



NEWSLETTER

May 1, 2026

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

Phone: 907-746-2358
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Dear Academy Families,

We end April with so many wonderful activities and begin the final week of an exciting, intensive hands-on and experiential week of learning – WORLD FAIR WEEK! Thank you for all of your hard work and involvement! Parents are such an integral part of Academy, and we are grateful for each of you!

Did You Know? Can You Imagine School Ending in June?

Almost 20 years ago, the MSBSD school district calendar didn't begin until after Labor Day. While that timing may have seemed traditional, beginning after the Alaska State Fair ended, it clashed with the natural rhythm of the expanding daylight in Alaska. As daylight increased, it became increasingly difficult for students and staff to stay focused on classroom learning when summer energy was making bedtimes slide into the later evening and the natural desire for summer's freedom from schedules edged into the structured routines of the school year. 😊

In response, Academy proposed a major shift: start school in early August with the cooler temperatures, more rain, and shorter days. Though there was quite a rumble of disbelief within the community, the MSBSD School Board recognized the benefits of aligning the academic calendar with the patterns of daylight and approved the change! Today, this shift allows the school year to conclude by mid-May, giving students and families more time to begin the summer season as the light lengthens and our desire to be outside grows. The State of Alaska requires students to attend at least 172 instructional days—but now, more of those days occur when students are more likely to be engaged, focused, and ready to learn! This change aligned the calendar with both educational goals and Alaska's unique seasonal cycles, which has helped maximize meaningful learning time—making every minute count!

WORLD FAIR!

WORLD FAIR is a week-long, focused, and wonderful experiential, hands-on learning experience! This culminating week-long project is quite a feat! It takes a lot of effort and planning to guide and shape the learning process and channel the excitement of this week. **THANK YOU to Academy's Amazing, top-notch Staff!**

The final tent displays are open for one hour and 15 fantastic awe-inspiring minutes! Please come by and enjoy Academy's enthusiastic and knowledgeable students as they share their grade level topic. The honorable judges, ranging from the Superintendent to City of Palmer and Mat-Su Borough officials, to our own fantastic Advisory Board Members, take on the difficult task of comparing and contrasting the grade level tent displays. Academy's students dazzle and amaze all that enter!

We have shifted our World Fair start time to begin a little earlier. The judges arrive at 1:30 pm, with the judging of the classroom "worlds" beginning at 1:45 pm. Please don't miss this final sharing by the students! It is purposefully short and sweet, and really, it is the journey to create those final displays that provide the in-depth learning experiences. Presenting to the public and the judges provides the students with a meaningful opportunity to practice the critical skills of public speaking and communicating. Remember, *everything we do at Academy is purposeful and carefully designed to shape our students into amazing, empowered young adults!* 😊



THANK YOU!

I am so grateful for these past 29 years of collaboration and teamwork that has created Academy! **TOGETHER, WE HAVE DONE GREAT THINGS** and there is so much more to come!

Needs? Concerns?

WE CARE! Please do not hesitate to call, text, come in!

With Warm Regards,

Barbara Gerard, Principal



Date:	Event:
5/4	2 nd Grade Kids Don't Float Presentation
5/6	Middle School Dance, 6:00pm Palmer Train Depot
5/8	World Fair Open to the public at 1:30pm
5/12	Early Release, 12:45pm KG Graduation, noon 8 th Grade Graduation, 6:00pm
5/13-15	Exit Interviews
5/15-16	Yard Sale Fundraiser

Academy Charter School's Annual
YARD SALE

SPRING CLEANING?
WE WANT YOUR STUFF!

**DONATE TO OUR
YARD SALE
FUNDRAISER
TO BE HELD ON**
May 15th - 16th

DROP OFF DONATIONS AT
Affordable Storage / U-Haul Mini Storage
(Located at the end of Ellen Street, behind Carr's and Mubonak's)
Gate Code: *33526 Storage Unit: 304 Lock Code: 2358
Any questions feel free to call Rachael for details at 907-331-9756

COME CHECK
OUT OUR

**LOST AND
FOUND**

It's Overflowing



**IT'S RAFFLE
TICKET TIME!**

Grand Prize
\$ 2,000.00

Please remember to pick up
your tickets at the office!

Each family is asked to sell 2
books.

**Tickets are due
back to the office
Friday, May 8th**

Drawing will take place
Thursday, May 14th



Kindergarten



Kindergarten continues to wrap up their Core Knowledge content with sayings, stories and rhymes from the series. We added more words to our Spalding spelling notebooks. I think you will be impressed with their

penmanship and spelling abilities when they share this book with you at exit interviews.

