

QUARTERLY CURRICULUM UPDATE

1ST GRADE

First Quarter 2009

LANGUAGE ARTS – Mrs. Ewert

The first couple weeks of school have been really busy. Routines and procedures are a big part of our school days. We will be listening to many stories, followed with a discussion and writing every day in our handwriting books. Students will be constructing their own ABC books. We will be reviewing uppercase and lowercase letters, letter sounds, and color words. Literacy workstation ground rules are being explained and we will begin rotations soon. Workstations allow students to work independently or with a partner using materials that are presented during whole group instruction time. During this time, I am able to work either one-on-one with students or with small groups on skills that have not been mastered.

Students will be bringing home a reader for homework. Your child should read about ten minutes each evening. Practicing flashcards can be included in that time. The children will have plastic bags for their readers. Bookmarks will also accompany the reader. The bookmarks need your initials, amount of time read and indicate if the reader was E for easy, J – for just right, or H- for hard, each time your child reads to you. Spelling will also start for the first graders.

Spelling tests will be on Tuesday, new spelling words will be sent home in their Wednesday envelope. The spelling homework has four different activities; your child only needs to complete one activity. It must be handed in by Tuesday morning. If you feel the suggested activities are too difficult, have him/her submit, in their handwriting, an activity you did at home to practice the spelling words. Readers and spelling words are based upon their level.

Flashcards will be coming home soon. These can be considered part of their reading minutes. If your child is having difficulty remembering them, only practice about five at a time until the words are automatic. Then mix them in with a few new words.

MATH – Mrs. Zaszczurynski

We begin our math class daily with calendar time. During this time we practice counting, place value, and other time skills like months of the year and days of the week. Another major focus of the first quarter is correct number formation and writing our numbers from 0 to 100 along with counting up and back on a number to practice basic addition and subtraction concepts.

SCIENCE – Mrs. Anderson

The first objective the 1st grade has been working on is to make purposeful observations of the natural world using the appropriate senses. We have discussed our 5 senses in making observations, and using our sense of sight and hearing. We chose bees as a theme for learning. We have read books about bees, and watched a video. We have enjoyed the National Geographic Young Explorer series as well.

SOCIAL STUDIES – Mrs. Zaszczurynski

The first grade students will be focusing on themselves and their families. This will include looking at rules, roles, jobs, wants and needs. As we discuss rules at school and home we will talk about safety (fire, stranger, transportation, etc.).

COMPUTER – Mrs. Zaszczurynski

Throughout the first quarter, first graders learn the basics of logging on and off the computer, using the school username and password, opening and exiting programs, and saving their work on the school network. We will begin the year using Jump Start Typing (practicing basic keyboarding skills), Microsoft Paint, and Microsoft Word Art.

SPANISH – Mrs. Machniak

The first grade students are learning their ABC's in Spanish this first quarter, how to introduce themselves, say their name, greet others, and counting to 20. We are learning through songs, movement, stories, worksheets, activities and repetition.

RELIGION – Sr. Pat Magee, OP

First graders will be reminded, at this start of school, that God is our creator. This will be followed by seeing God as our Father who sends Jesus to help us love. The story of Jesus' birth brings Mary, His mother and her cousin Elizabeth into the story. The children will be led gradually into the stories of Jesus throughout the year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – Mrs. Anderson

Not available.

ART – Mrs. Machniak

The first grade students have begun the year with self-portraits (They were introduced to facial proportion.) and learning the primary color family. We have been using scissors, glue sticks, crayons and pencils as we continue to work on the fine motor skills. In the upcoming weeks we will be learning about the art elements of color and shape through their artwork. Famous artists that will help us learn are Monet, Picasso, Haring, and Eric Carle.

MUSIC – Mrs. Collings

We start the year by learning how to keep a steady beat, and how to break down rhythms into quarter and eighth notes, known to them as "tas and tees". Ask them how "ta ta tee tee ta" goes! Our composers of the month will be Antonio Vivaldi (think "The Four Seasons") and Randy Newman (writes music for movies like "Monsters Inc.") We will learn how to use classroom instruments such as rhythm sticks and maracas. We will be talking about the concepts of loud and soft in music. We will work on music to sing at our masses.

QUARTERLY CURRICULUM UPDATE

2ND GRADE

First Quarter 2009

LANGUAGE ARTS – Mrs. Ewert

The month of September is very busy. The students are getting used to new routines and procedures. They are working in a handwriting and Starfall journal, grammar workbooks, and will soon begin literacy stations. Guided reading and spelling have also begun.

Students have received their first reader; readers will be sent home nightly. The children have plastic bags to for their readers. Please read with your child every night for at least ten to fifteen minutes. Please remember to fill out the bookmark every time your child reads.

Spelling tests will be on Tuesdays; new word lists will go home in their Wednesday envelope. Spelling homework has four different activities; your child only needs to complete one activity. It must be handed in by Tuesday morning.

Flashcards will be coming home soon. If your child is having difficulty remembering them, only practice about five at a time until the words are automatic. Then mix them in with a few new words.

