

# ALDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

## March 2024



Dear Alden Middle School Families:

It is hard to believe that spring is right around the corner. The school year is going by so fast. As we close in on some warmer temperatures, our thoughts begin to focus on the end of year events. Please reference this edition of our newsletter and be sure to mark your calendar with the many important upcoming activities.

As part of our continued efforts to address and prevent bullying and promote positive character, we continue to participate in the school wide character education initiative. For the past few months, teachers have been incorporating activities around having a positive feeling in their classroom and nominating "Students of the Month" who exemplified those traits. The week of February 12<sup>th</sup>, we celebrated kindness and caring week at Alden Middle School. In conjunction with the February trait of "Kindness," we encouraged staff and students to participate in showing random acts of kindness throughout the week.

March is "Music in our Schools" month at Alden Middle School. On March 5<sup>th</sup>, middle school band students joined forces with the high school and intermediate school band students to have a combined concert. This was an awesome night. Thank you to Mrs. Nye, Mrs. Nieman, Mr. Larrabee, and all the students for their hard work and time practicing. From February 1<sup>st</sup> through February 3<sup>rd</sup>, the students performed the Middle School musical "Beauty and the Beast Jr". Kudos to Mrs. Tryka, Mrs. Urso, Miss Lerner, and the students for all their hard work and time to make the performance great.

Our commitment is to provide a safe environment for our students every day. During the week of April 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Middle School will take part in the ACSD Safety Week. Throughout the week, staff and students will be presented with different situations which will require them to go into one of our emergency preparedness procedures. We regularly conduct these drills so in the event that an emergency does happen, our staff will be ready to put our emergency plans in place to ensure that all the students are safe. To go along with this year's safety week will be NYS mandated lesson related to personal safety and Erin's Law. These lessons are designed to teach students how to seek out trusted adults if they feel they are in an unsafe situation. They will be conducted at the end of June during our exam week.

Alden Middle School students will take the New York State Assessment in both English Language Arts and Mathematics. The English Language Arts assessment will be administered April 15<sup>th</sup> and April 16<sup>th</sup>. The Mathematics assessment will be administered May 7<sup>th</sup> and May 8<sup>th</sup>. We value the role that multiple assessment measures play in informing quality instruction. These assessments are one way the district is able to determine student understanding of grade level expectations and serves as a tool to help us evaluate our programs and curriculum. We encourage all students to be here on time, get a good night sleep, eat a healthy breakfast, and try their best during the assessments.

Soon we will be experiencing warmer weather, it is important that your child is dressed appropriately for school on a daily basis. The safety and security of the students at Alden Middle School are a main priority. Please refer to page 9 in the Alden Middle School Student Handbook for additional information regarding our dress code.

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](http://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. In an effort 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.

Sincerely,

Steve Smith  
Middle School Principal

## March

3/1– No School  
3/5– Band –O-Rama 7 pm HS Gym  
3/8– Fun Night  
3/8– 25 Week Interim reports posted to PP  
3/29– 4/8- Spring Recess



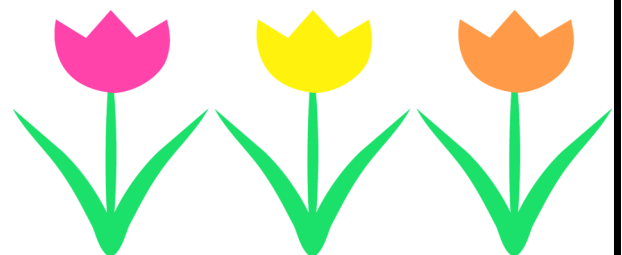
## April

4/15– 3rd Marking period ends  
4/15–4/16 ELA Assessments  
4/22-4/26– District Wide Safety Week  
4/24 - 4/26– 8th Grade Washington Trip



## May

5/2– MS NJHS Induction Ceremony 7pm MS Aud  
5/7-5/8- Math Assessments  
5/14- Science Assessment—Grades 8th grade only  
5/14– Spring Band & Jazz Concert– 7pm HS Aud  
5/16– MS Spring Chorus Concert 7pm– HS Aud  
5/17–Exploratory Reports posted to PP  
5/21– Annual Budget Vote– HS Aud  
5/21- MS Chicken BBQ– 7th grade fundraiser  
5/22-5/24– MS Coffee House Days  
5/23– 35 week interim grades posted on PP  
5/27– NO SCHOOL– Memorial Day





This year the Guidance Department has paired up with the Mental Health Advocates of WNY (MHAWNY) to focus on living a mentally health life. Last month, in 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade health class MHAWNY presented on the importance of emotions and feelings with a focus on coping skills and strategies. Students also had the opportunity to participate in the Mental Health Fair put on by MHAWNY during PE classes. Students were able to explore and experiment with numerous Social Emotional games, activities and/or sensory crafts to help them maintain a healthy life both physically and mentally.

