



# NEWSLETTER

February 6, 2026

Principal: Barbara Gerard  
<http://matsuk12.us/acc>

Phone: 907-746-2358  
Fax: 907-746-2368

Dear Academy Families,

Thank you for such generosity and help with contributions to the Go Fund Me! For your information, and publicly shared in the MSB Annual Comprehensive Financial Report:

#### 14. Self-Insurance Coverage

The Borough and the School District jointly participate in self-insurance for unemployment claims and for property and casualty coverage. Unemployment insurance is paid on a reimbursement basis directly to the State of Alaska when individual claims are filed. Property and casualty claims within the retention are paid on a reimbursement basis. An estimate for claims incurred but not reported is accrued at year end. There is a \$250,000 self-insured retention per occurrence for claims. Commercial policies are purchased to cover claims exceeding these amounts.

Approximately 90% of the Academy's budget is dedicated to staffing, including salaries, health insurance, and other employee benefits. We do not control the negotiation process or its outcomes; instead, we adjust to align with the latest district-union agreements. Despite these challenges, we have successfully maintained small class sizes and a highly qualified, top-notch teaching staff. This requires careful balancing and juggling annually.

The remaining 10% of the budget covers operational expenses such as utilities, copier services, paper, facility cleanliness, as well as instructional supplies and materials.

**Thank you! Together we can! Together we do!**



#### What Should You Know?

##### **Durham Transportation and Bus Drivers – Required 10-Day Strike Notice**

Durham Transportation has issued a required 10-day notice indicating a potential bus driver strike. We are monitoring the situation closely and will provide updates as more information becomes available.

##### **Alyeska Ski Day Packets**

Alyeska Ski Day packets should be completed and submitted as soon as possible. We have worked hard to keep costs as low as possible while continuing to offer this incredible, life-enhancing experience for our students.

**Questions? Concerns? Please call, come in, text, and email. WE CARE!!**

With Warm Regards,  
Barbara Gerard, Principal  
907-841-5704

[Barbara.Gerard@matsuk12.us](mailto:Barbara.Gerard@matsuk12.us)



Date:	Event:
2/9	K-5 Valentine's Parties
2/10	Early Release 12:40pm
2/11-13	Professional Learning No School for Students
3/4	Early Release 12:40pm

#### **A Friendly Reminder from the Academy Advisory Board Regarding Communicating Concerns about Students:**

One of the things that makes Academy great is the wide variety of staff and family volunteers our students spend time with and receive guidance from. There have been a small number of interactions mentioned recently on the topic of family volunteers and communications regarding student behavior. The Board would like to remind family volunteers that should they observe concerns with students while at the school, they should report those to Academy staff or the Office. Academy personnel will investigate and address the concerns as appropriate and communicate with other student families as needed. Although good intentioned, families of students should refrain from contacting volunteers to discuss their concerns as it may inadvertently put the volunteer in an uncomfortable position, and the volunteer is not in a position to address concerns. Thank you all for continuing to keep communications professional.

Kara Kusche, Board President



Kindergarten read Groundhog and Valentine's stories this week. They worked extremely hard reviewing the five jobs of silent final E as they added them to their spelling notebooks. Our new phonograms are PH and OUGH.

During our math block we learned about dollar bills and how to write the dollar sign. They also began learning number words as they worked on a Valentine book. We will work more on number words next week during our reading block.

Thank you to all of the families that have signed up to help with the party on Monday. Reminder that if your child brings cards to share, they should only be signed who they are from and not addressed to individual students. Thank you so much for your help!

Have a great weekend and feel free to reach out at any time:-)

Mrs. Berg  
[Verona.Berg@matsuk12.us](mailto:Verona.Berg@matsuk12.us)



## hello FIRST GRADE

- Writing multiple sentences and understanding where one ends and the other starts.
- Compound sentence culmination with Gerald and Piggie captions.
- Core Knowledge Native American folktale, "Why Owl Has Big Eyes and Rabbit Hops."
- 2D shapes.

WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO OUR VALENTINE'S DAY CELEBRATION! Thank you ahead of time to everyone for making their party happen!