MATH – Mrs. Zaszczurynski

When the second graders begin math class they immediately begin with Simple Solutions (SS). SS is a program that reviews concepts they have already learned by giving them 15 questions to complete. We are reviewing correct number formation and counting up and back on a number grid to practice addition and subtraction concepts.

SCIENCE – Mrs. Anderson

The first objective the 2nd grade has been working on is to make purposeful observations of the natural world using the appropriate senses. We have discussed our 5 senses in making observations, and using our sense of sight and hearing. We chose bees as a theme for learning. We have read books about bees, and watched a video. We have enjoyed the National Geographic Young Explorer series as well.

SOCIAL STUDIES – Mrs. Zaszczurynski

The second grade students will begin the year discussing themselves and the community of Adrian. To set our foundation of geography skills, we will begin using Daily Geography.

COMPUTER – Mrs. Zaszczurynski

During the first quarter, the second grade students will practice logging on and logging off the computer, using the school username and password, opening programs, and saving their work on the school network. The children will begin using Jump Start Typing (practicing basic keyboard skills), Microsoft Word Art, and Microsoft Paint.

SPANISH – Mrs. Machniak

The second grade students are reviewing greetings, courtesies and the days of the week. They will be learning to count from 1-50. We are learning through songs, movement, stories, worksheets, activities and repetition.

RELIGION – Sr. Pat Magee, OP

Second graders will use their knowledge of events in Jesus with the Father and the Holy Spirit. This introduction to the Holy Trinity will lead in the second quarter of school to the concepts of Church and our lives with God, together.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – Mrs. Anderson

Not available.

ART – Mrs. Machniak

The second grade students have begun the year with self portraits, (They were introduced to facial proportion.) and reviewing the primary and secondary color families. We have been working on fine motor skills. In the upcoming weeks we will be learning about the elements of color and shape through their artwork. Famous artists and cultures that will help us learn are Rousseau, Kandinsky, African masks, other tribal masks (Native American, Inuit, Polynesian, Asian) and South American molas.

MUSIC – Mrs. Collings

We will be learning about rhythms including quarter notes, half notes and quarter rests. We will learn about the musical alphabet and the concepts of staff, clef and measure, partially through a computer application known as 'Music Ace'. We will work on accurate singing through singing games. We will learn about higher and lower notes by using our boomwhackers. Our composers of the month will be Antonio Vivaldi (think "The Four Seasons") and Randy Newman (writes music for movies like "Monsters Inc."). We will work on music to sing at our masses.

QUARTERLY CURRICULUM UPDATE

3RD GRADE

First Quarter 2009

LANGUAGE ARTS – Mrs. Ledergerber

We are off to a terrific start of our year. I would like to welcome Alexandria Ford to our third grade. We are excited that she is here at SJA. The children have received their first readers. They will be reading from chapter books of their choice. They may also choose nonfiction books as their readers. The children have plastic bags to keep their readers in as they travel from school to home and back to school each day. Along with their reader they have a reading log (they can keep this at school) to track their books, and a bookmark. The bookmark is for the children to record the title of the book they are reading and to record each time they read. I would like the bookmark to be initialed by an adult to verify the reading session. The children need to read at least four times a week for 15 minutes each session. Bookmarks are due every Monday, so any reading over the weekend counts. Of course they may read more! The goal for the first quarter is to read three books to four books. At the end of each quarter the children will participate in a Read In. More details will come home later.

In reading class the children will be working with me in guided reading sessions, working independently on individualized activities or in Literacy Work Stations. Each day we enjoy reading aloud together.

Through writing workshop we will practice writing instruction, grammar, and spelling skills. The children will practice their handwriting by copying favorite poems for a poetry anthology. Grammar is also practiced daily in our Grammar Simple Solutions workbook. The children complete one lesson each day and then they are given a quiz on Friday that quizzes them on skills practiced for the week.

In spelling we will be doing word study in which we focus on the development of spelling strategies and application of spelling patterns. My goal is for the children to develop and understand how words work, and not to just memorize them for the week. Our spelling week will be from Wednesday to Tuesday. The children will receive their words on Wednesday and take the spelling test on the following Tuesday. They need to keep their word list in their work folder so they have it at school every day. Any spelling work assigned for their week's words will be due each Tuesday also. The children will be given class time to work on spelling activities. If your child utilizes their class work time effectively he/she shouldn't have much spelling to do for homework.

The children are allowed to have water bottles. The bottle must contain only plain water and the top needs to lift or twist. We do not want bottles in which the top must be completely removed. If the bottle is not insulated, I've suggested to the children that you put it inside an old sock. We also have a snack break each day around 10:00 a.m. The children are allowed to bring in a healthy snack.

The supply list for this year did not ask for the children to have a tote bag since most of the children's classes are on the same floor. They carry their pouch, planner, and work folder to each class. Some of the children have expressed that they would like to carry a small tote bag for those items. I told them it was fine with me, but it is not required. If your child decides to bring in a tote bag, please make sure it is small and will fit into their backpacks at the end of the day.

Please continue to initial planners and feel free to write notes to me at the bottom of the planner pages. I look forward to a wonderful year.

