



NEWSLETTER

September 18, 2026

Principal: Austin Grimes
<http://matsuk12.us/acc>

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

Dear Academy Families,

I hope you are all doing well! We have had a busy week, and it has been wonderful to see everyone settling into the school year.

Celebrating Our AK STAR Results!

We are excited to celebrate the outstanding 2025–2026 AK STAR results from our Academy students!

Our students' hard work, perseverance, and dedication are reflected in these results, and we are incredibly proud of what they accomplished. We are also grateful for the teachers, staff, and families who support our students every day.

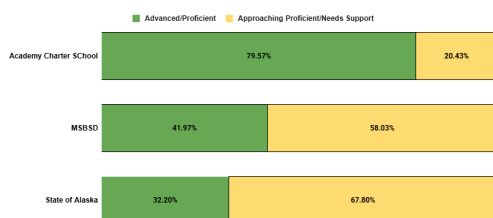
One result we are especially excited to highlight is Math:

79.57% of Academy students in Grades 3–8 scored Advanced or Proficient in Math, compared with 41.97% across MSBSD and 32.20% across the State of Alaska.

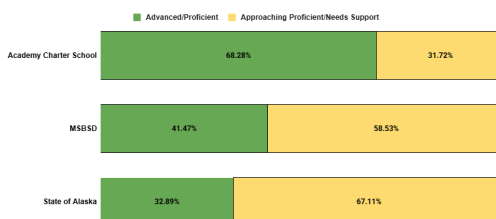
Test scores are only one piece of the picture, but it is always exciting to see our students' hard work reflected in their assessment results. We are so proud of our Academy students!

If you would like to see the rest of Academy's AK STAR results, you can view our schoolwide assessment results through the Alaska DEED assessment results page.

AK STAR - All Grades
Math



AK STAR - All Grades
English Language Arts



Friday Electives Are Here!

Our Friday Electives are starting for our middle school students!

These electives are designed to give students opportunities to explore interests, learn new skills, and experience something different from their regular coursework. Changing activities and engaging in different types of learning can provide students with a valuable opportunity to refresh their attention and approach learning in new ways.

We love that our electives allow students to learn, create, explore, and have fun while developing skills and discovering new interests!

Thank you to all of our teachers and staff who make these unique opportunities possible for our students.

Questions? Thoughts? Concerns?

Please do not hesitate to reach out! Stop in, call, or email. We are always happy to talk and help however we can.

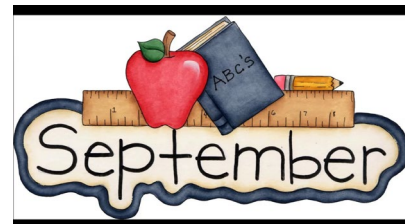
WE CARE! I CARE!

Austin Grimes

Principal

907-232-9756

Austin.Grimes@matsuk12.us



Date:

Event:

9/30

Fall Pictures



Date:

Event:

10/7

KG and 1st Grade
Palmer Lions Vision
Screenings

10/7

4th Grade
Alaska Wildlife Conservation
Center

10/26-30

Middle School Intensive Week

10/27

2nd Grade
Kids Don't Float

10/30

K-5 Halloween Parties





Elementary Cross Country



This week in kindergarten, we read *Camping* stories and enjoyed books that focused on the daily phonogram we were learning. We added five new phonograms this week, bringing our total to 12 phonograms learned so far. Students have worked very hard on their Written Phonogram Review. Be sure to look at the papers they are bringing home to see their wonderful handwriting and progress!

We also began practicing how to sound out and read words using the phonograms we have learned. Students practiced reading simple words such as *dad*, *had*, *dog*, and *fog*. This is an exciting step as students begin applying their phonogram knowledge to reading.

During our math block, we have been working with ten frames and practicing the concept of adding one more. We also introduced a new game to help students practice these skills in a fun and engaging way. Each week, we continue practicing numbers through 20. Some students are still working on correctly saying the teen numbers or may skip numbers while counting. Practicing counting at home can help strengthen these skills and build confidence with number recognition and sequencing.

