

Algonquin Middle School

September/October 2016

AMS POST



Algonquin Middle School Mission Statement

Algonquin Middle School will provide a safe, respectful, and positive learning environment that engages all students, parents, staff, and community members. We will facilitate self-directed learning and responsible citizenship through the use of a variety of strategies designed to meet the needs of all learners.



Please remember that there is **No Parking** in front of the school in the fire lane. If you are stopping to drop off something to your student or to pick up your student, please park in the visitor parking on the east side of the parking lot. Thank you for your cooperation.

Parents when you send checks to the school, please remember to include your phone number on the check.



Andrew Reinke, Principal andrew.reinke@d300.org

Erik Jensen, Assistant Principal erik.jensen@d300.org

2016-2017 Late Start Dates

Friday, Sept. 2nd
Friday, Sept. 23rd
Friday, Oct. 7th
Monday, Oct. 31st
Friday, Dec. 9th
Friday, Feb. 17th
Thursday, March 2nd
Thursday, April 18th
Friday, April 28th
Friday, May 12th

AMS Phone Number:
847-532-7100

AMS Home Page:
<http://ams.d300.org/>



Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (P.B.I.S.)

What is it?

- P.B.I.S is an all school program designed to promote positive and respectful behavior in the classroom as well as other environments related to school (bus, cafeteria, gym, hallway, etc.). No matter where you are, as a community member of AMS, we...
Always **Model & Show RESPECT!**

Are your students coming home with little pieces of papers signed by teachers? Do they have a small collection of them already? They have probably earned **ROLE Cards!**

What are they and why do we use them?

They are small slips of paper handed out by teachers and staff to recognize our outstanding students. They may earn these cards to be cashed in later for celebrations and rewards.

They may earn cards which are gold or purple from substitute teachers, or blue ones from administrators. Students will continue to have opportunities to use their role cards throughout the year, and can be used until they move onto high school. So make sure they have their names on them, don't lose any, and keep earning them!



The image shows a template for a ROLE Card from Algonquin Middle School. At the top, it says "Algonquin Middle School" in red. Below that is a red line drawing of a Native American person's head wearing a feathered headdress. To the left of the drawing are three lines for "Student:", "Staff:", and "Date:". Below the drawing, it says "Be a ROLE model." in red, followed by "Respect Our Learning Environment" in red, and "Save this and redeem for something later!" in a smaller font.

Remember, we care about our students and want them to have a safe and enjoyable time at AMS. Parents who wish to volunteer for school incentives and/or celebrations, contribute ideas by joining our Universal Team (meetings in the morning once a month from 8am-8:45am), or assist in any way can feel free to contact the school coaches:

Michelle Merk – michelle.merk@d300.org or Nancy Grove – nancy.grove@d300.org

Avid

Thank you to all who attended the contract signing on August 30th and stayed to support our Volleyball team. It was a pleasure to see/meet you!

The sixth grade AVID classes started the year off by learning what AVID is! Students are learning to ask good questions, practicing presentation skills, focusing on organization, reflect on learning weekly, and take responsibility for their learning. Students check their grades and set goals for ways to improve in any classes they may need to do so.

Writing, organizing, and reading will continue to be areas of focus as well as working to become an AVID family.

Thank you to Mrs. Vehrs for leading a team building activity.

Beginning September 6th, the AVID tutors will be joining us in preparing us to be successful in the Tutorials held Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The AVID classes will be heading to University of Wisconsin Madison on October 5th to preview parts of college life. More information will be sent home in the coming weeks.

We are looking forward to continuing to learn and grow as an AVID family.



Exploratory

Students will have one exploratory class per quarter, rotating approximately every nine weeks.

For all grade levels, rotations include (in no specific order):

- Study Skills Workshop (All Teachers)
- Art (Ms. Sitko)
- Digital Literacy (Mrs. Merk)
- Computer Essentials (Mrs. Nelson)

Students who are enrolled in 6th/7th/8th grade AVID or 7th/8th grade Spanish do not have Exploratory classes in their schedule.

Here are a few good facts to know:

- Students in Exploratory classes have limited homework assignments. Typically, students finish their work during class. Please contact the current teacher in the Exploratory class your student is enrolled in for questions.
- It is helpful for students to have one folder marked “Exploratory.” They can clean out the folder at the end of one quarter in preparation for their next class.
- The first quarter rotation ends on October 14th. Second quarter starts on October 17th. Check student schedules for second quarter Exploratory classes.
- During PARENT – TEACHER CONFERENCES, you only need to sign up with the teacher your student has for 2nd quarter. You can set up a conference with other teachers by email or phone call any time throughout the year.



Music

The AMS Music Department has hit the ground running this year!

Band students are working hard to prepare music for the upcoming November concert. In lessons, students are continuing learning techniques specific to their individual instrument.

