

VIEW FROM THE MIDDLE



December 2023

Dear Alden Middle School Families:

This time of year, we often reflect upon all that we are thankful for in our lives. We are certainly blessed at Alden Middle School. It is a joy to work with all the wonderful children, parents, teachers, and staff here at Alden Middle School. Thank you for all that you do.

This fall has looked a little different this year and our hope is that your child(ren) have shared much of what has happened over the last three months. In addition to these conversations, we will highlight many of our school and classroom activities within this newsletter.

As a part of our continued efforts to promote positive character at Alden Middle School, we continue to teach and promote our monthly character traits. Throughout the month, our students showed their generosity in the school and community. I would like to thank the Alden community for their generosity with our Socktober drive. We collected around 870 items (socks, hats, gloves, soap) which were donated to a local shelter. Mrs. Pyc's homeroom brought in the most items for this drive and the students won a breakfast hosted by ABC. In November, we had a group of our students and staff deliver Thanksgiving dinners to some of our Alden Middle School families. The students also collected canned goods by hosting a pajama day, along with a Spirit dress week. All food goods will be donated to the Alden Marilla food pantry. Thank you to Mrs. Laraba and ABC members for organizing these events.

In an effort to spread some happiness during the Holiday Season, our 6th-8th grade band and chorus will have concerts this month. These performances will be on December 5th and December 7th in the HS auditorium. Students and staff will also participate in the 12 days of Holidays, from December 6th - December 21st, where students and staff will have opportunities to dress in their holiday apparel. On December 21st, students and staff will enjoy our annual "Holiday Follies. We will participate in team building activities featuring several different events and races mixed with holiday flair.

REMINDER: All grades and report cards can be found on the Parent Portal. Parents and students should be using this to keep themselves updated on grades, and any missing assignments. For information on the steps needed to create this account, please visit our site at www.aldenschools.org and select the Parent Portal link. If you do not know the student access ID or password, please call the Middle School at 716-937-9116 ext. 2191. To make sure that we are communicating effectively to our families and people in the community, we have added and updated many sections of our middle school website. Please visit our website to get old and new information related to AMS.

On an academic note, 86% of our students achieve Honor or Merit Roll status for the first marking period. I do want to congratulate all these students for this accomplishment. Earning Honor or Merit Roll status is quite an accomplishment. Congratulations!

Please note that we will be on winter recess break starting on 12/22/23 through 1/1/24. On behalf of our Alden Middle School faculty and staff, I wish you and your family, a very special Holiday and healthy New Year.

Season's Greetings,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve C. Smith".

Steve Smith
Middle School Principal



12/5 -MS Winter Concert– Band & Jazz- &pm– HS Aud 7pm

12/7– Winter Chorus Concert–7pm HS Aud

12/15–15 wk Interim report posted to PP

12/22- 1/2/2024– NO SCHOOL– Break



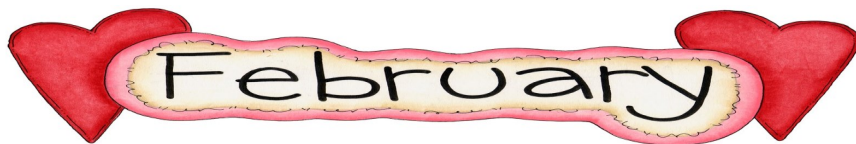
1/2 —Back to School

1/15– No School—Martin Luther King Day

1/18 & 1/19- MS Musical–7pm– IS Aud

1/20– MS Musical– 2pm & 7pm IS Aud

1/22– 2nd Marking Period ends



2/2 –2nd Quarter Report Cards Posted to PP

2/9– Early Dismissal K-12

2/13- MS Band & MS Jazz Band Prism Concert– 7pm IS Gym

2/19-2/23– Mid-winter recess



Attention Parents of 8th Graders!

Preparation for Freshman Year is underway.

Please make note of the following information:

- Prior to Winter Recess, the counselors will distribute information to eighth graders to review scheduling information and describe the scheduling process.

Pertinent information about course offerings and diploma requirements are available to you and your student through the Alden High School's website: www.aldenschools.org and under the Guidance/Counseling tab.

We suggest that you review this information with your eighth grader in the coming weeks.