Ms. Gerard Rachael.Gerard@matsuk12.us



FIRST GRADE:

- Spalding was busy with learning more and more rules and two-letter phonograms as well as all the jobs of silent final e!
- Read Naturally stories have begun (for half the class). The other half will get to next week, and then it will become an every other week routine.
- A noun is a person, place or thing! Lots of practice with what a noun is.
- Partners in ten and addition story problems have been our math topics.
- If you only have time to **read** the spelling words for **spelling and reading** - that's the most important part!

Contact us anytime!

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



Another wonderful week in second grade! We had a very exciting week as we finished reading *Charlotte's Web*! The students have loved getting to know Wilbur, Charlotte, and all of the other characters throughout the story. To celebrate finishing the book, we enjoyed watching the movie and had some great discussions comparing the book and the movie. The students did a fantastic job noticing similarities, differences, and changes between the two!

In Math, we have been busy reviewing several important skills. We practiced counting coins, worked on adding two-digit numbers without regrouping, and learned more about collecting and organizing data. We are continuing to build those math skills and grow our confidence!

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

Kimberly.Kramer@matsuk12.us

Grade 3

The Farring Files

Language Arts: We have enjoyed starting to learn about different ways scientists classify animals through our new reading unit. We examined vertebrates and invertebrates and the characteristics that each group has.

Math: We have been using our skills of regrouping and rounding to help us find estimated sums of multi-digit numbers. I am looking forward to beginning multiplication soon with our class! Please help ensure at home that your child has good fluency of their addition and subtraction facts as this will be incredibly helpful in learning multiplication.

As always, thank you for your partnership and support,

Mrs. Farring

Katherine.Farring@matsuk12.us



The Glanville Weekly

Language Arts: This week, students became zoologists as we began Unit 2 on animal classification! We learned what classification means, how scientist group animals, took notes on vertebrates and invertebrates, explored and took notes on warm- and cold-blooded characteristics, and finished the week by learning about fish. Next week, we will continue learning about amphibians, birds, and reptiles.



The students are doing very well in their reading groups. They have been excellent reading detectives, working together to answer questions about what they are reading using evidence from the text. We also practiced classifying words as nouns, adjectives, or verbs.

In Spalding, the students entered 30 new words into their notebooks and took their first 30-word spelling test. A new spelling list is coming home today for their spelling test next Friday!

Math: We wrapped up Chapter 2 on addition. The students worked hard all week to improve their fluency with three- and four-digit addition and word problems. We finished the chapter by taking our first math test!

Next week, we will move on to Chapter 3 and begin learning about subtraction. The students also continued working toward our goal of completing three ALEKS topics each day!

Have a wonderful weekend! Mrs. Glanville Megan.Glanville@matsuk12.us

FOURTH GRADE

Nielsen's News:

ELA-

Your children have been working so diligently and enthusiastically. It is such a joy teaching them!

This week we covered:

- Grammar: subject/verb agreement
- Spalding: List O2, Rule focus: Rules 4 & 6
- Novel study: Because of Winn Dixie- character growth and foreshadowing
- Writing: revising and publishing personal narratives

We are excited to share our stories with you soon!



Math-

- Multiplication/ division fluency
- Addition and Subtraction test- They all did fantastic! Keep an eye out for it coming home.
- Ch. 3 Understanding Multiplication and Division: Relating multiplication to addition, relating division to subtraction, multiplication as comparison, compare to solve problems, multiplication properties and division rules

Mrs. Nielsen Laurie.Nielsen@matsuk12.us

Benbow's Buzz



Thank you to all the families who got that field trip permission slip signed and returned! Please remember that this is a **CASH ONLY** trip, and we do need to get those funds together as soon as we can to ensure that our entry to the center is as smooth as possible.

Language Arts - We had our first spelling homework and test this week! You should have seen a spelling list disguised as cursive practice coming home. Please check in with your kiddo to see how the first test went and possibly help to set up a homework routine to ensure that the rest of the year goes smoothly. Each morning we practice sentence writing, which consists of identifying and correcting fragments and run-on sentences, as well as unscrambling sentences and writing all four sentence types. Daily Language Review this week covered compound subjects, Greek and Latin roots, sentence editing and identifying adjectives. We finished The War with Grandpa and wrote a persuasive paper to recommend (or not recommend) this book as our final task. We also expanded on our personal narratives this week and will continue them next week by adding more sensory details, figurative language and dialogue.