Our math block focused on making ten when given any number less than ten. Many of the students have memorized some of these basic facts.

An email went out earlier this week clarifying dates and times of upcoming events. Please let me know if you need the information. For World Fair Kindergarten students will need a white, black or brown shirt. Please let us know as soon as you can which one your child will be wearing. We will be making bear headbands to match their shirt. This is the only costume they will need.

Please contact me anytime!

Mrs. Berg Verona.Berg@matsuk12.us



hello FIRST GRADE

- We are experiencing more of our "lasts" in first grade! Last taekwondo, last labs, and last library!
- The planet and sun reports done at home have been made into wonderful paragraph write-ups for World Fair!
- Each morning involved learning activities about space: gravity, rotation/revolution, constellations, day/night, seasons, ISS, and more!
- Thank you to Caroline's mom, Christine, for presenting on her home country of Norway during geography lab! The kids LOVED seeing the flag and pictures, hearing the language and learning what brackish means!
- Money, money, money in math - along with solar system play practice!

The play will start at 2:00 in the Taekwondo room on Monday, the 4th. There will be three sets of the same play on our solar system! Short but sweet, and they are SUPER excited!

Contact us anytime!

Mrs. Mayer & Mrs. Drummond

Betsy.Mayer@matsuk12.us Jessica.Drummond@matsuk12.us



2ND GRADE

As we begin wrapping up the school year, we've had a busy and exciting week in second grade!

Students completed their **final spelling test**—it's amazing to see how much their skills have grown throughout the year. We are so proud of all their hard work!

In math, students put in great effort to finish the **Great Math Worksheet Challenge** and earned a well-deserved **math party on Friday**. What a fun way to celebrate their perseverance and teamwork!



We have also begun learning about the **different types of bees**, and the excitement is building as we get ready to dive deeper into all things bee-related next week.

Thank you for your continued support during this special time of year. We are so proud of all that your children have accomplished!

Mrs. Saunders and Mrs. Kramer Erin.Saunders@matsuk12.us Kimberly.Kramer@matsuk12.us

Grade 3

Grimes Gambit

Language Arts: This week we began our Viking unit, *Gods, Giants, and Dwarves*, which includes exploring Norse myths. Students learned that myths are fictional stories that often feature gods and goddesses with supernatural powers. We discussed how ancient people used myths to explain natural events before scientific explanations were available. We also focused on using the conjunctions *and*, *but*, and *because*.

Math: This week in math, students worked on quadrilateral castles, an area and perimeter amusement park project, and a “perimeter person” activity. Many students also mastered their ALEKS pies, which is great to see!

Mrs. Grimes

Austin.Grimes@matsuk12.us



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

Mrs. Glanville Megan.Glanville@matsuk12.us

The Glanville Weekly

Language Arts: We began our Viking unit by exploring Norse myths and reading stories about Odin, Thor, and Loki—the mischievous giant welcomed by Odin to live among the gods. Students have been especially engaged with these tales, participating in discussions about the characters, and making thoughtful predictions about what might happen next. In addition, we wrapped up any remaining projects, illustrated long ships, and completed our final DOLs of the year. Next week, we will launch our Viking voyage, diving deeper into Viking history and learning the knowledge as we begin preparing for the World’s Fair. We are all looking forward to next Friday!

Math: I am incredibly proud of the progress our students have made this year! They have learned so many new concepts and shown meaningful growth in their confidence and skills. It has truly been a wonderful year in our math classroom. This week, students worked hard to wrap up their ALEKS topics, complete our final DOMs, and review key concepts through a spiral mini math mystery activity. We ended the week on a fun and creative note by designing “perimeter people” and enjoying some extra Prodigy time with friends. We also concluded our daily multiplication and division fact practice with our final 5-minute tests. The improvement students have shown in their fact fluency is impressive, and their dedication throughout the year has really paid off. I am so proud of each and every one of them!

FOURTH GRADE

Benbow's Buzz

Nielsen's News:

Thank you again to all the wonderful chaperones that made our field trip go so smoothly! We appreciate you.

ELA-

- **Reading-** This week we learned about the building blocks-minerals and read about geology under the sea.
- **Writing:** We learned to take observational notes while on our field trip, as well as wrote an expository paragraph on how tectonic plates shape and change the sea floor.

Math- This week we were working hard to finish ALEKS, so many earned those free lunches this week! We are also enjoying building Geometric cities, brushing up on all our geometry terms.