- We will begin meeting with students in January 2024 for them to select their high school course requests.
- A copy of your child's course selection will be sent home for your review and approval.
- If you prefer to be present when your child meets with us, or if you have any questions about the process, you may call the Middle School Counselors, listed below, to schedule an appointment.

Mrs. Bonczar (students last name beginning with A-K)
937-9116 ext. 2197

Mrs. Gavigan (students last name beginning with L-Z)
937-9116 ext. 2194

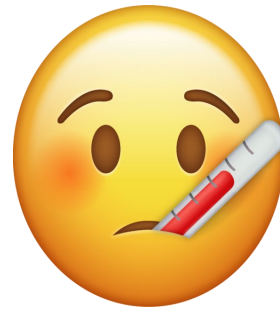


CAN MY CHILD GO TO SCHOOL TODAY?

SICK DAY/RETURN TO SCHOOL GUIDELINES

Does your student currently have (or has had over the past 10 days) one or more of these new or worsening symptoms?

- A temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 F
- Feels feverish or have chills
- Cough
- Loss of taste and smell
- Fatigue/Feeling of tiredness
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Muscle pain or body aches
- Headaches
- Nasal congestion/runny nose



If the answer is **YES** to any of those symptoms, then the student cannot go to school and must be-assessed by their Health care provider (HCP).

If your HCP provides a diagnosis of a known chronic condition with unchanged symptoms, or a confirmed acute illness (examples: laboratory-confirmed influenza, strep throat), then a note signed by your HCP explaining the alternate diagnosis is required before you will be allowed to return to school. You may return to school according to the usual guidelines for that diagnosis.

If your student does not need to be seen by their HCP, AND your child has been **symptom free for 24 hours without the use of medications**; a parent note must be submitted for the student to have an excused absence.

Example: If a child has a **fever, an episode of vomiting or diarrhea** on a Monday they **cannot** come to school the next day. They may return to school on Wednesday if they have had 24 hours without symptoms without the use of medications.

These guidelines have been given to us by the NY state department of health in addition to the school district.

When your child is diagnosed with any communicable (contagious) disease, please report this to the Health Office as soon as possible. Some of the common communicable diseases among school-age children include: Strep Throat, Scarlet Fever, Pneumonia, Impetigo, Ringworm, and the Flu.



Bulldog Bulletin

Vol. # 2

October

Page 1

Thanksgiving Meals to Local Families

This month we sat down with Mrs. Bonczar and Mrs. Gavigan to learn about the Thanksgiving meals that were gifted to local families last year. Here is what they had to say:

Q: Where did the idea come from to gift families with a Thanksgiving meal?

A: Every year we make food boxes at Christmas time, and we thought it would be a great idea to get meals for Thanksgiving. We want everyone to have a hot Thanksgiving meal.

Q: How many families were gifted a Thanksgiving meal last year?

A: We had about 12 families from the Middle School. The other 3 buildings also gifted meals. We had about 40 families for the whole district.

Q: Where did the money come from to purchase the meals?

A: We sent an email to all the staff in the building asking if anyone would like to donate to the Thanksgiving donation fund. We used that money to purchase the meals. There was also some money donated from the community that was used as well.

Q: Where did the meals come from?

A: We ordered the meals from Tops in Alden. Tops donated some additional food to our meals and the families were so grateful for it.



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October

Page 2

Thanksgiving Meals to Local Families

Q: How did the meals get delivered to the families?

A: We got a bus and with the help of Mrs. A. O'Neill's class we went to Tops to pick up the meals and then delivered them to each of the families.

Q: Are you planning on gifting Thanksgiving meals again this year?

A: Yes, we are planning on doing the Thanksgiving meals again.

Q: How can others help and donate to the meals this year?

A: We are going to send an email to teachers and staff to ask for donations again this year. If students would like to donate nonperishable food items, we will collect them as well. Any extra food will be given to the Family Center to be used for food bags that are given out to families year-round.

Q: Mrs. Gavigan what are you most thankful for?

A: I am most thankful for my family and people being healthy.

Q: Mrs. Bonczar what are you most thankful for?

A: I am most thankful for the health of my family.

Be on the look out for emails and signs about ways that you can help with this years Thanksgiving meals.