Math - We spent this week making sure that we are ready to move on to multiplication! We practiced multiple digit addition and subtraction, reviewed vocabulary, and took quizzes to prove our understanding of the terms. As we move into our multiplication unit, you might see multiplication books come home for additional practice if your kiddo has not progressed through the timed tests for basic multiplication facts. Automatic recall of these basic facts is vital to success in fourth grade math. Although we will 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



5TH GRADE



Sturgis Super Students!

Language Arts: It is wonderful to start settling into our routine for Language Arts. This week we have done a crash course in Spalding cursive, and rules. The students will be bringing home a spelling list this week, but our first test won't be until Thursday of next week. Since there is a wide range of spelling levels in my class, I do a mixture of lists so each student is getting 5th grade content, and words that are at their current spelling level. This first test will be the same for everyone and will be used to help me determine the more individualized spelling groups.

For reading and writing, the class began a unit on Personal Narratives. They worked diligently to answer comprehension questions in complete sentences and composed a short personal narrative about a memorable moment.

Math: This week the class finished up lessons on place value and took the first test of the year. As much of math comes from an understanding of place value, we will continue to visit the concepts we worked on this week as we move on to our unit on multiplication.

Mrs. Sturgis

Sabra.Sturgis@matsuk12.us

The Manley Minute:

Language Arts: In our first official week of language arts, students entered 30 words in their Spalding notebooks and took our first spelling test on Friday. As part of our Personal Narratives unit, students compiled a definition of a personal narrative and listed three characteristics. After reading a sample narrative, students wrote their own narrative based on a "first" that happened in their life. It was great to have a baseline for their writing; I look forward to seeing great improvement as they add detail and greater vocabulary.

Math: This week in math, we learned decimals through the thousandths place and wrote them in standard, expanded and word form. Students also compared and ordered decimals through the thousandths place and completed an enrichment activity on decimal place values.

Students are also working on multiplication Quicktables and ALEKS topics. Three students have completed their multiplication Quicktables. Well done! Our class goal is to complete 10 topics per week. Topics may be completed at home, but Knowledge Checks must be completed at school.

Mrs. Manley Patsy.Manley@matsuk12.us

SCHUMACHER MATH

We had a good week working with rates and ratios. Students have an opportunity to do a rate and ratio slide project with a connection to gears in a written response. Our class has a very large "pie" of topics in ALEKS. The reason for this is to "fill holes" from elementary years and also to challenge more advanced students at their own pace with prealgebra, geometry, probability, and statistics topics. Students will be assessed automatically with a learning knowledge check every 20 or so topics they have "mastered". I will also assess manually by request or at the beginning of the new semester.

Students are mastering Quicktables in ALEKS for fact fluency. Fast and accurate math fact recall is important for the application of multidigit multiplication & division, percents, algebra, geometry, probability, and statistics. Encourage your child to practice so they can reach their full potential.

Mr. Schumacher Jared.Schumacher@matsuk12.us



Outdoor Fitness

Thank you for the trail mowing, Mr. Tantanella! If you have a weed whacker or tall grass mower, the trails in the loop and woods still need lots of work. Delayed school construction means we'll have good trail access and extended hill use this year, but we'll need to clean up the mess first.

Outdoor fitness classes went well this week. Younger grades practiced shifting and braking to work together in a single-track line. Sixth grade learned to play Capture the Flag. Seventh and eighth grades did group-loop warmups and rode the trails.

Middle school students who miss class due to injuries or school district sports events will be excused. Other absences will require a make-up workout sheet completion to earn points for their grade. These forms are available from myself, Miss Molly or Miss Melissa. Your student will need initials and a signature from a supervising adult to earn up to 80% of the points for the missed class. Attending the whole class is 20% of their grade.

Mr. Schumacher and Mrs. Nichols

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

K-5 Lab Classes

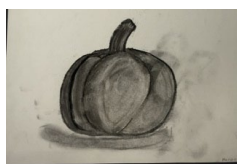


3rd Grade: Students completed their final art class of this rotation by learning how to shade with charcoal. They used their new skills to create realistic black-and-white pumpkins with depth and dimension!

4th Grade: Students wrapped up their drawing boot camp by practicing different drawing techniques at several stations. During their final class, they selected their favorite style and completed two projects to turn in.

