Micrographia". We then applied our newly acquired knowledge to the skill of microscope measuring and to our new unit "The Study of Cells". We learned about cellular organelles, cell structure and different types of cells. The concepts of division of labor, cellular organization and cell specialization have been discussed. We completed lab work to help us learn, about the process of osmosis and how it effects cells, the structure and function of the cell membrane "Diffusion through a Cell Membrane" and about cellular division, Mitosis. A comprehensive cell assessment will follow and lead us up to the New Year.

In **English** class we have been reading *The Outsiders*. We began the module with a discussion about society's natural inclination to pre-judge people before getting to know them, and the problems these judgements can create. This ties in well to our examination of the two groups within the text. We are also looking at the important choices that the characters are making within the novel, and the consequences of these decisions on the individuals and society. The students have been working on close reading skills, paying attention to how literary elements like characterization, imagery, and theme work together to create meaning and connect to our unit questions and our class discussions. Furthermore, as a culminating assessment, students will be writing theme essays. They will be developing introduction and conclusion paragraphs, as well as determining the best supporting evidence to prove their claims. They will practice varying their transitions and introducing and explaining evidence.

In **Social Studies** students have been analyzing the roles mercantilism, trade, and the French and Indian War played in strengthening and then severing the bonds between Great Britain and its American colonies. Students have also investigated the events that helped cause the American Revolution. There was an emphasis on looking at these events from both the British and Colonists' point of view. Students were then engaging in a series of debates around these events to try and determine the causes and eventual fault in the steps that led up to the American Revolution.

\*\*A reminder to parents: Team Inspire teachers post homework and other important reminders and resources on e-chalk.

**8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

**ELA**

In November, students crafted essays about self-selected themes in John Steinbeck's novel, *Of Mice and Men*. This was the culminating assessment of our first unit.

Next, students began reading and analyzing brief biographies about people who have successfully overcome major challenges; our emphasis was comparing these two inspiring individuals. In December, students selected two figures who persevered because of shared positive attributes. Students then experienced the research process to gather pertinent information about these two people, documenting their sources.

Upon returning from the winter break, students will participate in a writing workshop focused on comparing two successful people who have prevailed over adversity. Students will infuse facts, details, citations, and anecdotes—gathered during their research—into their essay. Students will be applying several revision and editing strategies using mini-lessons, feedback, models, and checklists. We look forward to Publishing Day! Students will also have the opportunity to reflect upon their own writing process and progress.

## SCIENCE

Physical Science students are in the midst of their Chemistry of Matter Unit. We studied the phases of matter and how thermal energy affects these changes. We just finished studying the building blocks of matter - atoms and how ions form and what isotopes of atoms are. Students will now apply their knowledge of the properties of matter and atoms determine if a chemical reaction does or does not occur when substances are combined and how to model chemical reactions. Students should be reviewing their notes nightly, as well as, extra help is held on Thursday afternoons (unless announced otherwise) and many resources are also available on eChalk.

Mr. Miller's Earth Science classes have been exploring the rationale behind earth's coordinate system (latitude & longitude), including "local astronomy" - astronomical objects and processes relatively close to earth. Additional local astronomy topics include: our seasons, the moon's phases, eclipses, and tides. You can download astronomy planetarium-like software (for free) named "Stellarium" (<http://www.stellarium.org/>) to make celestial observations alongside your student.

Mrs. O'Gorman's Earth Science students have completed their study of minerals and rocks. Now they are studying Earth's Weathering, Erosional and Depositional processes and the geologic features created by these processes. Their knowledge of igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks will be extended upon and applied in more detail as we study how these processes and forces shape Earth's surface.