Reporting by Mrs. O'Neill's Class

Mrs. Kerl- Math 6 AIS, Math 7 AIS & Math 8 AIS

I have had a great time working with your children so far this school year. Academic Intervention Services for Math (AIS) is a program designed to support a student's needs in math class. With smaller classes, students have a greater opportunity to ask questions. Because there is no homework and there are no grades, students often feel less pressure as they approach their math problems. Your children can practice skills they learn in their math classes with the direct support of the AIS teacher. I hope you have a great holiday!



8th Grade News



Mrs. Santiago - Spanish 8

The 8th graders have been busy! We reviewed 7th grade and completed chapter 5. Students can describe their houses, the furniture in the rooms and their chores. Feel free to give them chores to talk about! We also completed chapter 6 – food. We have reviewed the healthy eating guidelines of My Plate. Students simulated a restaurant to practice ordering food and commenting on their meals. We are starting chapter 7 – health and welfare - now students need to eat healthy and exercise!

8th Grade Math – Mrs. Stotz and Mrs. Smith

Math 8 students have been studying situations represented in equations, tables, and graphs in order to compare rates of change. Students continue to work collaboratively during class for problem-based learning. Because students work in randomly assigned groups, they are getting to see multiple perspectives to problem solving approaches.

At the end of December, students will get to show their creativity by designing a picture on graph paper that uses 4 types of slopes. We are anxious to see what the students come up with!

Each week, students are assigned a weekly sheet that will be due on Friday. Students have time in class to work on the problems, ask questions, and get feedback. Weekly sheets are in OneNote, but paper copies are available for students who prefer paper. Students may correct errors on weekly sheets until the due date (Fridays).

If students are absent for any reason, their daily math work may be found on Teams.

Students and parents may reach Mrs. Stotz for questions using email: hstotz@aldenschools.org.

Mr. Partell - Social Studies

Mr. Partell's 8th grade social studies classes, students used Marvel Comics characters Iron Man and Thanos as symbols of greedy or selfless reasons that the United States got involved in foreign affairs during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Specifically, the class examined growing American imperialism at the turn of the twentieth century. During the month of December, students will study World War I and begin the Roaring Twenties. A major focus in December will be understanding how investments such as stocks work. A stock market simulation will finish out the calendar year in 8th grade.

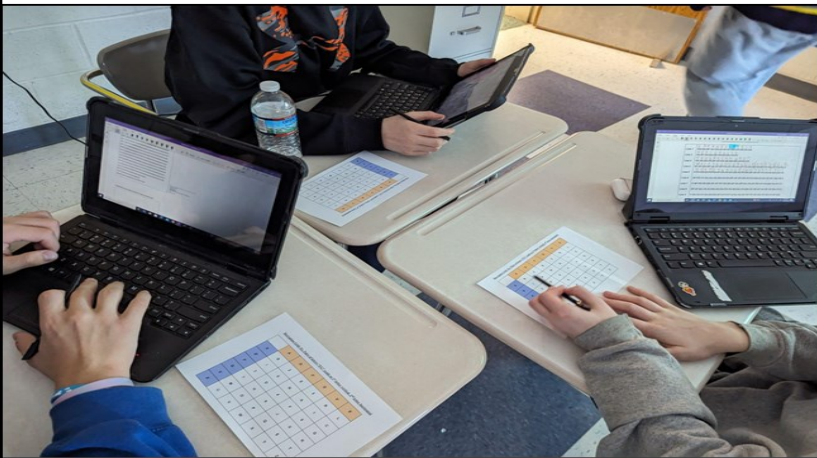
Mrs. Kerl- Algebra

I have had a great time working with your children so far this school year. They are enthusiastic and enjoy any activities that they can participate in. We have been working on solving equations and graphing linear equations. The next unit we will be working on is systems of equations. It is both a challenging and interesting unit. Please continue to encourage your child to complete corrections on their Weekly Sheets. They have 2 weeks to complete them. They serve as a review of skills that we have already worked on this year and previous years and as an extension of what we are currently learning in class. They can hand them in for corrections as many times as they would like before the due date. These are graded and are in addition to nightly homework. I hope you have a great holiday!

Mrs. Kerl: pkarl@aldenschools.org 937-9116 ext. 2343.