5th Grade: Students completed their split self-portraits and ended this art rotation with a fun drawing class!

Mrs. Saunders and Mrs. Glanville



3rd grade - Finished up the world rivers unit with a quiz and enrichment activities.

4th grade - Studied the Andes Mountains and Mt. Everest along with a location quiz.

5th grade - Wrapped up units on the Maya, Inca and Aztec civilizations.

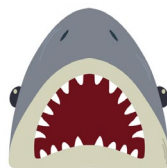
Mrs. Mayer and Mrs. Drummond



Español with Señorita Catarina

Kindergarten students learned about Tio Jaguar and Tio Conejo and how they became enemies and still are to this day. First and second graders are singing along with the Video Kids from Spain as they dance their excess energy away.

We are heeding some important advice from a shark - "Don't Eat the Teacher" and learning more vocabulary about supplies in our classroom.



Kindergarten-Feet- Understand that we leave a digital footprint online and must be careful what we share online; Legs- Understand what it means to be an upstander and reflect on ways to make others feel welcome

First Grade- Internet Traffic Lights (know when to go, slow, stop on websites or apps), My Digital Footprint (we leave tracks online everywhere we go)

Second Grade- Digital Footprints and Identity (how do we keep ourselves and our identity safe online)

Mrs. Nielsen



3rd Grade Science: This week in science we wrapped up our first rotation with intermediate grades and our unit on inheritance and traits looking at the difference between acquired and inherited traits!

4th Grade Science: This week in science we wrapped up our first rotation with intermediate grades and our unit on light and vision! Thank you to Mrs. Nielsen for donating moose eyeballs for us to dissect and be able to take a closer look at the different parts of an eye!

5th Grade Science: This week in science we wrapped up our first rotation with intermediate grades and our unit on habitat restoration with our terrariums that we built. Students got a firsthand look into how plants and animals cooperate in an ecosystem to all work together and thrive!

Mr. and Mrs. Farring

katherine.farring@matsuk12.us

timothy.farring@matsuk12.us



Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade have been working hard in writing lab. They have worked on letter formation, unscrambling sentences, adding detail to writing, and creating a picture story. This is our last week with this rotation, and we are proud of what they have accomplished.

Mrs. Sturgis and Ms. Benbow



Middle School Spanish

Sixth graders are amassing vocabulary about the second most important room in their homes - the kitchen. Expect to see some neatly written in your kitchen soon! Sixth graders learned a bit more about Mexico this week and will be creating extra credit decorations (if they so choose) celebrating Mexican Independence Day.

Seventh graders are getting adjective rules firmly cemented in their brains for a grammar test next week. They will be working on a mini-project about a notable Hispanic-American for Hispanic Heritage Month. They are getting back into the swing of remembering to do their Duolingo Choice Boards AND writing down at least 4 details about what they learned.

Eighth graders are reviewing how to conjugate AR verbs and helping each other be successful instead of getting in each other's way. I am proud of them. They are delving into a verb construct that helps them line out what they HAVE to do.

Spanish 1 students received ER verbs this week. They are working with a verb construct that lets them tell others what they are GOING to do. Spanish 1 students will be starting their time capsule project this week. They are going to write about their potential future lives in Spanish, and the work will be archived at the school for them to check in ten years if they so desire.

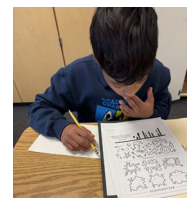
All middle school students marked Mexican Independence Day this week with a listening assessment of Claudia Sheinbaum's historic 2025 Grito de la Independencia and discussed the significance of this speech.

Señorita Cady.Agoff@matsuk12.us

Middle School Art-Ventures with Ms. Christensen

September is moving along quickly, and fall feels like it is as well! Seventh grade classes have been working on using organic and geometric lines in their landscape drawings, inspired by American artist Elyse Dodge. Our next art project is a fall collage with a watercolor background. We will be learning how to mix paints for a fall palette as well.

Sixth grade artists have begun their study of typography and their "Name Project". They have been learning some drawing techniques for their name artwork to use when designing the letters, style, shading, and composition. The Portuguese artist, Vile, uses his name in his street artwork, and was used as an example for innovative and creative use of typography in postmodern art.