MATH – Mrs. Zaszczurynski

When third graders begin each math class they immediately begin with Simple Solutions (SS). SS is a program that reviews concepts they have already learned by giving them 15 questions to complete.

The math program is the Everyday Mathematics program. Review and assessments will find students looking at numbers using money, measurement, etc. Number patterns in problem solving settings such as number grid puzzles and frames and arrows diagrams will be introduced. Adding and subtracting whole numbers will be practiced through the use of fact families, fact triangles, and games.

SCIENCE – Mrs. Anderson

The 3rd grade has been working on making purposeful observations of the natural world using the appropriate senses. We have discussed our 5 senses in making observations, and using our sense of sight and hearing. We chose the theme bees for our learning. We have read books about bees, watched a video, and completed a bee diagram. We have enjoyed the National Geographic Explorer series as well.

SOCIAL STUDIES – Mrs. Ledergerber

The third graders are studying Michigan History this year. We are excited about our next textbooks, Meet Michigan. This quarter we will be working from two chapters, The Government of Michigan and Michigan's First People.

COMPUTER – Mrs. Zaszczurynski

The first quarter is a busy one for third graders. We begin using Jump Start Typing to practice using the home row keys so we can become more efficient in typing. They will be learning to use their flash drives to save their work and then eject them safely. Our first big project for the first quarter will be to create a PowerPoint slideshow on "The Thirteen Days of Halloween." Students will use the Internet to download graphics and sounds, experiment with backgrounds and fonts, and use PowerPoint options to create a "terrifying" slideshow to present to their classmates.

RELIGION – Sr. Pat Magee, OP

Third graders are studying - what does Jesus have to do with the 10 commandments. After several lessons this will lead to Jesus and a respect for all life and how Church has a part in all of it.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – Mrs. Anderson

Not available.

ART – Mrs. Machniak

The third grade students have begun the year with self portraits (They were introduced to facial proportion.) and reviewing the primary and secondary color families. We have been working on fine motor skills. In the upcoming weeks we will be learning about the elements of color and shape through their artwork. Famous artists and cultures that will help us learn are Matisse, Japanese paper arts, European castles and cathedrals, and Cezanne.

SPANISH – Mrs. Machniak

The third and fourth grade students are learning and reviewing their numbers from 0 through 100. They are learning to use their numbers to count by 1's, 5's, and 10's. and use numbers in a variety of contexts (math, phone #'s, dates) and beginning to tell time.. Students will continue into the quarter with seasons and weather. We are learning through songs, movement, stories, worksheets, activities, puzzles, games and repetition.

MUSIC – Mrs. Collings

We are working on learning rhythms, including quarter notes, half notes and their corresponding rests. We will learn about the musical alphabet and the concepts of staff, clef and measure, partially through a computer application known as 'Music Ace'. We will work on note reading and use boomwhackers and xylophones to reinforce this. Our composers of the month will be Antonio Vivaldi (think "The Four Seasons") and Randy Newman (writes music for movies like "Monsters Inc.") We will work on music to sing at our masses.

QUARTERLY CURRICULUM UPDATE

4TH GRADE

First Quarter 2009

LANGUAGE ARTS – Mrs. Ledergerber

I'm excited to be working with your child this year. It's exciting to see their continued growth. I would like to welcome Isabel Valdez and Katelyn Weatherford to our fourth grade. We are glad they are here at SJA. The children have all received their first readers. They were given a plastic bag for their reader. Along with their reader they have a bookmark and a reading log. The reading log is to track all of the books that they read. The bookmark is for your child to fill out each time they read. I would like the bookmark to be initialed by an adult to verify the reading session. Bookmarks are due every Monday. The children need to read four times a week for 20 minutes each session. They can certainly read more than that! The goal for this quarter is to read four books.

In reading class the children will be working with me in guided reading sessions, working independently on individualized activities, or in literacy workstations. Each day we enjoy reading aloud together. The fourth graders have asked me if we can do a Read-In. I told them it was fine with me. So we will have our first one at the end of the quarter.

Through writing workshop we will practice writing instruction, grammar, and spelling skills. We are reviewing some of the cursive letters that we have forgotten. The children need to write in cursive, however there will be some times they will be asked to print. We also practice grammar skills daily in our Grammar Simple Solutions workbooks. They complete one lesson each day and then they take a quiz each Friday that quizzes them on the skills they practiced for the week.

In spelling we will continue to do word study in which we focus on the development of spelling strategies and application of spelling patterns. The children will be given their words on Wednesdays and take the spelling test the following Tuesday. Any spelling work assigned for their week's words will be due each Tuesday also. The children will be given class time to work on their spelling activities. If your child utilizes their class time effectively he/she shouldn't have much spelling to do for homework.

The children are allowed to have water bottles and a healthy snack again this year. I am also asking that you sign or initial your child's planner... If you need to write me a note, please feel free to use the space in the planner.

I look forward to a terrific year!

MATH – Mrs. Zaszczurynski

When fourth graders enter the room for math they immediately begin with Simple Solutions (SS). SS is a program that reviews concepts they have already learned by giving them 15 questions to complete.