**All** Earth Science would benefit from downloading free Google Earth software <https://www.google.com/earth/> on their home computers to enhance their view of our planet Earth's geology, terrain, latitude, longitude, and seasonal changes. Additionally, all earth students will have a midterm exam near the end of January that will be on everything learned to that point. In addition to students reviewing their notes nightly, extra help is held on Thursday afternoons (unless announced otherwise) and many resources are also available on eChalk.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

Eighth grade social studies students have been studying the Gilded Age and Progressive Era. They have learned to analyze political cartoons by looking at the examples of Thomas Nast who

lambasted the Tamany Hall political machine in New York in the late 1800s. They also learned about the muckrakers, including Upton Sinclair, author of *The Jungle*. Many lunches were spoiled after reading Sinclair's depiction of the meatpacking plants in his 1906 novel! After the holiday break, students will study how the United States became a world power and, eventually, entered World War I.

## MATH

Our Algebra 1 accelerated math classes have been solving systems of linear equations and inequalities using various methods, writing explicit and recursive formulas to represent both arithmetic and geometric sequences, and beginning to explore exponential functions. Students are solving problems with "real world" context involving exponential growth and decay.

Our Math 8 students have been solving multi-step algebraic equations. The students have been applying their knowledge of how to solve these complex problems when solving word problems. Students have also been working on a transformations unit which includes the idea of congruent vs. similar figures. We will be continuing our geometry unit by exploring angles formed by parallel lines and transversals.

## WORLD LANGUAGE

### 6-7-8 Latin

Mr. Knittel's Latin 6/7 students have been busy lately, learning about Roman gods and goddesses, exploring an ancient villa, touring the ruins of Pompeii, speaking and listening to lots of Latin, and enduring their teacher's terrible sense of humor. Tired of his corny jokes, however, the Latin 6A students decided that they had had enough and took to the halls, offices, and classrooms of JJMS this Wednesday to sing holiday songs in Latin (*Rudolphus, naso rubro* was a particular favorite). They looked the part, too, wearing authentic rose crowns and everything. It was a lot of fun.

Not to be outdone, the Latin 8 students have been working on a scale model of the Roman Forum. Each student researched a monument, wrote a brief description of it in Latin, and then built the monument out of ... well, anything they had available. Legos were a popular medium, but so were cotton swabs and cardboard. One monument was rendered on a 3D printer, which was very exciting. These same students celebrated the Roman festival of Saturnalia in a decidedly non-Roman fashion - by singing Karaoke. Miley Cyrus, Madness, Queen, the Beatles, et al. sung dulcetly in Latin? We all are confident that record contracts will be forthcoming.

# 6-7-8 French

## FRENCH 6

As we continue in our exploration of French language and culture, we are learning real-life communicative situations in French. For example, we are currently learning how to order food and drink in a café, how to pay for what we order and how to use French money. Students recently created menus and wrote café dialogs which they acted out with props.

In addition, students will learn the basics of learning to tell time, to give the date and day of the week, and to talk about the weather.

We continue to focus on authentic culture of France and the French-speaking world. Students recently finished their francophone country posters and prepared IMovies for a game of 'Traveling Around Francophone Countries.'

Students are deepening their understanding of the differences between their own language and French and appreciating the differences between their culture and the various cultures of the French-speaking world.

## FRENCH 7

7<sup>th</sup> grade French students have been practicing the irregular verbs **être**, **avoir**, **faire**, **aller**, and **venir** through one pager projects, which have them expanding their writing with accompanying illustrations.

Students have been using the prepositions **à** and **de** to talk about sports, games, and music. In addition, they have learned to refer to people using a variety of prepositions with stress pronouns. They also expanded their vocabulary to talk in more detail about family, neighbors and friends.

We have been learning about several Paris cultural 'institutions', such as *Le Centre Pompidou*, *Les Champs Elysées*, and *Le Parc de La Villete*, and students can look forward to creating IMovies about these institutions.

## FRENCH 8

8<sup>th</sup> grade French has expanded their knowledge of *être*, *avoir* and *faire* in expressions that describe what people are busy doing, feelings, desires, intentions, and common activities such as cooking, doing the dishes and going grocery shopping. Students have also expanded their use of the irregular verbs *aller* and *venir* to talk about plans (near future) and recent events (recent past).