Mrs. Nielsen

Laurie.Nielsen@matsuk12.us



Thank you to all of our drivers on Tuesday! We truly appreciate your willingness to not only drive a group of students, but to stand out in the snow and rain with us! We do have a walking field trip planned for next Monday. If you would like to join us, reach out!



Our next driving field trip is Monday, May 11 to Ken's Garden Center. If you haven't already, please send in the \$7.00 for Ken's Garden as soon as possible.

Language Arts - We continued our unit on Geology this week, covering mountains, fossils and the seafloor. We also had some amazing presenters, both in school and out in nature, who shared so much great information with us in preparation for World Fair. Speaking of World Fair, can you believe it is next week?! We continued 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. Additionally, our Daily Language Review topics this week are idioms, identifying dependent clauses in complex sentences, and adding suffixes.

Math - We spent this week learning about ancient number systems and how to plot points on a coordinate grid. Automatic recall is vital to success in fourth grade math, but it is even more important in 5th grade math, so 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

5TH GRADE

Sturgis' Super Students!

Language Arts: It's been a busy week as we fit in several extra activities along with working on finishing out our regular classwork. On Monday the students read about the Feudal period in Japan and began researching their World Fair Topic. Tuesday was a fun and educational day as Palmer High School Japanese II students shared their knowledge about Japanese culture with our students. Wednesday was a big day to finish up the Matanuska Forest Visitor Guide slides, and Thursday was our unique experience to visit the R/V Sally Ride in Seward. Friday was another catch-up day as students prepare all of their work for final grading. Any missing assignments should be turned in no later than Wednesday, May 6 to allow time for them to be graded for report cards. It has been a great year!

Math: We didn't have very many regular math classes this week, but the students put in a lot of work during those normal days that we did have. Most students have completed all of their work for the semester. Any incomplete or missing work needs to be turned in to me no later than Wednesday, May 6th. I have really enjoyed this math class.

Mrs. Sturgis Sabra.Sturgis@matsuk12.us

The Manley Minute:

What a fantastic week! Students enjoyed Japan Day presented by PHS students and thoroughly enjoyed touring the R/V Sally Ride in Seward. Thank you to Carl Jones and his team for allowing us to explore such an amazing research vessel. The students were well behaved, asked thoughtful questions, and received high praise from the crew. We are proud of how they represented our school!

Language Arts: In language arts, we wrapped up our biographies and *Time* magazine covers. Students worked diligently through the writing process and formatted their biographies using MLA format. Students also stepped up to help each other out when creating their covers in Canva. Well done!

Math: In math, we are finishing the year with a variety of culminating review activities to reinforce concepts learned throughout the year. We also have just two students left to complete their ALEKS pie! Way to go!

Mrs. Manley
Patsy.Manley@matsuk12.us

SCHUMACHER MATH

Thank you to all the parents and family members who helped on Japan Day! We designed and tested balloon-powered cars and slideshows this week in math class. Check out your student's creation and results hanging in the hallway. Expect to see a slideshow at exit interviews. Just a few students have not completed their fluency in Quicktables, they had time to practice in class but then had less time for balloon cars. Grades are due next week so any work from home will need to be completed before then.

Have a good weekend!

Mr. Schumacher Jared.Schumacher@matsuk12.us



K-5 Lab Classes



It's our last week of art for the year, and what a creative finish it has been!

Kindergarten artists drew beautiful under-the-sea scenes featuring sea turtles, using bright colors and lots of thoughtful detail—they did such a great job bringing their ocean worlds to life.

First grade created vibrant flower drawings, bursting with color and energy that really brighten up the room.

Second grade worked hard on their World Fair art, helping decorate their bee-themed tent with creative and cheerful pieces. It's been a wonderful year of art, and we are so proud of all our young artists!

Mrs. Glanville and Mrs. Saunders



K-5 Choir Concert



Español with Señorita Catarina

Third, fourth and fifth graders have been learning more about the natural wonders of Chile this week.

They have also been conversing in Spanish about their favorite Spanish speaking country that they have been introduced to this year.



Third, Fourth and Fifth grades all finished their final projects on code.org.

Watch for links to come home by next Monday. Enjoy!

Mrs. Nielsen



Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades - REVIEW of all the units as well as landform, continents, and oceans testing in 2nd grade!

Mrs. Mayer & Mrs. Drummond



What a great last week of science for primary grades!

In kindergarten we continued working on bears for World Fair, in first grade we enjoyed some nature journaling, and in second grade we picked up our unit on erosion from last fall by heading to the river with our science notebooks. It's been a wonderful week! Thanks for a great year of science, Academy students!