Miss Behlmaier– Social Studies

It is hard to believe that the first half of the school year has been flying by so quickly! In Miss Behlmaier's social studies class, students have been learning about the rise of American power during the Age of Imperialism and World War I. One of the fun activities students participated in was using a cipher to decode the Zimmerman Telegram. They raced to discover the hidden message that prompted America to join World War I. In the following unit, students can expect to learn about the Roaring 20s and the Great Depression.



Decryption Grid- Ex. Pairs of letters "EG" reads as 1st letter vertical, 2nd letter horizontal

	A	D	F	G	V	X
A	B	2	E	5	R	L
D	I	9	N	A	1	C
F	3	D	4	F	6	G
G	7	H	8	J	0	K
V	M	O	P	Q	S	T
X	U	V	W	X	Y	Z

THE ZIMMERMANN TELEGRAM

Line 1 JON ARY 1917
GG-DG-DF-XA-DG-AX-VA-DV-DD-DV-GA
Line 2 MEXICOTU
VA-AF-XG-DA-DX-VD-DX-DA-VX-VV
Line 3 TO VOPECSTHACDT
VX-VD-XD-VD-DF-AF-DX-GX-DD-DG-AV-FD-VX
Line 4 WE ARE NOT GOING TO OVERTHROW
XF-AF-DA-DF-VX-AF-FD-VX-VD-AX-DA-DF-VD-DF-VX-DD-AF-FG-DA-A
Line 5 RS TO OFFEEGRUABRUVRSSTRICT
V-VV-VX-VD-FG-FG-AF-AA-AV-XA-DG-AV-XA-DF-AV-FV-VX-AV-DA-DX-VX
Line 6 EDSU BMARINEWARFAREWEHD
AF-FD-VV-XA-AX-VA-DG-AV-DA-DF-AF-XF-DG-AV-FG-DG-AV-AF-XF-AF-DD-VD-V
Line 7 PAF VX-VD-DX-AF-AF-VF-VX-DD-AF-XA-DF-DA-VX-AF-FD-VV-VX-DG-VX-AF-VV
Line 8 KELTRALIFT HISATTEMPTIS
DF-AF-XA-VX-AV-DG-AX-DA-FG-VX-GD-VA-VV-DG-VX-VX-AF-VA-VF-VX-DA-VV-D
Line 9 NOTSUCCEFTFULWEPBOPESEA
F-VD-VX-VV-XA-DX-DX-AF-VV-VF-G-AX-AX-AF-AF-VF-AV-VD-VF-VD-VV-AF-DG
Line 10 NACLIANCEN THMEXICONAK
DF-DG-AX-AX-DA-DG-DF-DX-AF-XF-DA-VX-GD-VA-AF-XG-DA-DX-VD-VA-DG-GX-A
Line 11 EWABRIGGETHERMAKPEFACELO
F-XF-DG-AV-VX-VD-FX-AF-VX-DD-AF-AV-VA-DG-GX-AF-AF-DG-DX-AF-VX-VD
Line 12 STHEREGEVERWSTFINANCIA
FX-AF-VX-DD-AF-AV-FX-AF-DF-AF-XV-VD-XA-VV-FG-DA-DF-DG-DF-DX-DA-DG-A
Line 13 LSUPPORTANDANUNDERSTAND
X-VV-XA-VF-VF-VD-AV-VX-DG-DF-FD-DG-DF-XA-DF-AF-AV-VV-VX-DG-DF-FD
Line 14 INSONDORROBTHA
DA-DF-FX-VD-DF-VV-XA-AV-FG-DA-VX-VX-DD-DG-VX-VA-AF-XG-DA-DX-VD-D
Line 15 STORETAKELDSTERRITORY
A-VV-VX-VD-AV-AF-VX-DG-GX-AF-AX-VD-VV-VX-AF-AV-DA-VX-VD-AV-VV
Line 16 INTEXASNEWMEXICODANDARJA
DA-DF-FX-AF-XG-DD-VF-DF-AF-XF-VA-AF-XG-DA-DX-VD-DD-DF-FD-DG-AV-DA-X
Line 17 NATHESSETLFMEFTINDOLA
X-VD-DF-DG-VX-DD-AF-VV-AF-VX-AX-AF-VA-AF-DF-VX-DA-DF-FD-AF-VX-DG
Line 18 LITLFEETUO
DA-AX-DA-VV-AX-AF-FG-VX-VX-VD-XV-VD-XA
Line 19 ZIMMERMANN
XX-DA-VA-VA-AF-AV-VA-DD-DF-DF
Line 20 GERMANEMBRASSY
FX-AF-AV-VA-DG-DF-AF-VA-AX-DG-VV-VV-VV



