

6th Grade Communications

Miss Blanshine's Homeroom

October 2013



Dear Parents / Guardians,

Well, September has come and gone already! We are well on our way to a fabulous school year. I am enjoying getting to know each student and the special gifts each one brings to our classroom. Our first month of school has gone by very quickly. We've used this time to establish work habits and study habits to help us be successful throughout the year. 6th grade can be quite a bit more demanding than previous years and it does take some time for students to become accustomed to the rigors of our curriculum. They need to spend time daily reviewing notes taken during the day in each subject in order to be well prepared for tests and quizzes. I cannot stress enough the importance of checking in with your child on a regular basis to simply ask, "What did you learn today?" Use the binder as a tool to facilitate communication between you and your child. Ask him or her to explain notes to you. It is an excellent way to help them review and for you to know more about what they are learning. The investment of your time will pay off for them in the end!

Parent/Teacher Conferences

During curriculum night, many people signed up for Parent/Teacher conferences on November 25th – November 27th. I will send reminders home with your child to confirm the date and time. For those of you who did not select a time and date, I will be circulating the conference sign-up this month. When it comes to you, please schedule a time or write me a separate note explaining when you could come for a conference. I will try to be as accommodating as possible. Please remember to send the schedule back to school the following day!

What Have We Been Reading?

Already this year we have worked with historical fiction and realistic fiction through excerpts from "Old Yeller" and "Mother Fletcher's Gift". Students have been reviewing and learning more about the concepts of character, setting, fact vs. opinion, as well as expanding their vocabulary. Each student keeps a journal where responses to literature, new concepts, and vocabulary are kept. There may be times when they will be asked to do re-reading at home and write in their journals. This is to aide in comprehension, thinking skills, and to prepare them for tests.

Also, please remind your student to be writing in their home reading journal once a week. The journal is due the first school day of every month. I enjoy reading up on what they have been reading at home!

Assignment Books

After a month of daily signing, I am ready to release several students from the need to get daily parent signatures in their assignment books. If I've spoken with your child, you can feel free to stop signing the book except on Thursdays (I will check on Fridays). Also please continue to check the TEAM sheet weekly. If I see that your child is forgetting homework assignments, we will have to return to the daily signature pattern. I do appreciate your help in getting the students off to a good start by signing daily throughout the first month! Please feel free to continue looking at the book daily and using it as a communication tool.



Please return this portion of the newsletter to Miss Blanshine

Student Name _____

I have received this information newsletter.

Parent Signature _____

Contacting Teachers

All teachers can be contacted here at school between 8:00 a.m. and 3:45 p.m. Dial the school number, 656-2068 and then the teacher's extension. Or dial 0 to leave a message with Mrs. Parker or see if we are available.

The best method for contacting teachers is e-mail. While we may not be able to answer the phone, many times we can get back to you much more quickly with an e-mail.

Miss Blanshine: Communication Skills and Science/ Social Studies ext. 4107

alison_blanshine@cvsd.k12.pa.us

Mrs. Shetter: Writing ext. 4109

dori_shetter@cvsd.k12.pa.us

Mrs. Schader: Math ext. 4111

jill_schnader@cvsd.pa.us

Mrs. Weaver

marlene_weaver@cvsd.k12.pa.us

Mrs. Leaman: Learning Support

doris_leaman@cvsd.k12.pa.us

Lunch Tickets

Just a reminder that lunch tickets can be purchased through the cafeteria. If lost lunch money is a problem, you can send a check for lunches to school with your child. This eliminates the hassle of remembering every morning.

Curriculum News

Math: We just started working on chapter 2 which is multiplying and dividing decimals. This is very difficult chapter for a lot of students. You can help your child prepare for this test by reviewing the division process on a daily basis. We will continue to have a daily review quiz every week. The students have been practicing their facts using www.aracademicskillbuilders.com. This is a fun way to practice both multiplication and division facts.

Social Studies: We opened the year by taking a look at the five themes of geography: location, regions, place, movement, and human-environment interaction. Students are making a lot of connections between the concepts we are learning and the earth around us. We also continue to make connections to what we know about earth and its structure to help with new concepts. The students have been "synergizing" like crazy while they put together skits or newspapers that cover what they have learned about volcanoes and earthquakes. I have been impressed with their teamwork and creativity as they work on this first small group research project.

Writing: Writing: Our writing routine is up and running. During September, our main focus during workshop was getting our ideas flowing and we explored many different ways to find ideas for writing. We also began our discussion of conferencing by looking for specific ways to praise and question a piece of writing. These are the first two important steps to revising writing to make it better. I've been very impressed with the enthusiasm students are embracing the ideas of writing workshop. There are so many pieces decorating the walls of the room already!

This coming month, we will examine the idea of responding to prompted writing and how to improve our writing scores on district and state writing assessments. Students will also begin moving from journals to finished pieces of writing for portfolios. In order to do this, students will need to follow the process of drafting, revising their work, editing, and finally deciding on a published forum. Our goal will be for students to have several finished writing pieces in their portfolios by parent/teacher conference time.

In October, I'll introduce one of our main technology tools, GoogleDocs. Students are welcome to access this tool at home as well as here at school. Please know that we have discussed internet safety, etiquette, and cyber-bullying. While the students now know what is acceptable behavior, we adults still need to monitor online activities to be sure they apply that knowledge. For information about internet safety, you might want to check out the technology page of my wiki. <http://grade6shetter.wiki.cvsd.k12.pa.us> Your child may have mentioned several additional adults when they talk about writing class. You may hear your child mention Mr. Brooks or Mrs. Booth, both of whom provide instructional support. We are very fortunate to have so much support for our writing program!

Important Dates for Your Calendar

Please make note of the following dates:

Wednesday, October 9th Picture Day - Bring your smile ☺

Monday, October 14th **No School** (Teacher Professional Ed. Day)

Tuesday, October 15th **No School** (Teacher Professional Ed. Day)

Wednesday, October 23rd Early Dismissal 1:15

Friday, October 25th 6th Grade Field Trip – Lancaster Science Factory (9:30 -12:30)

Week of October 28th Red Ribbon Week

Character Trait of the Month – Respect

Respect is esteem for or a sense of the worth or excellence of a person.