Ms. Heppner & Mr. Farring
Natalie.Heppner@matsuk12.us
Timothy.Farring@matsuk12.us



We are pleased to see our 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students for one last week of Writing Lab. Third and fourth grade worked on writing letters to future students and had a lot of fun creating progressive stories. Progressive stories are a fast paced, engaging writing activity where each student starts their own story, then after a few minutes passes their paper to another student who reads what has been written, then adds more to the story. There was a lot of laughter as students read what had been added to their original idea. --Mrs. Sturgis

3rd-, 4th-, and 5th-graders wrote letters to the next class, telling them what to expect in their new grade level next year. --Ms. Kile

Middle School Spanish

Sixth graders did well on their languages test. Being given explicit lessons about cognates helped them to master this vocabulary list which showed strong similarities to the same vocabulary in English.

Seventh graders finished strong. They showed a good understanding of the process of verb conjugation and demonstrated facility with AR verbs through their last grammar test of the year.

Eighth graders learned about the many handy verbs like gustar and picked up quickly the best way to speak, write and read with them.

Spanish 1 learned the differences between saber and conocer. They also played a few different games that they made extremely challenging to help solidify prepositions of place in their long-term memory.

All eighth-grade students came together and concocted refreshing Limonada de Coco and watched Encanto en Español as their culminating activity for the year.

Señorita Cady.Agoff@matsuk12.us



This was a busy and productive week in 6th grade!

Students wrapped up their argumentative essays in Language Arts and completed their comprehensive math review. We're proud of the hard work they've been putting in as we approach the end of the year.

Next week is **World Fair Week**, and we're excited for students to showcase their learning and creativity! As we head into this fun and important time, we are encouraging all students to turn in any missing assignments and stay on top of their grades.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out. We hope you have a wonderful weekend!

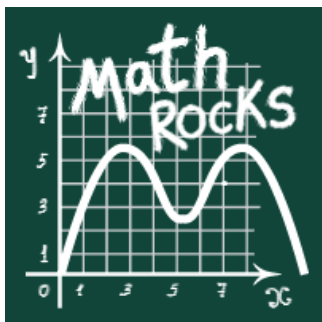
Mr. Chadwell and Mrs. Zerkel Jordan.Chadwell@matsuk12.us Katherine.Zerkel@matsuk12.us



This week, students refreshed and practiced their graphing skills while working on interpreting data, an essential skill in science. They also had time to catch up on any missing assignments and complete one final notebook check to wrap up our year.

It has been such a pleasure being these students' science teacher this year!

Mrs. Strohmeyer Cynthia.Strohmeyer@matsuk12.us



Way to finish strong!! Mrs. Heppner Natalie.Heppner@matsuk12.us

4th-8th Grade Outdoor Fitness



Fitness classes played team and group games this week. Capture the Flag was popular amongst the middle schoolers. Fifth grade liked Human Stratego with student coaches. The trails are finally hike and bikeable, if still muddy in a few places. Hopefully everyone who want to bike gets a chance next week.

Mr. Schumacher Jared.Schumacher@matsuk12.us Mrs. Molly Molly.Nichols@matsuk12.us

7TH GRADE

Wrights Winners!



Congratulations to the Alaska state middle school winners of the Stock Market Game! In first place came Hadley F. and Samson S; in second place is Sawyer G. and Carter S.

The year-long competition culminated by awarding a win to teams managing the top earning portfolios. Both places earned gift cards and medals.

Wright 7th LA: It's a wrap! Students finished up their 7th grade studies with final book presentations on their dystopian reads. They created book trailers, a capstone project that built upon their 3 previous book commercials and year-long emphasis on summarizing.

Wright 7th math: Students dove into Chapter 9's linear equations concepts, finishing up by graphing and solving systems of equations. They celebrated by turning in their books and a math-themed party on Friday.

Wright 7th history: After a final learning session on the Manhattan Project and D-Day, students created a unit review Gimkit. They tested Tuesday to wrap up their WW2 unit and the year's curriculum. They'll have learning on WW2 as their World Fair concept is WW2 technologies.

It's been an honor teaching your child this year! Have a great summer and please encourage your child to READ!!