The math program main focus is the Everyday Mathematics program. We begin with studying the geometry of two-dimensional shapes. Students examine definitions and properties of various shapes and the relationships between and among these shapes. Students use compasses to construct shapes and to create their own geometric designs.

SOCIAL STUDIES – Mrs. Ledergerber

The fourth graders will be studying States and Regions this year. They will be responsible to learn the names and capitals of our fifty states. This quarter we will work on two units covering, Our Country's Government and Our Country's Geography.

SCIENCE – Mrs. Anderson

The 4th grade has been working on making purposeful observations of the natural world using the appropriate senses. We have discussed our 5 senses in making observations, and using our sense of sight and hearing. We chose bees as a theme for learning. We have read books about bees, watched a video, and completed a bee diagram. Students are looking for books that relate to a question that they have asked about the natural world. They will share their book with the class. We are enjoying the National Geographic Explorer series.

COMPUTER – Mrs. Zaszczurynski

The fourth graders are learning how to save their work to a flash drive and safely eject it from the computer. Their first project is to create a Bio Poem. Since this project requires a lot of descriptive language, the students learn how to use the “Research’ icon to find more vivid adjectives for their poem. They also learn how to take pictures with a digital camera and insert them into their project.

SPANISH – Mrs. Machniak

The fourth grade students are learning and reviewing their numbers from 0 through 100. They are leaning to use their numbers to count by 1’s, 5’s, and 10’s. and use numbers in a variety of contexts (math, phone #'s, dates) and beginning to tell time.. Students will continue into the quarter with seasons and weather. We are learning through songs, movement, stories, worksheets, activities, puzzles, games and repetition.

RELIGION – Sr. Pat Magee, OP

A main emphasis for 4th grade Religion is salvation history. This will include a study and working knowledge of the Old and New Testament. The Bible does not easily make sense unless a person can build a relationship with God. Therefore, there will be an emphasis on prayer and time with God.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – Mrs. Anderson

Not available.

ART – Mrs. Machniak

The fourth grade students have begun the year with self portraits (They were introduced to facial proportion.) and reviewing the primary and secondary color families. We have been working on fine motor skills. In the upcoming weeks we will be learning about the elements of color and shape through their artwork. Famous artists and cultures that will help us learn are Frank Stella, Homer, Matisse, Monet, Hokusai, Bearden, Calder, O’Keeffe and Rivera.

MUSIC – Mrs. Collings

Our strong focus will be on recorders, and working through the Recorder Karate belts. I will be putting a link on our school website for accompaniment to these belts so that they can practice at home. Students need to remember to bring their recorder back to class every week! We will continue to review our knowledge of notes and rhythms and start to learn musical terms that go with dynamics, melody and harmony. Our composers of the month will be Antonio Vivaldi (think “The Four Seasons”) and Randy Newman (writes music for movies like “Monsters Inc.”) We will work on music to sing at our masses.

QUARTERLY CURRICULUM UPDATE

5TH GRADE

First Quarter 2009

LANGUAGE ARTS – Mrs. Knape

What's the best way to become a better reader? It's to read, read, read! Students will participate in small group, whole class, and individual opportunities to explore literature. **30 minutes of reading daily is required along with parent/guardian signature verification in the student's planner.**

Simple Solutions is a daily program which will allow students to master basic grammar, spelling, and writing skills through structured review and consistent practice. Personal journal writings will allow students to practice their writing skills.

Spelling will focus on the development of spelling strategies and application of spelling patterns. Words will be given out on Wednesdays with the Spelling tests being the following Tuesday. Written spelling work and/or vocabulary work is also due the day of the testing.

I am looking forward to a busy, yet productive year.

MATH – Mrs. Knape

Simple Solutions: Math and Every Day Math are the two math sources for students. Every Day Math begins with review and practice of multiplication facts. Areas of study will include factors, divisibility, prime and composite numbers, square roots, and prime factorizations. Unit 2 will allow students to examine several methods for adding, subtracting, and multiplying whole numbers and decimals.

Simple Solutions is a daily 20 problem practice and review of math concepts coupled with the introduction of new material. The skills are presented in a way that students will need to think critically about each problem and decide how to solve them.

SCIENCE – Mrs. Anderson

The 5th grade has been working on making purposeful observations of the natural world using the appropriate senses. We have discussed our 5 senses in making observations, and using our sense of sight and hearing. We chose bees as a theme for learning. We have read books about bees, watched a video, and completed a bee diagram. Students have spent time in the computer lab researching their topic pertaining to the natural world. They have been working on writing two paragraphs of 5 to 7 sentences each, with a bibliography. We have discussed plagiarism and will work on how to avoid using other peoples work as our own. We have enjoyed the National Geographic Explorer series as well.

SOCIAL STUDIES – Mrs. Machniak

The focus for the fifth grade class in social studies is American History from its beginnings through the American Revolution and the Constitution. We have begun the year with the review of basic skills and concepts, such as latitude/longitude, climate and regional maps, time zones, the five themes of social studies (history, economics, culture, geography, and civics/government) and the five themes of geography (location, movement, regions, place, and human-environment interaction). The students have also spent a couple of days revisiting the Constitution. We took a 100 question test that is given to people who have applied for citizenship in the United States to see how we fared, read books and watched a DVD. From here the focus for the quarter will be on pre-Columbian times, the Native Americans and an introduction to life in Africa as we set a foundation for the meeting of the cultures with the European explorers. Students can expect to have individual projects and study at home as well as class projects and study.