Mrs. Mayer & Mrs. Drummond  
[Betsy.Mayer@matsuk12.us](mailto:Betsy.Mayer@matsuk12.us)  
[Jessica.Drummond@matsuk12.us](mailto:Jessica.Drummond@matsuk12.us)



## 2ND GRADE

This week our classroom was full of learning and curiosity! In literacy, students focused on identifying adverbs, spent time reading nonfiction texts, and practiced spotting nonfiction text features. They also began researching and writing a research report, learning how to gather information and share what they've learned in their own words.

In math, we continued building our skills by counting money and practicing the value of different coins.

A quick reminder that our Valentine's Day party will be on Monday. Please send in a paper bag for your child to decorate and use during the celebration.

Mrs. Saunders and Mrs. Kramer  
[Erin.Saunders@matsuk12.us](mailto:Erin.Saunders@matsuk12.us) [Kimberly.Kramer@matsuk12.us](mailto:Kimberly.Kramer@matsuk12.us)



## Grade 3

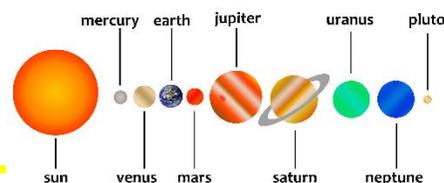
### Grimes Gambit

**Language Arts** – This week, we began Unit 7, *Our Solar System*. Students learned about our solar system by reading *What's in Our Universe?* and exploring the sun, Earth, our moon, the eight planets, asteroids, comets, and meteors. We also added 30 new words from Section Q to our Spalding notebooks and reviewed Rule 3.

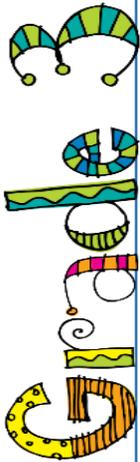
**Math** – This week, students continued learning about perimeter and area. They practiced identifying the difference between the two, finding the area of shapes that included half-square units, and determining the perimeter when some side lengths were missing. Students also worked on their ALEKS topics and continued building multiplication fact fluency.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

Mrs. Grimes [Austin.Grimes@matsuk12.us](mailto:Austin.Grimes@matsuk12.us)



# The Glanville Weekly



**Language Arts:** We have spent the week exploring space! The students are having so much fun with our unit. We first learned about our solar system and the sun, then the moon, inner and outer planets, and ended the week by comparing and contrasting asteroids and comets. It has been a fun unit, and we will wrap it up next week.

We have finished Section N with this week's thirty-word test and will be starting Section O for the next. There will be no list coming home this week due to the short week.

**Math:** We have been working hard on area and perimeter! This week, we learned how to find the area of rectangles using unit squares, the formula for area, how to decompose figures to find area, and ended with a fun activity using Cheez-It crackers as unit squares to find both area and perimeter.

Next week, we will wrap up this unit and move on to measurement after the break.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out!

Mrs. Glanville [Megan.Glanville@matsuk12.us](mailto:Megan.Glanville@matsuk12.us)



## FOURTH GRADE

### Benbow's Buzz

#### Nielsen's News:

We are looking forward to celebrating Valentine's Day early with your children, Monday, February 9.



#### ELA-

- American Revolution: discussed significant battles and spies.
- Writing: finished cause and effect paragraphs on the winter of 1777-1778.
- In Spalding we continued with List R and focused on Rule 26, capitalizing proper nouns.
- Grammar: Students tackled the challenge of relative pronouns: that/which

**Math-** This week in fractions, students learned adding and subtracting of mixed numbers and multiplying fractions with a whole number. Quote of the week from a student, "I really like math now, I just LOVE fractions!"

Mrs. Nielsen  
[Laurie.Nielsen@matsuk12.us](mailto:Laurie.Nielsen@matsuk12.us)

We are running low on glue sticks and fine point dry erase markers! Please grab a pack on your next shopping trip and send them in with your kiddo. Thank you so much to the families who have sent some in!

**Language Arts** - Our experience with the American Revolution is really heating up! This week we learned about the "shot heard 'round the world," a little bit of "Common Sense" and why it is odd that the Battle of Bunker Hill has its name. While reading Johnny Tremain, we are making connections to what we are learning about the American Revolution. Because these chapters are longer and include higher level vocabulary, we will be taking two nights per chapter as we read and prepare for discussions. Students are expected to complete the assigned reading and be prepared for discussions the next day. This should help with the minimum daily requirement of reading for at least 30 minutes every day for all fourth graders! We will continue to practice sentence writing every morning, which consists of identifying and correcting fragments and run-on sentences, as well as unscrambling sentences and writing all four sentence types. We are practicing adding dependent clauses that provide contextual information. Additionally, we added Daily Language Review, which focuses on grammar and parts of speech.