It has been another busy and productive week in 6th grade!

In **Language Arts**, Mrs. Zerkel's class finished reading *Black Ships Before Troy* and wrapped up writing their own epic stories. Students had a great time applying what they learned about epic heroes and storytelling to create adventures of their own. Mr. Chadwell's class continued developing their character profiles and is also finishing the novel.

In **Math**, Mr. Chadwell's class successfully completed their **Statistics** unit. Mrs. Zerkel's class has been working hard on **fractions, decimals, and percents**, building important skills and making connections between the three concepts.

In **Social Studies**, students have officially completed our **Ancient Greece** unit! They have learned about Greek geography, government, mythology, daily life, and the lasting impact of Greek civilization. Students will be taking their **Ancient Greece Unit Test next Tuesday**, so they should spend a little time reviewing their notes and study materials over the weekend.

As always, thank you for your continued support. We hope you have a wonderful weekend, and please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or concerns!

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



We dove a little deeper into the natural hazards of volcanoes this week. Certain types of rocks are made from cooling lava depending on how much gas was dissolved in the magma before eruptions. We specifically looked at pumice and basalt and then tested "less gassy" and "more gassy" magma to see what type of eruptions took place. Based on the results and student observations, they can determine how that gas affects the types of rocks made! Next week we will begin to look at why our planet has these natural hazards. Have a wonderful weekend!

Mrs. Strohmeyer Cindy.Strohmeyer@matsuk12.us



Wrights Winners!

Wright 7th LA: Students reviewed their Kennecott notes and wrote a rough draft article/compiled photos for their website. A discussion of which text structure to use for their informative articles guided them in their organization. After a peer review, they'll revise next week with my feedback. They also worked on their news site critique research for sites 2 and 3. They took a grammar quiz on nouns.

Wright 7th math: Chapter 2's focus on operations with integers is in the class's review mirror after an assessment Wednesday. Next, they delved into operations with fractions in Chapter 4. Ten ALEKS topics are due each week.

Wright 7th history: The class took notes on the Spanish American War and President Teddy Roosevelt. They reviewed past concepts in various ways and continued practicing their 7 continents/five oceans map. A Harkness discussion on an excerpt of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* explored the impact of laissez-faire government on public safety and health.

All hand-outs and homework are on ConnectEd or Google Classroom. Have a great weekend

Mrs. Wright Melodie.Wright@matsuk12.us

"Successful and unsuccessful people do not vary greatly in their abilities. They vary in their desires to reach their potential." – John Maxwell

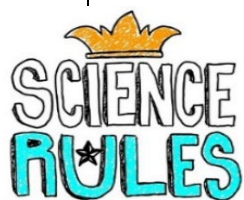
In English this week, students practiced identifying various text structures and their organizational features with daily reading passages and demonstrated their knowledge of assigned Week 3 vocabulary words ("spec"), while learning ten more words with the root "dict." We are still laying the foundational pieces in this first quarter. The class reviewed the literary devices of metaphor and simile, creating their own and distinguishing between the two. Students reviewed poetry analysis skills and applied those skills using Langston Hughes's poem "Mother to Son." This week's writing was about the topic of Conscience and Character. Students reflected upon themselves and wrote about the effects of being honest, even though consequences could mean failure or suffering.

Students in math are improving their accuracy and speed in multiplication and division and have completed the first two lessons of Chapter 4: Rational Numbers, covering terminating and repeating decimals and how to compare and order rational numbers. They also started practicing how to add and subtract both like and unlike fractions. As a reminder, students are expected to engage in ALEKS lessons at school and home to support what is being learned in the classroom. Since we have finished Chapter 3, check for topic mastery on skills connected to integers. If they still have some to do, encourage your child to engage with the newly learned concepts and mark them off the list. The true goal is to finish the pie before the end of the year.

For history, students answered nine more geography questions to strengthen geographic awareness and map-reading skills and continued learning about the Industrial Revolution. Students viewed the second and third episodes of the series *The Men Who Built America*. Discussions were held after viewing, using completed Viewing Logs and taking notes on key concepts: Carnegie's Success Chain (cause-effect relationships), steel (Bessemer process and mass production), Johnstown Flood, and the Homestead Strike (labor conflict). We also drew connections between the two episodes, the Six Ingredients of Industrialization, and whether Carnegie falls closer to a Captain of Industry or a Robber Baron. Students will be viewing the fourth episode and completing its log to be ready to discuss on Monday, September 21. We also viewed an episode of student-friendly news to learn more about current events.