Thanks to our language lab, students record themselves in French, then listen and critique their pronunciation and intonation.

The student pen pal exchange with Normandy was most recently by letter, with students exchanging holiday greetings.

# 6-7-8 Spanish

## **SPANISH 6**

Students are enjoying communicating with classmates in Spanish and are now able to talk about basic personal information, the weather, seasons, classroom objects, and their likes and dislikes. The next topic will be adjectives and how to use them in descriptions. Students continue to enjoy learning through a variety of songs and games aimed to increase speaking proficiency. Students are encouraged to speak Spanish at all times during class; to ask to use the bathroom, to ask for a pencil or paper, and to use other useful expressions they have learned thus far.

## **SPANISH 6a**

Students have been practicing basic conversations and can identify numbers, days, weeks and months in Spanish. Students enjoy learning vocabulary through songs and by playing games in pairs and groups. We are currently working on weather expressions and seasons. Students will soon begin working in pairs to create weather forecasts to be presented to the class.

## **SPANISH 7**

Seventh grade Spanish students have been busy getting to know each other and their families. By studying the grammatical concepts of describing possession and making comparisons, students have been able to talk about and compare their families, friends, and pets. We explored Puerto Rico including the food, celebrities, geography, history, and more. Seventh graders recently began a new unit to describe clothing and shopping preferences. Grammatically, we are studying adjective placement and agreement, along with some new verbs relevant to the topic. We will be studying Spain and comparing its culture with that of the United States.

## **SPANISH 7A**

Spanish 7A students recently learned adjectives to describe themselves and other people. They have also spent time practicing noun-adjective agreement and applying it to form grammatically correct sentence structures. Students reviewed vocabulary on passed times and other activities. They are now learning to talk about time and when they do certain activities. Students are given many opportunities to practice speaking the target language and share what they've learned with others in the class. The language lab has become a valuable tool for them to engage and have fun learning Spanish. Oral proficiency and listening comprehension continue to be a focus of this class.

## **SPANISH 8**

Students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade Spanish learned how to navigate a doctor's visit and tell "what's wrong" after studying body vocabulary and different activities to stay healthy. They applied prior knowledge of the verb "gustar," to a new verb, "doler" to express what hurts. We reviewed the preterit tense to talk about what happened and learned context words, such as yesterday, last week, and last year. We studied the culture of the Dominican Republic and now we are moving to South America, to explore Argentina. Continuing our expansion of vocabulary, we are learning the ever present and useful topic of technology.

# MUSIC

**Orchestra:** We had our first Concert on December 12<sup>th</sup>. Everyone did a wonderful job and the concert was well received by our audience. "Japanese Lullaby" was a big hit and featured solos and duets.

**Chorus:** We had our first Concert on December 19<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations to all the 6, 7 and 8<sup>th</sup> grade choir members.

**Band:** Our first Concert will be January 28<sup>th</sup>. The 6<sup>th</sup> Grade concert begins at 7PM and the 7/8<sup>th</sup> Grade concert begins at 7:45 PM. Band families will receive an email with call times, in January.

**Discovering Music:** 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders have been working on building their piano skills and music literacy. 8<sup>th</sup> graders have been working hard at learning the minor scales.

## **ALL-COUNTY Participants:**

Congratulations to our JJMS musicians who performed a NYSSMA solo last Spring. Joseph Klettner has been chosen to perform with the Westchester County School Music Association Intermediate All-County Orchestra.

Mrs. VonBargen held auditions for the All-County Elementary (4-6) and Intermediate Chorus. (7-9) Congratulations to:

Sophia Hinkley and Brooke D'Aleo (6<sup>th</sup> Elementary All-County Chorus)

Stephanie Halsey and Madelyn Browning (8<sup>th</sup> Intermediate All-County Chorus)

Members of the All-County ensembles perform at SUNY Purchase, in March 2019.