**Math** - We continued our fractions unit this week! We learned the basics of adding and subtracting fractions, then applied that knowledge as we worked our way through multiplying fractions and mixed numbers and improper fractions. Automatic recall is vital to success in fourth grade math, even as we work through fractions! Although we will continue to practice multiplication facts every day in class, I do ask you to make sure that your child finds time at home to practice as well. Just a few minutes a day can make such a difference.

Please reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns!  
[cherie.benbow@matsuk12.us](mailto:cherie.benbow@matsuk12.us)

# 5TH GRADE

## The Manley Minute:

**Language Arts:** We are nearing the end of our class novel, *The Secret Garden*. Students have shown tremendous growth as readers, and we have had wonderful discussions throughout this unit. In our recent Harkness discussion, students answered the question: *At this point in the novel, who holds the most power over Colin's future—Colin himself, the adults, or the environment?* Students supported their ideas with evidence from the text and respectfully built on one another's thinking during discussion. They all had strong beliefs and reasons to support their beliefs, so it was an interesting conversation indeed! **Don't forget:** Final projects are due on Monday, February 9th.

For Spalding this week, we took the spelling test on Thursday as well as a test over rules 2, 29 and 14.

**Math:** Students have been hard at work focusing on finding equivalent fractions, reducing fractions to their simplest form, and converting improper fractions into mixed numbers. Students are also learning how to identify the greatest common factor (GCF) and use it to simplify fractions efficiently. We repeatedly use mathematical vocabulary so students have a solid understanding of what is being asked of them when they complete problems.

Our class average for ALEKS is now at 80%! Thank you for encouraging your students to complete topics at home.

Mrs. Manley  
[Patsy.Manley@matsuk12.us](mailto:Patsy.Manley@matsuk12.us)

## SCHUMACHER MATH

My math students finished fraction ops and/or percents assessments and worked on surveys this week. Students pushed themselves to test their fraction skills to continue the survey opportunity.

Our survey data will be used to apply fraction, percent, and statistical concepts in a future project. If your child is unable to conduct a survey, we will share data with them.

Mr. Schumacher [Jared.Schumacher@matsuk12.us](mailto:Jared.Schumacher@matsuk12.us)

## Sturgis Super Students!

Language Arts: The class made another great jump during our last 50-word test, so I've increased the difficulty of the spelling lists. The last test showed this increase in difficulty as several scores were lower than they have been. Please encourage your child to study their words by making markings and noting any rules. As words get more difficult, it will become important to understand rather than just memorize.

For this week's reading and writing activities the students did some hands on work. In order to answer comprehension questions, students cut apart the passage and focused on the sentences that pertained to the question. The class enjoyed this unusual way to analyze what they read.

Math: We are incredibly close to being ready for our next test! This week we worked on multiplying mixed numbers and began learning how to divide fractions. Keep up the great work!

Mrs. Sturgis [Sabra.Sturgis@matsuk12.us](mailto:Sabra.Sturgis@matsuk12.us)



## 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Outdoor Fitness

We enjoyed the great building snow this week for outdoor fitness. Students snowshoed to pack trails, pulled each other in sleds, and built snow structures. Seventh grade helped put the gym back together now that we have ceiling insulation and a clean floor. Bike trails have gotten very soft and slippery, so hopefully we can have a little more real winter soon. Think snow and just a little bit colder. Enjoy you weekend!

Mr. Schumacher [Jared.Schumacher@matsuk12.us](mailto:Jared.Schumacher@matsuk12.us)  
Mrs. Molly [Molly.Nichols@matsuk12.us](mailto:Molly.Nichols@matsuk12.us)

## K-5 Lab Classes



The art room has turned into a clay studio, and it has been so much fun!

Kindergarten artists are making adorable ceramic pendants with their initials, carefully pressing and shaping the clay like real artists.

First graders are creating playful cat relief sculptures, full of whiskers, textures, and personality.