ELA 7 – Mr. Burkhardt and Mrs. Renaud

In November, we finished reading *A Long Walk to Water*. Students closed out the unit by exploring how they can apply Salva's methods of overcoming hardship to their own lives. We then read and watched "All Summer in a Day," by Ray Bradbury, and examined the reasons we mistreat each other.

We are now beginning *Gathering Blue*, by Lois Lowry. This poignant novel tells the story of Kira, an orphan girl who doesn't fit in due to her crippled leg. Kira has strong and able hands, which she uses to make beautiful creations with fabric. Kira is given an important task, and as she works, she finds out more than she may have wanted about the history and workings of her community.

We go to the library to exchange books once a month, and homework is to always have something they are reading. There are regular reading checks.

Students can find their daily work in Schoology, even when absent from school. They can keep up on class reading by listening to audio of that day's chapter. They are responsible for work missed while they are absent. Late work is accepted, and corrections are encouraged on every assignment. These can be corrected multiple times if students wish.

Parents can keep up with what we're doing in class by going to the Alden district homepage, clicking on Schools, then Middle School, and then Teacher Sites and Team 7. Please feel free to email us with any questions. May your family have a safe and happy holiday season!

Ms.Siuta– Coding

Coding students used their newly learned skills to create Thanksgiving cards that were dropped off to Meals on Wheels in Alden. Each student took their time to design a card, print, and write a message on the inside of the card. Next, they will be creating ornaments that will be shared with Meals on Wheels. Students are very excited about this project and looking forward to sharing their skills to make someone happy around the holidays.

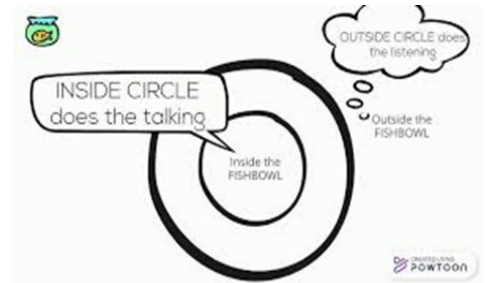
Students are also continuing to expand their knowledge of JAVA Script and have started to animate objects. Students are having fun making their objects move on the screen. There is a lot of code that goes into making things move on the screen and students are being very creative in making an animated holiday card. Using the loop, counter pattern, and math functions, they are applying math skills to create animated holiday cards to send to someone. The creativity they have shown is impressive! Ask to see their work, you will be amazed!



Science 7



Our 7th graders have been remarkably busy exploring forces! It is especially fun to discover how forces are applied to our lives. This unit requires students to test speed, velocity, and acceleration. They especially enjoyed “wall learning” to use formulas, apply their math calculations skills, and make conclusions. Coming up, students will be researching Newton’s Laws to create their own “Doodle Notes” pages using a combination of notes and graphics. We will round out the unit by working with Mrs. DiSalvo in the library researching “Seatbelts on Buses.” The project will conclude with a fishbowl class discussion using the Q-ball.



Math – 7th- Mrs. Pyc, Mrs. Renaud

We just wrapped up our unit on ratios and proportions and are heading into our percent unit! We will be engaging in a variety of different activities to gain a better understanding of real-life percent applications. Please encourage your child to help you find tax, tip, markup, discount, simple interest, commission, and percent of change/error as you encounter these applications in your daily life.

Please encourage your child to take advantage of daily class time given to work on weekly sheets and to make corrections when necessary to improve their grades.

Please continue to use the Remind texts for our daily team homework assignments and upcoming tests and projects. PowerSchool is an excellent tool to utilize to keep track of your child’s grades throughout the school year. Please feel free to contact us with any questions and/or concerns.

Happy Holidays to you and your family! Stay safe and healthy!