# Library News

The past two months have been a whirlwind in the JJMS library!

The sixth grade students on Team Zeal have been in the library working diligently on a research project, learning about ancient Egypt. The students chose a topic and completed their research using books, magazines, online databases and informational websites. They were also introduced to Microsoft OneNote, which allowed them to take notes and write their essays on the computers in the library. They became such experts at this, that they were asked to teach students from other sixth grade teams how the process worked. As a culminating activity, students made an artifact based on their topic, and we turned the library into an Egyptian Museum. Parents, students and administrators were dazzled by the creativity and originality of the artifacts, and the accompanying presentations!

Seventh graders visited the library during Spanish class to research Puerto Rico. They worked in groups to find information about the island and its people, and then created calendars to share that information.

Ms. Atwell and Ms. Crigler's eighth grade students wrapped up social studies research projects based on events that took place in America from the late 1800's into the early 1900's. Each class had an exhibition in the library to display all their work. Topics that were researched included the creation of the National and American baseball leagues, the Wright brothers' first attempts at flight, and the sinking of the Titanic. Eighth graders also visited the library in December to select biographies, autobiographies and memoirs of people who have overcome adversity.

The makerspace is still immensely popular with students during lunch, and they have become very clever at using our materials to create things. We have seen everything from woven yarn jewelry to construction paper rockets. In November, the 6<sup>th</sup> graders helped create American flag pins, which were given out to veterans during the middle school's Veterans Day ceremony. Donations of any paper, fabric, yarn, buttons, beads, ribbons and other crafting materials would be greatly appreciated.

Finally, the library has its own Instagram account! Please follow @jjmslib for posts about student projects and classes in the library, book reviews, and sneak peeks at upcoming library book orders!

## Physical Education

In November, Physical Education classes participated in a badminton unit and fall fitness testing. The testing includes the following: One mile run, pacer test, push-ups test, sit-ups test, sit & reach, and agility shuttle run. Our students put out a tremendous effort on these tests. Students will be tested again in the spring.

Our students have also been participating in a fitness unit. Some classes have been working in our middle school fitness center while others have been participating in a CrossFit unit. CrossFit is a high-intensity fitness program incorporating elements from several sports and types of exercise. Students have been training with their teams in a variety of exercises, circuits and fitness challenges.

On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, our fitness center is open for intramurals from 2:15-2:45.

# Health

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Health

In health, the seventh-grade classes focus on the skill of goal setting and explore various aspects of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD). We research and discuss brain development, the concept of binge drinking, the short and long-term effects alcohol and drugs on the brain and body. We research about how early access and use leads to increase in risk factors for addiction. Concerns about vaping are directly addressed. With national heroin rates skyrocketing within the US, we discuss how socially accepted drugs (tobacco, vaping, alcohol, marijuana, prescription pills) potentially lead to the use and abuse of other drugs.

For more information about health standard go to the NYS Health Guidance Document link: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/documents/GuidanceDocument4.25.update.pdf>

## Health Office Reminders!

Annual Scoliosis Screening for 7<sup>th</sup> grade girls will begin January 2019. Screenings will take place during PE class in the Health Office. Please note, that if your child has a 2018 physical on file, they will be exempt from this NY State mandate.

Modified sports Spring signups will take place in March. For more information please refer to the Athletics Department website. Please note that a physical dated on or after March 1, 2018 will be required for participation in this program.

Students should not be texting parents and arranging for rides home if they are sick or injured. Students must come to the health office and we will facilitate communication with all parents. If your child texts you, please redirect them to come to the Health Office to be evaluated and to make a phone call to you together. Thank You!

We accept paperwork via fax or email. Please send any messages or paperwork to both nurses at [mmullaney@klschools.org](mailto:mmullaney@klschools.org) and [kwhalen@klschools.org](mailto:kwhalen@klschools.org).

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