Both 7th and 8th grade are working with MP3 players during lessons and are becoming self-guided learners. Eighth grade is working out of the Technique and Musicianship book. They are focusing on natural, harmonic, and melodic minor scales and exercises. Our extra-curricular jazz ensemble group is starting soon! We will be learning the basics of jazz rhythms, articulations, and improvisation. We will also start working on our first set of concert tunes!

6th grade is learning about key signatures, time signatures, and working on their 1st major scale. They are working out of the Sound Innovations for Concert Band Series. 7th grade is also working out of Book 2 of the Sound Innovations series.

7th and 8th grade students are working with mp3 players during lessons to become self-guided learners. 7th grade orchestra students are learning many new rhythms and vibrato while working out of Essential Elements book 2 and 8th grade orchestra students are working on shifting and playing in new positions while working out of Essential Technique book 3 as well as preparing for Orchestra Fest.

6th grade orchestra students are working out of String Basics for lessons and preparing for the November concert by working on some new ensemble skills.

All three choirs are off to a great start this year! In 6th grade, the students have started learning some core musical concepts including note names, rhythm, and basic sight reading. I can't wait to hear the progress they will make as an ensemble leading up to our November concert! Seventh grade choir returned from summer ready to sing! The 7th graders are embracing more challenging 3-part music with enthusiasm. 8th grade started the year with a more mature, blended sound. We are starting to learn music for the D300 Choral Festival which will take place on October 17th! They are facing this year's more challenging music head on and I can't wait to see what they will accomplish this year! A Capella auditions will be taking place soon."

Physical Education and Health News

Welcome back! This year we started off with swimming and the students enjoyed their time at the pool!

We will be completing our FitnessGram Pre-Tests within the next week and continue on with our next units of Cross Country and Soccer!!

LaCrosse will finish off our 1st Quarter PE and is normally an AMS favorite!!

Our Haiku pages are set up and your students can locate the study guides for their summative exams there. Also, please consider purchasing PE warm-up gear for students! Part of the proceeds come back to our PE Department to enhance our program. Orders are due by September 18th and purchased online.

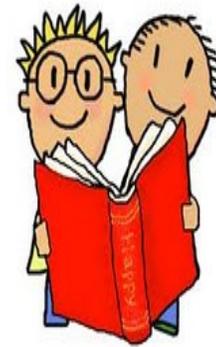
We look forward to another great year!!

Mrs. Vodvarka
Mr. Bloomberg
Mr. Cardenas
Mr. Brice



LEAP and LIFE

The LEAP and LIFE programs have started an exciting year! In ELA, students have been introduced to their reading curriculums, which include Reading Mastery, Unique, and General Education curriculum. Assessments have been done to determine levels, which will best suit each student's needs. Everyday students are working on daily communication through daily language, journaling, topic writing and more.



In Math, students are using the Equals curriculum, which include a multitude of different skills. These skills include, adding, subtraction, multiplication, and division of single digits and multiple digits, fractions, measuring, and patterns.

In Science, our programs are beginning to learn about the Human Body. While each class works at the pace that is best for those students, we are also all discussing the same topics such as the brain currently. We look forward to learning about Scientific Inquiry in October.

In Social Studies, each class has a Social Group once a week. During the social group we are discussing appropriate ways to introduce yourself, as well as, body language when speaking to others. We will continue to work on manners and appropriate behavior. We also discuss our community trips during class. We will talk about budgeting, reading menu's, and appropriate behavior when ordering. Our first community trips will be coming up this week and the following week.

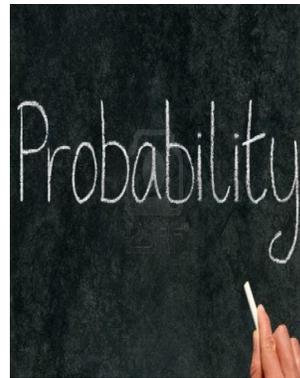


We are ready for a great year ahead! We look forward to seeing the growth the students make in our classrooms.

7th Grade Math

Currently in math, all seventh graders are working on the probability unit, What Do You Expect? Students have worked on finding experimental and theoretical probabilities, and soon they will move onto learning about probabilities relating to compound events. They are working diligently on keeping their notebooks and binders organized, which is where lab sheets and notes from the math investigations can be found.

Additionally, students have recently taken the I-Ready diagnostic test, and soon most students will be required to complete at least one I-Ready math lesson per week for homework. The purpose of these lessons is to strengthen the math skills of all students. Please encourage your child to complete the I-Ready lessons each week, and make sure they are working out the quiz problems on pencil and paper, rather than trying to calculate everything mentally. We are looking forward to seeing our students' math growth throughout the year!