Mrs. Wright Melodie.Wright@matsuk12.us

"Sunsets are proof that endings can often be beautiful too." – Beau Taplin

It's hard to believe that we have arrived at the end of the classroom instruction journey for the year. Next week will be dedicated to the school's World's Fair. It has been a pleasure working with this wonderful group of bright, inquisitive, young individuals whom I know will reach whatever goals they set for themselves. They have all worked hard and be proud of the gains they have made. I look forward to meeting with you at exit interviews

This week in English, students finished their practice of daily skills and demonstrated editing skills with the same assessment they did last August for placement. They selected a writing entry from Weeks 15-27 and then followed the writing process to serve as a final writing assessment. The class collaboratively created a retirement gift of words for Mrs. Gerard and wrote her "Thank You" cards. Please encourage reading over the summer. Those who engage in reading (at grade level or higher) build their vocabulary and academic performance, critical thinking skills, and empathy. They will be reading a lot of assigned books next year, so this summer is their time for choice reading.

In Math, students finished the first four lessons of Chapter 8 – Measure Figures. They then reviewed, practiced, and demonstrated knowledge on mid-chapter assessment. Students were motivated with the field trip to Dairy Queen on Friday and worked hard during given time in class to master topics. I'll have to remember how effective this was next year. Ha Ha! The final math grade is the ten topics in ALEKS for Week 16, and there is still time to finish the pie! Students will be able to access their account under the archive tab when the district moves it over (likely at the end of the month when all schools have dismissed for the year).

Students in History used atlases to identify answers to a variety of the last questions of the year. We finished our studies of World War II with D-Day, the atomic bomb, the end of the war, the aftermath of WWII (including the Cold War) and the formation of the United Nations. Students demonstrated knowledge on an open-note, summative assessment on their last day with me. Encourage them to continue learning about history and current events throughout the summer. Keep the momentum going and be ready for Washington, D.C. in the fall.

Together, this has been a great year!

Ms. Twohy Tuesday.Twohy@matsuk12.us



Seventh grade Science finished strong this year. Mother Nature cooperated enough for us to finally get outside and do some population studies of the school yard. Students made direct and indirect observations of the various plants, animals and fungi that can be found here at Academy Charter. The students were glad to be out of the classroom even on a cold and windy day! It has been my pleasure to instruct your children this year. I strive to set up a foundation in Science that they will carry with them for years to come.

Mrs. Dunham Susan.Dunham@matsuk12.us

Middle School Art-Ventures

with Ms. Christensen

We are wrapping up all of our middle school art projects this week! 6th graders have finished their self-portraits inspired by artist Bisa Butler and are hard at work using their portrait drawing skills on a historical figure for their World's Fair research project. Seventh grade has completed painting their canvases for entry in the art contest sponsored by Valley Orthodontics, "Looking to the Future." Their artwork will be on display in their offices for the next few months and will be available for pick-up in July or will be returned to Academy in the fall. Our middle school art elective, "Fantasy Map Drawing", is focusing on the creation of fantasy worlds and using various drawing techniques. Students are pictured here beginning to draw out their worlds. Thank you for an amazing year of art!



Wow.....how are we already at World Fair Week? Time sure does fly! In case you missed it, I sent all students and parents last week with important information about upcoming events. Exit Interview Slips were sent home last week as well- if you haven't seen this yet, please check with your 8th grader.

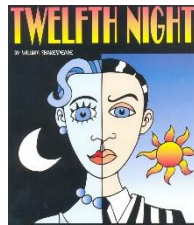
The Honors English I finished our year with the Twelfth Night as readers' theatre. This is always such a fun part of the year & as we discuss the text, there are so many fun "a-ha moments." We were also wrapping up the Hero's Journey writing. This is always the perfect way to end our year together, and especially with such an amazing group of young scholars!

We welcome any parent help during World Fair Week. Please feel free to join us at anytime!

Have a great weekend,

Mrs. Molina

Stacy.Molina@matsuk12.us



Manley's Minute: English 1



This week in Algebra 1 we continued on our quest to review every topic that we covered throughout the entire year!



This week in 8th grade Science we finished up our look into Natural Selection and then did a small dive into ways that our 8th graders can avoid microplastics in their everyday lives.

This week, we wrapped up our reading of *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare. It was a little slow going at first as students worked hard to understand the text and all that was going on. By the time we reached the end, the classroom was filled with laughter as the plot twists unfolded and the humor of the play truly came to life.

To celebrate the conclusion of our unit, students participated in a *Twelfth Night* escape room activity. This was a fun and engaging way to review key characters, events, and themes from the play while working collaboratively and competitively!

It has been a true pleasure teaching your students English 1 this year. I am proud of their hard work and growth; I am confident they are well-prepared high school.

Mrs. Manley

Patsy.Manley@matsuk12.us

Mr. Farring Timothy.Farring@matsuk12.us