Second grade is hard at work on fishbowl relief sculptures, layering details to make their fish look like they're swimming right off the clay.

There's been lots of excitement, muddy hands, and proud smiles—ceramics is definitely a favorite!

Mrs. Glanville and Mrs. Saunders



Third through fifth grade worked hard in writing lab this week. All grades worked on editing and creating final drafts of some descriptive writing they did last rotation. Fourth and fifth have been working on properly punctuating dialogue in their writing. They seemed to enjoy the hands-on activity where they made their punctuation marks out of Play-Doh.

Mrs. Sturgis

This week in writing lab, third-, fourth-, and fifth graders interpreted, completed, edited, and finalized their story based on the picture they viewed.

Ms. Kile



### Español with Señorita Catarina

Third, Fourth and Fifth Graders are learning about A man, a plan, a canal: Panama! They are being introduced to the beautiful, welcoming country of Panama.

They started out learning about the canal and will segue into the historical, cultural and natural aspects of this small but biodiverse nation.



Third grade shared their stop motion videos with each other and continued their great growth with typing skills. Look for the links to their videos in your email! They did a fantastic job.

Fourth grade is learning how to make interactive timelines using Google Sheets. They are using their new knowledge of the American Revolution to input on the timelines.

Fifth grade is continuing their research on states. They are building skills with creating presentations and citing sources.

Mrs. Nielsen



Kinder Science: This week in science we took our one day and seized it! We planted terrariums and did a review of what all living things need. Ask your kinder student about the dance they learned to remember what all living things need!

First Science: This week in First grade science we did a review on simple machines and watched how someone took simple machines to make a complex system that they used as a ninja warrior course for squirrels in their back yard. Then we went out into the trails and looked for tracks of animals that live in the woods near our school. Once we found some rabbit tracks, we set up a trail cam to try and capture these critters on camera.

Second Science: This week with second grade we did more work with electrical circuits adding in fans, switches, and noise machines in with the lights that we already had.

Ms. Heppner & Mr. Farring  
[Natalie.Heppner@matsuk12.us](mailto:Natalie.Heppner@matsuk12.us)  
[Timothy.Farring@matsuk12.us](mailto:Timothy.Farring@matsuk12.us)



**Kindergarten** - Two-day study of landforms.

**1st grade** - Wrapped up the Colonies to Independence unit with a timeline, quiz, and headbands.

**2nd grade** - War of 1812 and the Star-Spangled Banner.

Mrs. Mayer & Mrs. Drummond

## Middle School Spanish



Sixth graders are learning about the Aztec calendar. As part of learning their months vocabulary they created their own versions of this profoundly significant artifact. Sixth graders are navigating expectations in Spanish class. It can be challenging to transition from active conversational activities with peers to quieter work time. I am confident our 6th graders can continually improve in this respect and make the shift with ease when appropriate.

Seventh Graders have been working with possessive adjectives. They created some very luxurious Dream Houses. Look for them on Zillow! They have been using the gallery walk format to present aspects of their dream homes to their classmates.

Eighth graders are cementing regular verb conjugations in their brain before moving on to irregular verbs. They had a final conversational opportunity with their food trucks by having a food truck auction this week. They have been practicing their body parts vocabulary by playing heated games of Simon Dice.

Spanish 1 also had a somewhat rowdy food truck auction. They have been learning to read, write and speak with verbs like Gustar. They created a wheel of gustos and have been quizzing each other about their strong feelings on subjects such as Canes, NASCAR, eating, and reading.

Señorita [Cady.Agoff@matsuk12.us](mailto:Cady.Agoff@matsuk12.us)



Sixth grade had a busy and exciting week! In **Language Arts**, students in both **Mr. Chadwell's** and **Mrs. Zerkel's** classes worked on drafting thoughtful letters to our Juneau government officials, practicing how to clearly express their ideas and opinions. We are also continuing our novel study of *Sophia's War*, in which students are delving deeper into the themes and historical context of the Revolutionary War.

In **Math**, learning took a hands-on turn as students combined math and building skills while working on their birdhouse projects. Measuring, problem-solving, and planning have all been key parts of this work. A huge thank you to **Mr. Tilbury** for generously donating paint to help bring these projects to life!