6th Grade News

Team 6 News

We appreciate the families who check PowerSchool and their email regularly. Power School is the best way to stay current with the assignments your child has completed and for gauging his/her/their success. Just a reminder that the weekly 6th grade assignments and homework list can be found by following this route: ACSD District Homepage →Middle School →Teacher Sites –>Team 6-1.

Students should be in the habit of checking their email daily, especially on days (s)he/they is absent. Work for science and social studies is posted to OneNote each day, and ELA uses TEAMS. Math assignments can be found in their workbook. Math Test/Quiz Review is available before each assessment and is through ClassLink on Savvas Easy Bridge.

Families are reminded that school-issued devices should be used appropriately for schoolwork as spelled out in the district's AUP which everyone signed at the beginning of the school year.

The Sixth-Grade faculty would like to wish everyone a happy, healthy holiday season! Thank you for all you do to support your child's education.

Math Lab ~ Mrs. Laraba, Mrs. Kerl & Mrs. Kopra

In Math Lab, the activities are designed to meet the needs of the students and to reinforce the topics in the 6th grade curriculum. We will continue using OneNote for all our activities and assignments. Please note, Math Lab uses a coded grading system vs. a traditional numerical system. *EXC* means your student has demonstrated a definite understanding of the concept, went above and beyond, turned it in on time, in other words has *exceeded* the expectations.

MET means your student has demonstrated an understanding of the concept and completed the assignment, in other words has *met* the expectations. *INC* means the assignment is blank or *incomplete* and he/she should finish it asap.

The students have been busy working on activities to reinforce the math they are learning in their on-team math class. We have had some fun working with GCF/LCM, fractions and decimals, ratios and rates. Next up is the percent unit!! We will continue to preview and review the topics they will be working on this year. We will also be throwing in some technology assistance throughout the year.



Bulldog Bulletin

Vol. # 3

November

Page 1



Guess What's Back? Back Again!



Did you hear that Holiday Follies is back? But wait, what is Holiday Follies? This month we sat down with Mrs. Laraba to learn about Holiday Follies and what it means for the students and staff at Alden Middle School. Here is what she had to say:

Q: What is Holiday Follies?

A: Holiday Follies is a team building competition filled with Minute to Win it type of games.

Q: Where did the idea of Holiday Follies come from?

A: Mrs. Snell, a former math teacher at AMS, used to do it at her old district and thought it would be a great activity to do here. We have been doing it ever since.



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Take a Mindful Minute

Mindfulness Coloring can be incredibly therapeutic for many. There are tons of free printables out there with positive affirmations and intricate designs for kids to get lost in.

Just like this one here



To see them all use this website:

<https://coloringnation.com/>



What do the people have to say?

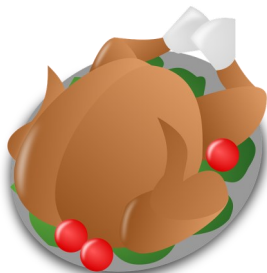
Question:

What is your favorite Thanksgiving food?

Results:

Students:

It was a tie!
20 votes each for
turkey and pumpkin pie.



Staff:

With 29 votes, stuffing is the
winner!!



Library News – Ms. DiSalvo

We are grateful for all the wonderful things happening in our library this season! Some fun activities that took place recently include a spooky read-aloud, lunch bunch gatherings, and a 2-sentence horror story contest. Students continue to visit the library during study hall and lunch periods and make use of brain games to practice important social/emotional skills. The library is always full of activity!

Additionally, all grade levels have visited the library for many different activities and projects:

6th grade ELA students took part in a Pokémon Go themed orientation scavenger hunt to learn more about the library. I also visited ELA classes to provide a mini-lesson on how to use our library catalog system (Destiny Discover). Students used the information they learned about our catalog to help them find historical fiction books for independent reading. 6th graders also visited the library for health class to learn all about personal hygiene and research good hygienic practices in order to make a book in Book Creator to share with younger students.

7th grade ELA students learned about horror, mystery, and thriller genres in time for Halloween. They selected books for independent reading. Using the results from the genre personality quiz from earlier in the year, students identified books to check out and wrote reviews for books they enjoyed.

8th grade social studies students in Mr. Partell's class visited to complete research on reformers and explore the Opposing Viewpoints database. Students led round table discussions on topics of their choosing. 8th graders in Envision classes spent time in the library learning more about the research process and good keyword development as a starting point for their passion project research.