Alden Middle School also participated in Kindness Week- February 12<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>. With the help of our Middle School Kindness Club members, students were shown Random Acts of Kindness, had the opportunity to share kind words with others, and show their love for their school as well as themselves by focusing on the importance of self-care and kindness.



**Health Office News**  
Meghan Snyder, RN  
Msnyder@aldenschools.org  
IS / MS Nurse (716)937-9116 ext. 3118  
Fax: (716)937-3376

**Parents of Current 5<sup>th</sup> grade students who will be entering 6<sup>th</sup> grade in 2024:**

Students that are 11 years old and going into 6<sup>th</sup> grade are required to receive and provide documentation of a Tdap vaccine. Tdap may be received after 10 years of age.

**Parents of Current 6<sup>th</sup> grade students who will be entering 7<sup>th</sup> grade in 2024:**

7<sup>th</sup> graders are required to receive and provide documentation of a meningococcal conjugate vaccine.

**NYS Mandated Physicals:**

NYS Education Law requires that students have a Health Appraisal on file in the health office if they are **entering grades Pre-K, K, 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11**, or if they are a new student entering the district. A physical that was on September 5, 2023, or after that date is valid for the 2024-2025 school year. **Please ensure you or your doctor's office sends a copy of the NYS Health Examination Form to the school.** Dental health certificates are requested but not required for students entering grades K, 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11.

Any student participating in a sport must have a current physical within 1 calendar year of the start of the sport.



## 8th Grade News

### Algebra– Mrs. Kerl

Algebra students are beginning a unit on Quadratic Equations and then followed by a unit on Graphing Parabolas. These are both challenging and interesting units. Please continue to encourage your child to complete corrections on their weekly sheets. They are handed out on Fridays and 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. Have a great Spring Recess!

Mrs. Kerl: [pkeryl@aldenschools.org](mailto:pkeryl@aldenschools.org) 937-9116 ext. 2343.



**Social Studies—Miss Behlmaier’s** students have been learning about World War II. Throughout the unit, we have discussed the causes of the war, life on the American home front, turning points of the war, and effects of the war. Some activities students participated in included: using the Constitution to identify individual rights that were violated in Japanese Internment camps, participating in a debate about the use of nuclear weapons, and analyzing primary sources from survivors of the Holocaust.

We are also exceptionally honored to be welcoming a guest speaker who will be coming to our classes to discuss her relatives’ experiences as Holocaust survivors. This unique learning opportunity will connect our classroom lessons with the diverse personal experiences of people in our Buffalo community and encourage students to show empathy for the experience of others.

In the coming units, students will be learning about the Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement.



### Math – Mrs. Stotz and Mrs. Smith



Math 8 students have continued to learn about how numerical relationships are represented mathematically and graphically. Students have just completed learning how to interpret scatter plots that are used to represent relationships between 2 sets of data. Data literacy is an important life skill, just like learning to read words and sentences. Students looked for trends and made predictions when the information was presented as a graph.

Next, our learning will be shifting to geometry. Students will learn how to transform figures on the coordinate plane, how to calculate volume of cylinders, cones, and spheres, and how to use Pythagorean Theorem to find side lengths on a triangle.

Most weeks, students are assigned a weekly sheet in their One Note Class Notebook. Students have time in class to work on the problems, ask questions, and get feedback. These sheets are distributed on Monday and are due on Friday. Paper copies are available for those students who prefer to work with paper and pencil.

Students and parents may reach Mrs. Stotz for questions using email: [hstotz@aldenschools.org](mailto:hstotz@aldenschools.org). Mrs. Smith may also be reached at [ksmith@aldenschools.org](mailto:ksmith@aldenschools.org).

### Mrs. Santiago - Spanish 8

Spanish 8 students have worked hard to complete: house, home, food, meals, restaurant, and health & wellness. We have started chapter 8 - the shopping chapter! We are learning the vocabulary of clothing, stores, and the key conversations necessary to buy those souvenirs when you are on vacation! We will be learning how to use the past tense verbs to tell where we went, what we bought and how much we spent. Our next chapter will be the celebrations chapter – fiesta time!!