COMPUTER – Mrs. Wathen

To begin the year, students will create an "About Me" presentation using PhotoStory. This project allows students to share some basic information about themselves and requires them to plan out their presentation, which will include photos, graphics and text/narration. Cybersafety is an ongoing topic, and in October we will have a special presentation on Cyberbullying. There will be an evening parent session on this topic as well that I hope you will attend. In fact, the beginning of the school year is a great time to review your house rules about internet use (and cell phone use, if applicable) with your child. A great resource for this can be found at <http://kids.getnetwise.org/tools/toolscontracts> and another excellent parent guide is available on our school website's "Current Families" page.

We will then move on to creating podcasts--digital recordings of voice, music and/or sound--for the younger elementary students and also for our families and friends. Towards the end of the quarter we will start learning elements of computer programming using a special program called Scratch.

Throughout the school year students will be working to improve their keyboarding skills. I have created accounts for all students on the TypingWeb.com website. I encourage students to practice their keyboarding skills regularly at home if they have access to the internet, so that they can type without looking at the keyboard. At this stage, accuracy should be emphasized over speed. Please contact me if you would like a home copy of your child's ID and Password for TypingWeb.

You can follow our technology learning at our on-line wiki space:
<http://sjaschool.pbworks.com>

SPANISH – Mrs. Machniak

The fifth grade class has begun their year with a review of 32 different commands, greetings, and questions. We will continue into the quarter with telling time, adjectives, article review and basic sentence structure. We will be utilizing a text book called "Hola" as well as a variety of support resources and opportunities to grow in our reading, writing, and speaking of the language.

RELIGION – Mrs. Machniak

The fifth grade class has begun the year with the theme of "peace" and what it means to us. We have also been using a variety of daily quotes about different characteristics such as optimism, change, determination, honesty, etc. to examine whether we agree or disagree with the statements and supporting the agreement or disagreement with an experience or with something they have read. They will expand upon this by writing a short weekly paper about one of the quotes of their choice. We will continue to examine scripture, kinds of prayer, and habits of prayer. As St. Francis of Assisi is the saint known for environmental sensitivities and his commitment to peace, we will learn more about this man and build onto our "live green" theme and peace studies.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – Mrs. Anderson

Not available.

ART – Mrs. Machniak

The fifth grade class has begun the year by practicing together a “Read and Draw” activity that will be a homework assignment every other week. These activities have been developed to build sequential thinking, eye-hand coordination, following directions, fine muscle control, basic design principles, visual discrimination, right brain functioning, reading comprehension along with measuring and plotting points. Students may need some additional help and support initially. At the middle school level, students will find that I will work with themes in art. They will have projects that we will do together and they will have projects where they will select from medium choices and take the lead in their creative expression. The first sets of themes will be shoes and sport/activities.

MUSIC – Mrs. Collings

We will be reviewing and expanding our knowledge of notes and rhythms as well as the concepts of sharp, flat and natural. We will learn proper singing techniques. Our main focus will be learning to add rhythms and pitches to our “Peanut Butter Jam” music, a set of lessons that talks about drumming around the world and includes singing, drumming, xylophones and/or keyboards. Our composers of the month will be Antonio Vivaldi (think “The Four Seasons”) and Randy Newman (writes music for movies like “Monsters Inc.”) We will work on music to sing at our masses.

MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

6TH GRADE

First Quarter 2009

LANGUAGE ARTS – Mrs. Knape

Simple Solutions is a program which provides daily mastery practice of basic grammar, spelling, and writing skills through structured and consistent review.

Spelling will focus on the development of spelling strategies and the application of spelling patterns. Word lists will be given out on Wednesdays with the Spelling tests being the following Tuesday. Written spelling and/or vocabulary work is also due the day of the testing.

Students will explore different types of writing such as narratives, diaries, etc. These writings are related to readings from their Literature books. A personal journal allows students to practice their writing skills.

Research has shown the best way to become a better reader is to Read, Read, Read. Students will participate in whole class, small group, and individual opportunities to explore literature. **Students are required to read 30 minutes a day. A parent/guardian signature is to be written in the student's planner to verify the completion of the daily reading.**

MATH – Mrs. Knape

Every Day Math and Simple Solutions for math are the two programs students will be using this year.

Every Day Math begins with a look at graphs and tables and how to glean information from them. Unit 2 will revisit operations with whole numbers and decimals as well as extending previously developed skills. Strategies practiced will include estimation, mental methods, algorithms, and decimal point positioning in answers. Exponential, scientific, and number-and-word notation skills will be used to represent very large and very small numbers.

Simple Solutions is a daily practice and review of math concepts as well as the introduction of new material. The skills are presented in a way that students will need to think critically about each problem and decide how to solve it.