In **Social Studies**, students wrapped up our unit on the Revolutionary War and are now transitioning into learning how our government works. This shift is helping prepare students for our upcoming visit to the state capitol in Juneau.

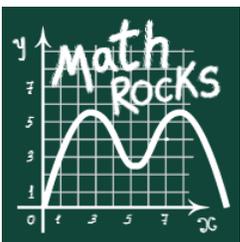
As always, thank you for your continued support—we love seeing our students engaged, curious, and creating meaningful connections across subjects!

Mr. Chadwell and Mrs. Zerkel [Jordan.Chadwell@matsuk12.us](mailto:Jordan.Chadwell@matsuk12.us) [Katherine.Zerkel@matsuk12.us](mailto:Katherine.Zerkel@matsuk12.us)



As a culminating assignment this week, students brought together their knowledge of states of matter and phase changes by creating a “one-pager.” This assignment included a symbolic border, a helpful diagram, and a detailed explanatory paragraph. Most of the one-pagers demonstrated excellent effort and were very informative. We wrapped up the week, and our unit on states of matter, with a short quiz. Next week, we will be moving on to energy! Have a wonderful weekend, and please reach out if you have any questions.

Mrs. Strohmeyer [Cynthia.Strohmeyer@matsuk12.us](mailto:Cynthia.Strohmeyer@matsuk12.us)



What a great week! My 6th grade math students are working hard to understand algebraic expressions and solve them. This week we reviewed the order of operations and what to do with variables. Next week we hope to finish out the chapter before the short break starts on Wednesday. Also in breaking news, we are starting a homework turn-in challenge, and if everyone turns in homework for a full week straight in a row, we will have a small celebration. Pretty exciting!

Until next time, keep up the good work! Mrs. Heppner [Natalie.Heppner@matsuk12.us](mailto:Natalie.Heppner@matsuk12.us)

## Middle School Art-Ventures

with Ms. Christensen

Pictures of seventh grade students working on their reverse acetate self-portraits.



### Wrights Winners!

Many thanks to everyone's bake sale support at the end of January for our community service project! Thanks to you, we were able to contribute nearly \$800 worth of supplies to Alaska Family Services and MyHouse.

Wright 7<sup>th</sup> LA: Students are wrapping up their short story unit. They discussed symbolism and character arc in Ray Bradbury's "The Sound of Thunder," and identified character types in "The Last Dog" by Katherine Paterson. They also dramatized their Gothic Radio Hour scripts into podcast forms, adding music and sound effects to their character voices. They took a quiz on direct objects in grammar and finished up the unit vocabulary with a quiz.

Wright 7<sup>th</sup> math: Students finished Chapter 8's algebraic equations and inequalities lessons this week. Ten ALEKS topics are due each Monday.

Wright 7<sup>th</sup> history: The class completed their podcast recordings for their suffragettes. They took notes on eugenics and Black Tuesday to round out their Roaring 20s unit. They created a Gimkit review for practice, as well as reviewed each event with gestures in class. They will test Monday and are expected to spend time outside of class studying.

All hand-outs and homework are on Google Classroom or ConnectEd.

Mrs. Wright [Melodie.Wright@matsuk12.us](mailto:Melodie.Wright@matsuk12.us)



**"If January is the month of change, February is the month of lasting change. January is for dreamers... February is for doers." – Marc Parent**

This week in English, students resumed practice with our daily English skills in language, editing, and reading comprehension. They demonstrated knowledge of vocabulary with the roots "frail, fract, frag" and were assigned 10 more words with the roots "junct, join, jug." Please work with your students on their spelling and definitions each week to support success. Students also demonstrated editing skills with a given paragraph, identifying and correcting 25 errors. They continued their novel study of *All Quiet on the Western Front*. We read and discussed Chapters 7-10, rereading passages to support responses and analysis, read summaries of Chapters 7 and 8 before completing the open-book assessment for those chapters, and made Social Studies connections to historical people and events. For this week's writing entry, they wrote about their greatest obstacle related to school. Ask them to share their thoughts with you!

