



West's Weekly

FEBRUARY 22, 2017

Wednesday Newsletter

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Class Highlight: Middle School Science

An update from Mr. Biega...

Our **Sixth Grade Earth Science** scholars are finishing up their research into the various climate zones that exist throughout the world. Students have taken temperature and precipitation data and created climate charts that can be used to uniquely determine the climate zone of a given location. After mastering the differences between six major climate zones, students have begun to research climate change using NASA's global climate change website to research five key indicators (vital signs) of Earth's climate health.

Parents: Your Sixth Grade scholars should be able to describe at least five variables that determine a location's climate. Students should be able to differentiate between continental and marine climates by explaining the differences in temperature change over the year. In addition, students should be able to describe the five climate-change indicators and why they are good predictive causes or results of climate change.

The **Seventh Grade Life Science** scholars have been examining various living organism using the theory of Evolution to explain the diversity of life on Earth. Students have created models to explain how insects can

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Read Across America Week

We are so excited to celebrate our love of reading! Here are all the details:

Monday, February 27	Tuesday, February 28	Wednesday, March 1	Thursday, March 2
<p>Wear a shirt you can read</p>	<p>Dr. Seuss Day!</p> <p>You can:</p> <p>wear wacky socks dress like a twin</p> <p>wear a hat wear green</p>	<p>Book Character Day</p> <p>Dress as your favorite book character and bring the book with you!</p>	<p>PIJAMA Day</p> <p>KEEP CALM AND PUT YOUR PYJAMAS ON</p>

In addition, West scholars will **Drop Everything and Read (DEAR)** for **19,500 minutes** in unison from Monday, February 27 through Thursday, March 2. During DEAR, our scholars will raise funds for much-needed books and technology enhancements for our school library. We welcome donations of any amount. **Donations may be made online at www.westschool.org/DEAR.**

Also, on **Thursday**, we will host **Family Reading Night at 5:30 pm**. We are asking for families/classes to donate fruits and toppings for the IHOP pancake bar:

- Pre-K3 and Pre-K4 – blueberries
- Kindergarten and First Grade – strawberries
- Second and Third grades – bananas
- Fourth through Eighth grades – whipped cream or chocolate chips

Last but not least, we still need volunteers to help with this year's **Book Fair**. Even if you can work only part of a shift, please consider helping out! **Volunteers should sign up at www.westschool.org/bookfairsignup.**



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Growth Mindset at Home

A message from Ms. Carpenter...

What daily messages are we sending our children? Every word and action sends a message about how children are to think about themselves. We must understand that they always are watching, listening and learning.

Carol Dweck, the author of *Mindset: The New Psychology for Success*, teaches that having a growth mindset means that “our basic qualities are things we cultivate through our efforts and that everyone can change and grow through application and experience.” We praise our children when they do well, and we want them to know that they are intelligent and loved. But, praising children for their intelligence, innate talent or “cleverness” rather than their effort could lead to the belief, “If I don’t learn something quickly, then I’m not smart.” Instead, we need to praise our scholars’ efforts and the strategies they use to achieve success. The message we also want to send is to believe in themselves; hard work and effort will help them reach their full potential.

As the school year progresses, scholars may be facing more challenging math problems, more complex texts and more rigorous assignments. Helping shape your children’s mindset and belief that mistakes are how we learn will help them approach challenges with excitement, enthusiasm and a desire to learn. As you support them at home with their continued learning, consider the messages that are being sent and try using the following strategies.

Have daily learning discussions:

What did you learn?
 What mistakes taught you something?
 At what did you try hard?
 What challenged you?
 What risks did you take in your classroom?
 Tell me a question you asked.
 How did you contribute to your class community?
 What did you do to help someone else?
 How did you participate?
 How did you show bravery today?

Stop saying, “You’re so smart,” and start saying:

You never gave up, even when it was hard.
 You have really improved on....
 I love how you took ownership of that!
 It was brave of you to...
 I know I can trust you because....
 I am so proud that you made that choice.
 It is nice of you to value other people’s opinions.
 What a creative way to solve that problem!
 I can tell you tried your very best because....

Important Reminders...

- **Thursday, February 23**—Third Grade APTT Meeting (8 AM) and Pre-K4 APTT Meeting (5:30 PM)
- **Friday, February 24**—Black History Month Celebration (2:15 PM)
- **Friday, March 3**—Last day of Parent-Teacher Conferences/No school for students

Middle School Science *(continued)*

become resistant to pesticides through the mechanisms of Natural Selection. They also have simulated the Artificial Selection of various varieties of chili peppers to select a pepper that is not only hot to taste but maximizes the amount of fruit it produces over the course of multiple generations.

Parents: Students should be able to explain the three types of selection mechanisms that can be used to explain the diversity of life that we see today. Students also should be able to describe the causes of genetic diversity within a species and why highly diverse populations are better adapted to change vs. populations with low genetic variation.

In **Eighth Grade Physical Science**, our scholars have been making huge strides in understanding the properties of elements in the periodic table. Students first investigated how to use the periodic table to determine the number of protons, electrons and neutrons in an atom of a particular element. To master this, clay models were created of the nucleus and electron cloud of the first 18 elements. Students have been able to classify elements in their families and explain why elements in families have similar properties by their location on the periodic table and physical atomic structure. Students then applied this knowledge to examine why some elements will or will not bond with each other. These students now can write chemical formulas of two elements that can react with each other based on their chemical properties.

Parents: Ask your scholars how many valance electrons an element of the periodic table has. Have your scholars distinguish between ionic and covalent bonds. Finally, ask them to create a sketch of any of the first 18 elements on the periodic table and then do a Google search to see if they are correct.