SCIENCE – Mrs. Anderson

The 6th grade has been working on making purposeful observations of the natural world using the appropriate senses. We have discussed our 5 senses in making observations, and using our sense of sight and hearing. We chose bees as a theme for learning. We have read books about bees, watched a video, and completed a bee diagram. Students have spent time in the computer lab researching their topic pertaining to the natural world. They have been working on writing two paragraphs of 5 to 7 sentences each, with a bibliography. We have discussed plagiarism and will work on how to avoid using other peoples work as our own. We have enjoyed the National Geographic Explorer series as well.

SPANISH – Mrs. Machniak

The sixth grade class has begun their year with a review of 32 different commands, greetings, and questions. We will continue into the quarter with telling time, adjectives, article review and basic sentence structure. We will be utilizing a text book called "Hola" as well as a variety of support resources and opportunities to grow in our reading, writing, and speaking of the language.

SOCIAL STUDIES – Mrs. Machniak

The focus for the sixth grade class in social studies is American History from its beginnings through the American Revolution and the Constitution. We have begun the year with the review of basic skills and concepts, such as latitude/longitude, climate and regional maps, time zones, the five themes of social studies (history, economics, culture, geography, and civics/government) and the five themes of geography (location, movement, regions, place, and human-environment interaction). The students have also spent a couple of days revisiting the Constitution. We took a 100 question test that is given to people who have applied for citizenship in the United States to see how we fared, read books and watched a DVD. From here the focus for the quarter will be on pre-Columbian times, the Native Americans and an introduction to life in Africa as we set a foundation for the meeting of the cultures with the European explorers. Students can expect to have individual projects and study at home as well as class projects and study.

COMPUTER – Mrs. Wathen

To begin the year, students will create an "About Me" presentation using PhotoStory. This project allows students to share some basic information about themselves and requires them to plan out their presentation, which will include photos, graphics and text/narration. Cybersafety is an ongoing topic, and in October we will have a special presentation on Cyberbullying. There will be an evening parent session on this topic as well that I hope you will attend. In fact, the beginning of the school year is a great time to review your house rules about internet use (and cell phone use, if applicable) with your child. A great resource for this can be found at <http://kids.getnetwise.org/tools/toolscontracts> and another excellent parent guide is available on our school website's "Current Families" page.

We will then move on to creating podcasts--digital recordings of voice, music and/or sound--for the younger elementary students and also for our families and friends. Towards the end of the quarter we will start learning elements of computer programming using a special program called Scratch.

Throughout the school year students will be working to improve their keyboarding skills. I have created accounts for all students on the TypingWeb.com website. I encourage students to practice their keyboarding skills regularly at home if they have access to the internet, so that they can type without looking at the keyboard. At this stage, accuracy should be emphasized over speed. Please contact me if you would like a home copy of your child's ID and Password for TypingWeb.

You can follow our technology learning at our on-line wiki space:
<http://sjaschool.pbworks.com>

RELIGION – Mrs. Machniak

The sixth grade class has begun the year with the theme of "peace" and what it means to us. We have also been using a variety of daily quotes about different characteristics such as optimism, change, determination, honesty, etc. to examine whether we agree or disagree with the statements and supporting the agreement or disagreement with an experience or with something they have read. They will expand upon this by writing a short weekly paper about one of the quotes of their choice. We will continue to examine scripture, kinds of prayer, and habits of prayer. As St. Francis of Assisi is the saint known for environmental sensitivities and his commitment to peace, we will learn more about this man and build onto our "live green" theme and peace studies.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – Mrs. Anderson

Not available.

ART – Mrs. Machniak

The sixth grade class has begun the year by practicing together a “Read and Draw” activity that will be a homework assignment every other week. These activities have been developed to build sequential thinking, eye-hand coordination, following directions, fine muscle control, basic design principles, visual discrimination, right brain functioning, reading comprehension along with measuring and plotting points. Students may need some additional help and support initially. At the middle school level, students will find that I will work with themes in art. They will have projects that we will do together and they will have projects where they will select from medium choices and take the lead in their creative expression. The first sets of themes will be shoes and sport/activities.

MUSIC – Mrs. Collings

We will be reviewing and expanding our knowledge of notes and rhythms as well as the concepts of sharp, flat and natural. We will learn proper singing techniques. Our focus will be learning to add rhythms and pitches to our “Peanut Butter Jam” music, a set of lessons that talks about drumming around the world and includes singing, drumming, xylophones and/or keyboards. Our composers of the month will be Antonio Vivaldi (think “The Four Seasons”) and Randy Newman (writes music for movies like “Monsters Inc.”), we will work on music to sing at our masses.

MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

7TH GRADE

First Quarter 2009

LANGUAGE ARTS – Mrs. Knape

Simple Solutions is a program which provides daily mastery practice of basic grammar, spelling, and writing skills through structured and consistent review.

Spelling will focus on the development of spelling strategies and the application of spelling patterns. Words will be given out on Wednesdays with the Spelling tests being the following Tuesday. Written spelling and/or vocabulary work is also due the day of the testing

Students will explore different types of writing such as narratives, diaries, etc. These writings are related to readings from their Literature books. A personal journal allows students to practice their writing skills.