**SPRING BREAK**  
**LOADING**

.Math – 7<sup>th</sup> grade  
Mrs. Pyc, Mrs. Renaud

We are on quite the algebra adventure. Please see the overview for Topics 4 and 5.

## TOPIC 4

### Generate Equivalent Expressions

In this topic, students work with algebraic expressions, which are mathematical expressions with at least one variable (such as  $4x$  or  $t - 5$ ). They use properties of operations to write and analyze expressions, focusing on the Distributive Property.

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### CONNECT THE MATH

Numerical expressions are used when all parts of the expression are known. Algebraic expressions are used when part of the expression is unknown or can change.

Suppose a dog-walker earns \$15 for each dog walked. The expression  $15d$  represents the amount of money the dog-walker earns for walking  $d$  dogs. When the dog-walker walks 11 dogs, the value of  $15d$  is 165, so the dog-walker earns \$165.

Look for opportunities to discuss situations in which something is unknown or may vary. What part of the situation would be represented by a variable? What algebraic expression could describe the situation?

## TOPIC 5

### Solve Problems Using Equations and Inequalities

In this topic, students write and solve equations and inequalities to model real-world situations.

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### CONNECT THE MATH

Just as many real-world situations can be modeled by expressions, many real-world problems can be modeled by equations or inequalities. An *equation* is used to model a problem for which there is one solution. An *inequality* is used to model a problem for which there is more than one solution.

Suppose a bowling alley charges \$4.75 per game plus \$4.80 to rent shoes. The equation  $4.75g + 4.8 = 28.55$  models the situation where  $g$  represents the number of games bowled and the total charge is \$28.55. There is only one solution, 5 games, to this equation. The inequality  $4.75g + 4.8 < 30$  models the situation when the total budget must be less than \$30. There is more than one solution: you could bowl 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 games. The cost for 6 or more games is more than \$30.

Topics 6 and 7 will bring us to the NYS Math Test which will be on May 7 & 8.

## TOPIC 6

### Represent and Interpret Data

In this topic, students extend their understanding of data and data analysis. They analyze both numerical and categorical data sets and determine the appropriate way to display a data set.

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### CONNECT THE MATH

The world is full of data, much of it shared on a daily basis. This topic gives students tools with which to analyze and interpret some of that information. This is particularly important because data can be misused and misrepresented.

When information is shared visually, as in a graph, it can be easier to interpret than when it is shared as a list. A list of individual pieces of data gives very specific information, while a graph displays more general information. Measures of center (averages) and variability (ranges) give information about the data set as a whole.

Look for data displays in media to discuss with your family.

## TOPIC 7

### Probability

In this topic, students explore probability. They determine the likelihood of an event and calculate both theoretical and experimental probability. They learn that as an experiment is repeated, its experimental probability approaches its theoretical probability.

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### CONNECT THE MATH

People make decisions every day based on how likely an event is to happen. You might take an umbrella when rain is likely. You might allow more travel time to get to an appointment during rush hour.

*Probability* is a numerical measure of likelihood. If it's more likely to be sunny than cloudy, being sunny has a higher probability than being cloudy has.

Estimate the probabilities of events with your student: How likely are the outcomes in the next turn of a game with a spinner or dice? Will the bus be on time tomorrow? Will you complete a puzzle in less than three hours? What will the next pitch thrown in a game be? How likely is it that all the traffic lights will be green on the way to the supermarket?

We will be celebrating Pi Day on March 14. Students will discover the relationship between the circumference and diameter of circles. Ask your child about the *Dragon of Pi* and what they discovered about pi when you eat circular food.

Please encourage your child to make corrections on weekly sheets consistently to improve their grades. Remind text alerts and PowerSchool will continue to serve as excellent tools to keep track of your child's assignments and grades throughout the rest of the school year. Please feel free to contact us with any questions and/or concerns.

Email: [mpyc@aldenschools.org](mailto:mpyc@aldenschools.org)

HAPPY SPRING!



**ELA 7 – Mr. Burkhardt and Mrs. Renaud**

We just finished reading Gathering Blue, by Lois Lowry. After completing the book, students wrote alternate endings and filmed them in Flip. We enjoyed watching and commenting on each other's videos.