In Math, students continued working in Chapter 5 on Expressions. They were assessed on Lesson 2: Sequences and Lesson 3: Properties of Operations; learned about, practiced, and were assessed on Lesson 4: The Distributive Property; and reviewed, practiced, and demonstrated concepts presented in Lessons 1-4 before completing the Mid-Chapter Quiz. This is the chapter where students are applying many of the previously taught skills in Chapters 1-4. As a reminder, students are required to complete ten topics or more each week in ALEKS. Please encourage them to work on these at home, as class time is not sufficient. Students should engage in the **"Equations and Inequalities"** pie to support concepts introduced and practiced in the new chapter of learning.

Students in History continued building geography skills, using atlases to identify answers to a variety of questions. Students learned more about the main events of the Russian Revolution and prepared for and completed the unit's test on Thursday. Students also enjoyed catching up with current events by viewing student-friendly news.

Together, this will be a great 7th-grade year!

Ms. Twohy [Tuesday.Twohy@matsuk12.us](mailto:Tuesday.Twohy@matsuk12.us)



Seventh grade Science is exploding with science! This week we looked at physical and chemical reactions. Students took a short quiz to check for understanding. This week was also the last week to show that they understood the symbols for the first 30 elements on the periodic table. Almost all of the students were able to pass the test at 100% We also conducted a couple of short labs on chemical reactions. We will continue those labs in 2 weeks after the Professional Learning days next week.

Mrs. Dunham [Susan.Dunham@matsuk12.us](mailto:Susan.Dunham@matsuk12.us)





Happy Friday! It has been a busy week in 8th grade, but the students have really dug in to get a great deal accomplished.

In history, we have learned about Presidents Kennedy, Johnson & Nixon, as well as discussed our upcoming *We Didn't Start the Fire* Projects! The students selected their individual topics for the project on Thursday afternoon. They are so excited!

I am elated as I watch my students truly blossom in Math. Every day, the 8<sup>th</sup> graders are becoming more confident in their math abilities & their willingness to dig deeper and persevere grows by leaps & bounds. In ALEKS, our current class average is over 70% and I

am stunned that they have remained ahead of the curve for the entirety of the year! Way to go 8<sup>th</sup> graders!

The Honor's English I students are about 1/3 of the way through *The Odyssey*. We have had some fabulous discussions during our Harkness sessions, and the students are preparing to write their own Hero's Journey narratives. The timeline (due dates) for this enormous writing project has already been posted in the Google classroom to help the students with time management.

Have a wonderful weekend & enjoy the ever-increasing increasing sunshine!

Mrs. Molina  
[Stacy.Molina@matsuk12.us](mailto:Stacy.Molina@matsuk12.us)

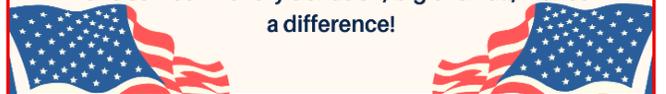


## LAST FRONTIER HONOR FLIGHT COIN DRIVE

The Academy Charter eighth grade class is raising money to support Last Frontier Honor Flight, a nonprofit organization that gives veterans the opportunity to visit Washington, D.C., and see the memorials dedicated to their service and sacrifice.

You can help by donating your spare change! Coin jars will be located at local businesses and at the front desk of Academy Charter. Every penny collected helps send a veteran on the trip of a lifetime. If your business or organization is willing to "host" a jar, please reach out to Mrs. Molina at [stacy.molina@matsuk12.us](mailto:stacy.molina@matsuk12.us)

Thank you for joining us in honoring those who have served — every donation, big or small, makes a difference!



## Manley's Minute: English 1

Students continue to read *The Good Earth* and engage in thoughtful, meaningful discussions. This week, students participated in a Harkness discussion centered on the question, "Did O-lan have a bad life?" Students defended their belief based on O-lan's complex character traits and evidence from the text.

Grades are updated; if your student has missing assignments please make sure they are completed before the end of this unit.

Mrs. Manley  
[Patsy.Manley@matsuk12.us](mailto:Patsy.Manley@matsuk12.us)



This week in Algebra we started on our exploration of Parabolas after mastering factoring trinomials in the last chapter.



This week in science we took a look at how our respiratory system works and how it works in tandem with our circulatory system. Then we looked into how powerful our lungs are with some different experiments on lung capacity.

Mr. Farring [Timothy.Farring@matsuk12.us](mailto:Timothy.Farring@matsuk12.us)