Research has shown the best way to become a better reader is to Read, Read, Read! Students will participate in whole class, small group, and individual opportunities to explore literature. **Students are required to read 30 minutes a day.**

It will be an exciting year for all of us!

MATH – Mrs. Knape

Simple Solutions: Pre-Algebra 1 and Glencoe Math Applications and Connections #3 are the two programs students will be using this year.

In the beginning of the Glencoe math book, students will translate verbal expressions into mathematical expressions, use mathematical properties to evaluate expressions, solve open sentences, and use/interpret stem-and-leaf plots, tables, graphs, and functions. Unit 2 will focus on exploring rational numbers.

Simple Solutions will be a mix of review skills and new skills. Because the skills are mixed, students will have to think critically about each problem and decide how to solve it.

SCIENCE – Mrs. Anderson

The 7th grade students have been working on a mineral and crystal unit. We have built crystal gardens and are observing and collecting data everyday. We will put these figures into a graph and present our gardens to the class. Our next unit will be on rocks and the rock cycle.

SOCIAL STUDIES – Mrs. Machniak

The focus for the seventh grade class in social studies is the Eastern Hemisphere. We have begun the year with the review of basic skills and concepts, such as latitude/longitude, climate and regional maps, time zones, the five themes of social studies (history, economics, culture, geography, and civics/government) and the five themes of geography (location, movement, regions, place, and human-environment interaction). The students have also spent a couple of days revisiting the Constitution. We took a 100 question test that is given to people who have applied for citizenship in the United States to see how we fared, read books and watched a DVD. From here the focus for the quarter will be on the beginnings of human society. We begin this quarter with the study of archeology, Paleolithic and Neolithic patterns of living. From here we will move to the civilizations of Sumer, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, then we move on to examine the development of armies and ideas in the Phoenician and Hebrew civilizations. Students can expect to have individual projects and study at home as well as class projects and study.

COMPUTER – Mrs. Wathen

This quarter students will work with partners to solve "How To" Missions--how to edit videos, how to make a screen cast, how to make a voice recording using Audacity, etc. They will be required to not only figure out how to do their mission, but also prepare a report that will turn into a class presentation using PowerPoint. Finally, each team will record a "How To" video so that others can learn from their expertise. Cybersafety is an ongoing topic, and in October we will have a special presentation on Cyberbullying. There will be an evening parent session on this topic as well that I hope you will attend. In fact, the beginning of the school year is a great time to review your house rules about internet use (and cell phone use, if applicable) with your child. A great resource for this can be found at <http://kids.getnetwise.org/tools/toolscontracts> and another excellent parent guide is available on our school website's "Current Families" page.

Throughout the school year students will be working on improving their keyboarding skills. I have created accounts for all students on the TypingWeb.com website. I encourage students to practice their keyboarding skills regularly at home if they have access to the internet, so that they can type without looking at the keyboard. Both accuracy and speed are important. Please contact me if you would like a home copy of your child's ID and Password for TypingWeb.

You can follow our technology learning at our on-line wiki space:
<http://sjaschool.pbworks.com>

SPANISH – Mrs. Machniak

The seventh grade class has begun their year with a review of 32 different commands, greetings, and questions. We will continue into the quarter with the verb "ir" and conjugation of "-ar" verbs. The textbook we will be utilizing is called "Juntos" along with a variety of support resources and opportunities to grow in our reading, writing and speaking of the language. The first unit focuses the lessons within the framework of the country of Mexico.

RELIGION – Mrs. Machniak

The seventh grade class has begun the year with the theme of "peace" and what it means to us. We have also been using a variety of daily quotes about different characteristics such as optimism, change, determination, honesty, etc. to examine whether we agree or disagree with the statements and supporting the agreement or disagreement with an experience or with something they have read. They will expand upon this by writing a short weekly paper about one of the quotes of their choice. We will continue to examine the Bible and the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. As St. Francis of Assisi is the saint known for environmental sensitivities and his commitment to peace, we will learn more about this man and build onto our "live green" theme and peace.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – Mrs. Anderson

Not available.

ART – Mrs. Machniak

The seventh grade class has begun the year by practicing together a "Read and Draw" activity that will be a homework assignment every other week. These activities have been developed to build sequential thinking, eye-hand coordination, following directions, fine muscle control, basic design principles, visual discrimination, right brain functioning, reading comprehension along with measuring and plotting points. Students may need some additional help and support initially. At the middle school level, students will find that I will work with themes in art. They will have projects that we will do together and they will have projects where they will select from medium choices and take the lead in their creative expression. The first sets of themes will be treasure and doors.

MUSIC – Mrs. Collings

Our focus this quarter will be on reviewing notes and expanding our knowledge of increasingly complex rhythms to aid in our work with our Afro Cuban Percussion unit. There are some cool rhythm instruments on order such as claves and a guiro! We will work on how to sing and sight read at the same time. We will learn music to sing at mass and hopefully some of us will help lead our monthly mass with singing and playing.

MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWS

8TH GRADE

First Quarter 2009

LANGUAGE ARTS – Mrs. Knape

Simple Solutions is a program which provides daily mastery practice of basic grammar, spelling, and writing skills through structured and consistent review.

