

6th Grade News

April 24, 2020

The novelty of being home is wearing off for many of us! Managing time can be a real challenge, as we try to recreate the routines that seemed to be second nature at school! Your team of teachers were feeling a bit isolated, despite the numerous, *and daily*, “hang outs,” phone calls, emails, and text messages that are shared, so we planned a safe-distance-team-meeting! When they say, “It takes a village....” we are confident that they were referring to us!



group meetings with 5 to 7 sixth graders, per group, to discuss academics, as well as social and emotional challenges that students are facing during this time of *remote learning*. While these 30-minute sessions will take place once-a-week (for each student); approximately 15 meetings will take place! We are hoping the smaller venue will enable more students to involve themselves in the conversations. The team also discussed upcoming homeroom meetings, and social/emotional lessons, subject-specific “hang outs,” and Bennett’s Student Council-sponsored *Virtual Spirit Week* (beginning May 4th – more information will be released next week).



During our most recent *outdoor* team meeting, we discussed an activity that 6th grade students, Sadie Konjas and Andrew Umhey, proposed – small



In **Math**, Mr. LaMonda continues to work on calculating surface area. Students are getting acquainted with using the KAMI computer program which allows them to draw, edit, use symbols and

even ask digital questions by voice or video. “This math tool is often used in the Middle School as well, so it is great practice,” Mr. LaMonda added. “The students are going to be closing their nets and calculating the volume of these 3D shapes in the near future. This is also a great product design skill for solid shapes. These students will then be challenged to calculate the volume using fractions and decimals as well.”



In **Science**, Mr. Downs is looking good out there! Parents and grandparents – in recognizing how much of your student’s day is spent in a virtual classroom, we are moving the science classroom outdoors! “Most of the students I have spoken with shared their Spring-time activities, such as starting gardens and getting chickens,” Mr. Downs explained. “I would like to incorporate this into our learning. Starting next week, we will be treating our gardens and backyards as our studios and laboratories.”

Mr. Downs would love for your students to share in the gardening responsibilities. “If you do not have any garden at all, please contact me and I will deliver a pot, soil and seeds to get your students going!” Mr. Downs offered. “I will be asking students to post pictures of their gardens, what they find under logs and rocks, maybe trees that are blooming and any other thing they can see and touch. I hope this will get your student outside and moving! We are all spending too much time in front of a screen adapting to our new way of learning.”

In **Social Studies**, Mrs. Kuhne is facilitating a *History Mystery!* Students are reviewing specialists’ findings about Mummy X – an individual who *really* lived in Ancient Egypt! Remains were discovered, and many tests were run, to determine pertinent information about this ancient being. The activity will unfold over the course of two weeks. Students will use both the specialists’ reports and the scientific process to solve the mystery of Mummy X.

In **Writing**, Ms. Bruck has posted the first two steps of our research project – “Ask Questions and Brainstorm Resources.” Students should be working toward submitting their topic proposals, so we can start gathering resources and finding facts. The proposal sheet has four questions that will help students hone-in on the topic they each want to study. “It’s important for students to have a topic that is not too big, that they’re drowning in information,” Ms. Bruck advises. “and not too small that they are having a hard time finding facts and resources they can use.” Students can choose a topic they are interested in so that

they are invested in the work that they are producing. This project will be broken into one or two steps per week that will then be put together. By breaking the project into smaller pieces, students will have ample time to complete each part, as well as time (to check in) to make sure they are on the right path.

Students are still completing weekly journal entries. Ms. Bruck was delighted to report that “some students are going beyond a traditional journal entry by writing poems, haikus, and even song lyrics to share with others, about how they are doing during this uncertain time.” Students should ensure that they are in the current week, by verifying what week’s journal entry they are submitting for review.

In **Reading**, Mrs. Countryman continues to post video lessons (two per week), inviting students to explore the challenging and vital questions that relate to social issues and relationships. “A Washington Post article titled *Does Reading make You A Better Person?*” concludes... Yes! Reading literature, especially, has proven to increase people’s ability to empathize with others, and to be more socially aware. A driving force in this unit is the power of reading to transform how we see others and to show us new ways to be kind, to connect, and to stand up for what’s right.” (p. viii, *Social Issues Book Clubs*).

Additions to the *Reading Workshop Classroom Folder* include a reading log and a journal submission page. Also included are many fiction and non-fiction texts, as well as handouts – some of these are new, and some of these are reprinted from material that students housed in their Reading binders. As these resources are posted, students will be notified. In the most recent “Reading Circle Hang Out,” Mrs. Countryman, Mrs. Formont, and Ms. Mayone-Allison discussed these ancillary texts with students, alerting them to their upcoming availability.

Students are also reminded to visit the Bennett web page to view previously published newsletters. The April 3rd newsletter contains days/times of office hours, homeroom “hang outs,” and subject specific meetings.