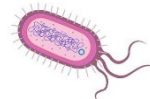
Together, this will be a great year!

Mrs. Twohy Tuesday.Twohy@matsuk12.us

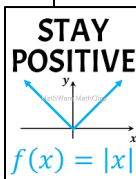


Students finished up their unit on Kennecott and Glaciers this week! They shared their experiences from the trip and connected them to what we learned in class over the past few weeks through a writing assignment. They also completed their unit test on glaciers. We had enough time to peek ahead at our next unit, "From Cells to Organisms," and I'm excited to kick off our first investigation together next week. Enjoy your weekend!

Mrs. Strohmeyer cynthia.strohmeyer@matsuk12.us



Maciel's Math Masters



This week, the students really stretched their brains and put in a lot of practice with fractions! We worked on writing fractions as decimals, comparing fractions, and adding and subtracting fractions. They are starting to sound like math teachers themselves as they use correct mathematical terms, such as *numerator* and *denominator*, while taking turns walking the class through a problem on the board. I really admire everyone's willingness to stay engaged, participate, and help one another when things get tough. Their perseverance is making a big difference in their learning!

Mrs. Maciel Ashleigh.Maciel@matsuk12.us



Middle School Cross Country

What an incredible cross-country season! We are so proud of all of our middle school runners and everything they accomplished this year. Each athlete showed tremendous growth—not only in their physical endurance but also in their mental toughness, perseverance, and confidence. It has truly been a pleasure to coach this amazing group of students.

We will have our **final practice and end-of-season celebration on Monday from 3:00–4:00 p.m.** Please remember to have your athlete bring their **clean, washed uniform** to turn in at practice.

We are also so thankful for Coach Willow and Coach Josh, who joined us this season! They were an incredible addition to our team.

Thank you to all of our runners and families for your hard work, dedication, and support throughout the season. We couldn't have asked for a better group, and we hope everyone has a wonderful rest of the school year!



We've completed another busy week of the 2026–27 school year! It was wonderful to have everyone back together and hear the students reflect on their experiences in Washington, D.C. They returned with plenty of stories, observations, and new memories to share.

This week in Civics/History, we recapped our D.C. tour and discussed the many things we saw and learned along the way. We also began exploring the design of government and the choices involved in creating a system that serves its citizens. The students were highly engaged and contributed to some truly thoughtful conversations!



In Math, we focused on the rules of exponents and using those rules to simplify powers of monomials. Students worked hard to strengthen their understanding of these important algebraic skills and apply them accurately to increasingly challenging problems.

In Honors English I, we completed an anticipatory activity for our next unit. Students took a deep dive into their own ideas about what would make a “perfect” society—and considered who gets to decide what “perfect” actually means. These conversations provided an excellent foundation as we began our new novella, Ayn Rand's *Anthem*. I am excited to see how their ideas develop as we continue reading and discussing the text.

Have a fantastic weekend,
Mrs. Molina
Stacy.Molina@matsuk12.us

Manley's Minute: English 1

As we are nearing the end of the novel *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* students have begun to discuss Bruno's character in greater depth. The big question was: Is Bruno truly a good friend? Students were challenged to find examples in the novel to support both sides of the debate. Our latest Harkness discussion had students deliberating Bruno's betrayal and redemption as well as the innocence of both Shmuel and Bruno.

In addition to our novel, students are working on Daily Paragraph Editing. This practice gives students continuous opportunities to apply grammatical skills in context. We are focusing on identifying and correcting errors while strengthening skills such as capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar, and sentence structure. The ultimate goal is for students to become more confident editors and to carry these skills into their own writing.

Mrs. Manley Patsy.Manley@matsuk12.us



With school trips being done we got right back too it working hard on equations and expressions working our way into linear equations!



This week in science we had quite an exciting time looking into collisions and how they work, as well as creating crumple zones to keep eggs safe from a head on impact.

Mr. Farring Timothy.Farring@matsuk12.us