When we return from February break, we will begin our court case. The case, titled "Bus Ride," is based on a fictional scenario where a student faces all kinds of obstacles as he tries to get to his bus at dismissal time. Once he does arrive, the situation goes from bad to worse. Students will serve on legal teams and will defend their clients in this case. This will include examining evidence and court documentation, writing and presenting statements, as well as lively cross examination on our court dates.

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

Students can find their daily work in Schoology, even when absent from school. 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.

**Coding– Mrs. Siuta**

It is a new semester and a new group of 7<sup>th</sup> graders have started Coding 7. It has only been a few weeks, and students are off and coding using block code and JavaScript. Students were introduced to coding basic shapes and colors. They then learned how to program the computer to create images on the screen using those basic shapes and colors. Currently, students are working on creating their own image scenes. Once they are done creating their scenes, they will learn how to animate their scenes with various algorithms. This introduces students to how animation and games work. Ask your child to see their work. They are doing a fantastic job!

## Science 7- Mrs. Gauthier & Mrs. Renaud

We have been studying minerals, rocks, and the Earth since January. Students were able to identify different types of minerals and understand how igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary rocks form and what they look like. We are now studying how the Earth is made up of layers and the role those layers will play in producing Earthquakes and Volcanoes. We have a very important event happening on April 8<sup>th</sup> here in Buffalo with the rare event of a total solar eclipse. For a total solar eclipse to happen the Sun, Moon, and Earth must be lined up perfectly. The moon will move into the path of the sun blocking all its visible light, turning day to night. Many changes will happen: the temperature will drop, streetlights may come on, and animals may go quiet. The most spectacular phenomenon is that using the ISO approved eye protection we will be able to see the Sun's Corona.

Alden Central will be sending home solar eclipse glasses with each of its students. Mrs. Moran's class in the High School will be doing presentations to the Primary and Intermediate students explaining safety and teaching about the solar eclipse. The middle school teachers will also be discussing the solar eclipse, in 7<sup>th</sup> grade we will be researching and creating a "Flip-Grid" newscast.

### **Solar Eclipse Safety:**

Do not look directly at the sun without solar glasses.

Do not look through unfiltered camera, telescope, or binocular lenses with or without your solar glasses.

Inspect your glasses before use. Do not use the glasses if they are damaged in any way.



**Start: 2:07 PM**

**Totality 3:15 PM**



Buffalo Museum of Science information page

## 6th Grade News

### Ms. Kopra's Math Classes

In math, students are beginning to use algebra to write and solve equations. Our interactive notebooks provide examples and notes to help students complete assignments and study for tests and quizzes. Schoology is updated each day with daily assignments for absent students and our team website is updated each week with graded weekly assignment due dates. These weekly assignments can also be found and completed on Schoology.

Fast approaching is our math state assessment in April. Weekly assignments provide review and practice of the math skills the students have learned throughout the year. Keeping up on these assignments, turning them in early, and making corrections are the best ways to ensure success! We also use calculators daily in class. Please make sure your student's supplies are stocked with pencils and a calculator.

### Mr. Fazio's Social Studies Classes

Students are currently learning about Greece. Students began the unit by learning that Greece's geography and its nearness to the sea strongly influenced the development of trade and the growth of city-states. They then moved onto understanding that the people of Athens tried many different forms of government before creating a democracy. This unit will end with students learning ancient Greeks created great myths and works of literature that influence the way we speak and write today.

### Mrs. McMullen's and Mrs. Woitaszek's ELA Classes

Classes recently completed unit 5: *Making Inferences in Fiction, Poetry, and Drama* in our Collaborative Classroom Reading Series. During this unit students visualize and make inferences to understand the narrative text, poetry, and drama, and they continue to ask questions and analyze narrative text structures. *Collaborative Classroom* teaches students to become respectful, caring members of a learning community who take responsibility for their own learning.

Students should have all Collaborative Classroom vocabulary definition handouts in their red folders and be reviewing them regularly. Vocabulary assessments occur at the end of each story/unit, and students may expect random cumulative assessments sprinkled throughout 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> quarters. ALL vocabulary terms and the vocabulary lists distributed in future units, will be part of the ELA final exam in June.

In addition to Collaborative Classroom, students continue to use *SCOPE Magazine* to meet curriculum requirements of NYS's Next Gen. Learning Standards. This magazine contains high interest articles along with activities that involve examining text structures, finding central claim/idea, identifying supporting evidence, and making inferences.