Mrs. O'Neill's class visited the library for stories and crafts. Students listened to a Native American Good Morning Message to help celebrate Native American Heritage Month while they painted pumpkins for district families.

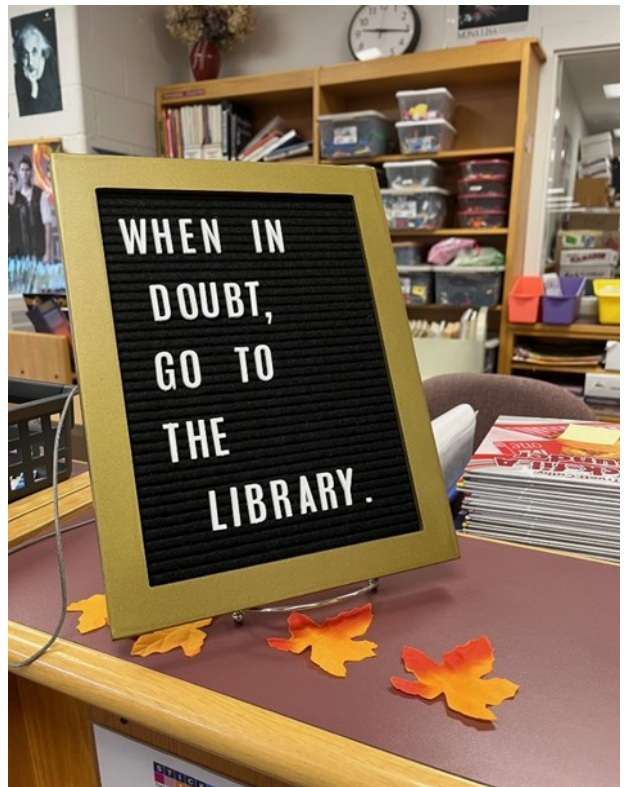
Upcoming events:

LEGO club

Silent Reading Society Lunch

Follow us on Instagram for updates: @aldenmslibrary

Happy reading!



MS International Club – advisor Mrs. Santiago The International Club meets once a month to explore cultures from around the world. The Club meets in the morning meeting time before homeroom, 7:45 am – 8:40 am. In October, we celebrated Day of the Dead by making sugar skull masks. In November we created explored the architecture of the Eiffel Tower in Paris France. We challenged the group to create the Eiffel Tower with pretzel sticks and marshmallows. In December we will learn more about the Scandinavian holiday Yule. In January we will celebrate the Chinese New Year. Do you know what the animal for 2024 is? Come and find out with us. The International Club is open to 6th, 7th and 8th grade students and it is a great way to learn about cultures from around the world.



Envision Experience – co-facilitators: Mrs. Santiago & Mrs. Laraba

Envision students have been busy! We met in August for our summer session and our book study “Pay it Forward.” During class we have explored the creation of quality presentation, public speaking, quality feedback, and made mini-pumpkin catapults. We began our passion projects by completing a heart map and moving the items to passion brackets. Students have finalized their topics and are creating their research questions and the projects driving question using the Question Formulation Technique (QFT). The students spend three days in the library with Mrs. DiSalvo to learn the skills of topic development and research tips and tricks. We will also be looking at the skills of grit, the power of yet, empathy and sympathy. We realize the making empathetic connections with others improves other areas of our lives. When we move into community connections part of the passion project, we will work on the life skills of email and phone etiquette, use of the calendar to manage time, as well as professional dress and behavior. Envision students are learning a lot!

A note to school.....

To: _____

From: _____
(parent's signature)

Date: _____

Student: _____

Check applicable box **Homeroom Number** _____

☐ is late due to _____

☐ will be picked up by _____
at _____ AM/PM.

☐ will be going home with _____

address _____

☐ is returning to school after an absence of _____
days, due to _____

☐ (other) _____

A note to school.....

To: _____

From: _____
(parent's signature)

Date: _____

Student: _____

Check applicable box **Homeroom Number** _____

☐ is late due to _____

☐ will be picked up by _____
at _____ AM/PM.

☐ will be going home with _____

address _____

☐ is returning to school after an absence of _____
days, due to _____

☐ (other) _____