Spelling will focus on the development of spelling strategies and the application of spelling patterns. Words will be given out on Wednesdays with the spelling tests being the following Tuesday. Written spelling and/or vocabulary work is also due the day of the testing.

Students will explore different types of writing such as narratives, diaries, etc. These writings are related to readings from their Literature books. A personal journal allows students to practice their writing skills.

Research has shown the best way to become a good reader is to Read, Read, Read! Students will participate in whole class, small group, and individual opportunities to explore literature. **Students are required to read 30 minutes a day.**

What a year this will be!

MATH – Mrs. Knape

Simple Solutions: Algebra 1 and Glencoe Algebra 1 are the two series students will be working in this quarter. In the Glencoe book, students will master the skills necessary to perform operations with monomials and polynomials. This will be followed by a chapter on factoring.

Simple Solutions will be a mix of review skills and new skills. Because the skills are mixed, students will have to think critically about each problem and decide how to solve it.

SCIENCE – Mrs. Anderson

The 8th grade students have been working on a mineral and crystal unit. We have built crystal gardens and are observing and collecting data everyday. We will put these figures into a graph and present our gardens to the class. Our next unit will be on rocks and the rock cycle.

COMPUTER – Mrs. Wathen

This quarter students will work with partners to solve "How To" Missions--how to edit videos, how to make a screen cast, how to make a voice recording using Audacity, etc. They will be required to not only figure out how to do their mission, but also prepare a report that will turn into a class presentation using PowerPoint. Finally, each team will record a "How To" video so that others can learn from their expertise. Cybersafety is an ongoing topic, and in October we will have a special presentation on Cyberbullying. There will be an evening parent session on this topic as well that I hope you will attend. In fact, the beginning of the school year is a great time to review your house rules about internet use (and cell phone use, if applicable) with your child. A great resource for this can be found at <http://kids.getnetwise.org/tools/toolscontracts> and another excellent parent guide is available on our school website's "Current Families" page.

Throughout the school year students will be working on improving their keyboarding skills. I have created accounts for all students on the TypingWeb.com website. I encourage students to practice their keyboarding skills regularly at home if they have access to the internet, so that they can type without looking at the keyboard. Both accuracy and speed are important. Please contact me if you would like a home copy of your child's ID and Password for TypingWeb.

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<http://sjaschool.pbworks.com>

SOCIAL STUDIES – Mrs. Machniak

The focus for the eighth grade class in social studies is the Eastern Hemisphere. We have begun the year with the review of basic skills and concepts, such as latitude/longitude, climate and regional maps, time zones, the five themes of social studies (history, economics, culture, geography, and civics/government) and the five themes of geography (location, movement, regions, place, and human-environment interaction). The students have also spent a couple of days revisiting the Constitution. We took a 100 question test that is given to people who have applied for citizenship in the United States to see how we fared, read books and watched a DVD. From here the focus for the quarter will be on the beginnings of human society. We begin this quarter with the study of archeology, Paleolithic and Neolithic patterns of living. From here we will move to the civilizations of Sumer, Mesopotamia, and Egypt, then we move on to examine the development of armies and ideas in the Phoenician and Hebrew civilizations. Students can expect to have individual projects and study at home as well as class projects and study.

SPANISH – Mrs. Machniak

The eighth grade class has begun their year with a review of 32 different commands, greetings, and questions. We will continue into the quarter with the verb “ir” and conjugation of “-ar” verbs. The textbook we will be utilizing is called “Juntos” along with a variety of support resources and opportunities to grow in our reading, writing and speaking of the language. The first unit focuses the lessons within the framework of the country of Mexico.

RELIGION – Mrs. Machniak

The eighth grade class has begun the year with the theme of “peace” and what it means to us. We have also been using a variety of daily quotes about different characteristics such as optimism, change, determination, honesty, etc. to examine whether we agree or disagree with the statements and supporting the agreement or disagreement with an experience or with something they have read. They will expand upon this by writing a short weekly paper about one of the quotes of their choice. We will continue to examine the Bible and the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. As St. Francis of Assisi is the saint known for environmental sensitivities and his commitment to peace, we will learn more about this man and build onto our “live green” theme and peace.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION – Mrs. Anderson

Not available.

ART – Mrs. Machniak

The eighth grade class has begun the year by practicing together a “Read and Draw” activity that will be a homework assignment every other week. These activities have been developed to build sequential thinking, eye-hand coordination, following directions, fine muscle control, basic design principles, visual discrimination, right brain functioning, reading comprehension along with measuring and plotting points. Students may need some additional help and support initially. At the middle school level, students will find that I will work with themes in art. They will have projects that we will do together and they will have projects where they will select from medium choices and take the lead in their creative expression. The first sets of themes will be treasure and doors.

MUSIC – Mrs. Collings

Our focus will be reviewing notes and expanding our knowledge of increasingly complex rhythms to aid in our work with our Afro Cuban Percussion unit. There are some cool rhythm instruments on order such as claves and a guiro! We will work on how to sing and sight read at the same time. We will learn music to sing at mass and hopefully some of us will help lead our monthly mass with singing and playing.