The students are involved in writing tasks that address each of these topics in preparation for the New York State ELAs scheduled for April 15 & 16. Students are reminded to get plenty of rest and eat a healthy breakfast these mornings to ensure optimal performance. Students must arrive at school on time with their devices fully charged both of these days. They will be taking these tests online.

## Mr. Matecki's Science Classes

In science, the students just completed a unit on Magnetism and Electricity. We first determined where the magnetic field of a magnet was, and then the students experimented with the properties of temporary and permanent magnets. During the electricity portion of the unit, the students were able to demonstrate the law of charges, distinguish between conductors and insulators, and create series and parallel circuits. We are currently learning about the relationship between Earth, sun, and moon. Students will investigate what causes Earth's seasons as well as the phases of the moon.



March 10 2024

## Club News

MS International Club – advisor Mrs. Santiago

Spanish Club is held in the mornings and is open to all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. We are exploring holidays around the world. In February we learned about the Chinese / Lunar New Year – The Year of the Dragon. In March we are going to explore Holi. The high school international trip is to Italy in February 2025. We hope to see our middle school students continue with Spanish in the high school and travel on the next trip in the spring of 2027.



## Library – Ms. DiSalvo

There is never a dull moment in the library! Here are some highlights from the winter months this year:

**6<sup>th</sup> grade students** in Mrs. McMullen and Mrs. Woitaszek's ELA classes experienced a poetry "book buffet" to sample our poetry collection and select books to check out. Many students also went on a "blind date with a book" during the month of February. 6<sup>th</sup> graders also had the opportunity to visit the library during their lunches for "lunch bunch" days.

**7<sup>th</sup> grade students** in Mrs. Gauthier and Mrs. Renaud's science classes worked on bus safety research as a culminating activity for their forces unit. The library hosted Alden's Transportation Supervisor, Mrs. Heckathorn, as she shared information about bus safety and students asked questions to prepare for a fishbowl activity. Mr. Burkhardt's ELA classes visited the library several times for book selection for independent reading and to prepare for a book trailer project this spring. Mrs. Kaderli's Social Studies classes took part in a three-part series of lessons designed to help them become "digital detectives" when looking at online content and evaluating sources.

**8<sup>th</sup> grade students** in Mrs. Gembka's ELA classes visited the library to research court cases as part of their Outsiders project. Mrs. Pelitera and Mrs. Tryka's support and AIS classes created Outsiders character posters in the library during a stations activity. Living Environment students in Mr. Kasper's classes researched and presented scientific posters about enzymes. Students in Mr. Casillo's health classes completed research projects about diseases.

**Mrs. O'Neill's students** visited the library for a variety of activities including holiday ornament painting and endangered species research.

### Other winter activities:

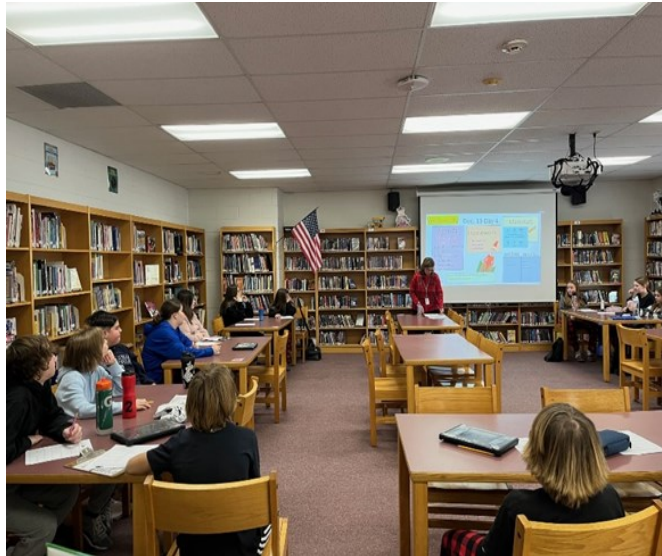
- Silent Reading Society Lunch
- LEGO Club Meeting
- Battle of the Books Competition Title Reveal
- Matching Contest – Match Teachers & Books

### Upcoming events:

- Eclipse project (7<sup>th</sup> grade science)
- Greek Gods Trading Cards (6<sup>th</sup> grade social studies)
- LEGO club
- Battle of the Books multi-district competition

Check out new e-books and audiobooks on [Sora](#)! Also look for more library news on the Middle School Library website.





# 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) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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☐ (other) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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