6th Grade Math

6th grade math is completing the “Prime Time” unit. During the unit, the students will be learning some new and useful strategies for finding factors and multiples of whole numbers. They can apply these strategies to gain familiarity with prime and composite numbers and to solve real-life problems. Common multiples and common factors are at the heart of many major mathematical ideas that are developed in middle grades. For example, common factors and multiples are the building blocks for equivalent fractions, which in turn provide a foundation for operations with fractions and proportional reasoning. Throughout all units, collaboration with peers is emphasized. We will continue to be working on how to collaborate effectively and talk about what good collaboration looks like. Students also improve their math communication by sharing their work and explaining their reasoning to others while in their groups. Problem solving strategies and creative critical thinking are also skills that students work to build each day.

Accelerated Math:

6th grade accelerated math is working through the “Comparing Bits and Pieces” unit. Rational numbers are at the heart of the middle-grades experience with number concepts and will be a focus this unit. The goal of Comparing Bits and Pieces is to help students deepen their understanding of equivalent fractions and build on this understanding as they explore ratios. They will become skillful at interpreting the different forms of a rational number, at knowing which form is most appropriate for the solution of a given problem, and at writing and interpreting ratios. Throughout all units, collaboration with peers is emphasized. We will continue to be working on how to collaborate effectively and talk about what good collaboration looks like. Students also improve their math communication by sharing their work and explaining their reasoning to others while in their groups. Problem solving strategies and creative critical thinking are also skills that students work to build each day.

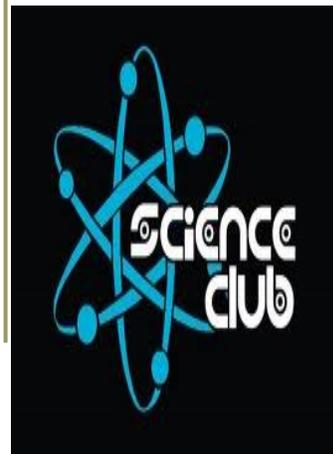
Science

8th Grade: We are off to a great start in 8th grade science! Students are reviewing the scientific method with a variety of hands on learning opportunities involving measuring mass, volume and density. We are practicing out problem solving in order to prepare ourselves for our first unit: Chemistry, which is all about matter and it's interactions. Students will learn the basics of atomic structure and how it relates to the periodic table and our everyday lives!

The 7th Grade scientists are kicking off the year with improving our lab skills. This includes measurement, safety, scientific inquiry, and many other concepts related to the scientific method. Expect that your child is bringing home his or her science notebook daily to finish labs and assignments, as well as study their notes by doing repetitions.

If your child is interested in Science Club, please encourage them to come to the informational meeting in September to sign up. All seventh and eighth grade students in Science Club are eligible to participate in Science Fair as well.

In science, 6th graders are practicing their problem solving skills in safe environments. Once they complete their lab safety unit, they will begin following the scientific method and the skills that go with it such as graphing, using the metric system, and the laws of motion. All of these skills will be practiced throughout the rest of the year as well as the rest of middle school, high school, and their everyday lives. Just another example of how everyone is a scientist!



Social Studies

8th Grade: We began the new school year by looking at ethics, morals and values. Students recently have started learning about the Industrial Revolution and will also learn about immigration and the Progressive Era during our first unit. Students will analyze the political, social, and economic impact on American culture during this time period from the late 1800's to the early 1900's. Upon completion of this unit, we will shift our focus to unit 2: Imperialism and World War I. In this unit, students will learn about the United States' impact on a global scale and our involvement in World War I.

7th Grade : The 7th grade Social Studies focus for the first quarter explores the causes and effects of European colonization in America. We will concentrate primarily on British colonization and the growing conflict between Great Britain and their American colonists focusing on their perceived lack of rights and other injustices. By quarter's end, we will have examined the causes for the American Revolution, the goals of winning the war and the result of independence and formation of our own country and government.

6th Grade : We are currently studying geography and the tools that geographers use to study the earth. We are learning about map skills, and the students have been creative and have developed their own tropical island, including the map features reviewed in class. Students have also learned the locations of continents and oceans and have practiced locating various countries and cities using latitude and longitude coordinates. Upon finishing our geography unit, we will begin our Early Humans unit. Students will be able to explain the connection between geography and history and understand what evidence we use to understand prehistory/history. We will focus on how Early Humans move from a hunting and gathering society to farming communities and how this led to the beginning of civilization.

ELA

8th Grade ELA students and teachers are in the process of getting acquainted with the new chrome books and the new Study Sync curriculum. In addition, we are engaged in readers' workshop in two – three days a week. We are looking forward to a productive year.

7th Grade : Wow! We have started out the year with a lot of changes, and our students are doing an **amazing** job! To begin the year, we learned the basics of Chrome books, earned our Chrome book driver's license, and began the process of navigating through StudySync; and that was just the first three days of school! We are all looking forward to exploring our digital curriculum together. In our first seventh grade unit, your students will be reading short stories, poetry, memoirs, and several nonfiction narratives to explore the missions some people or characters have pursued to achieve their goals. Some major reading and writing skills include looking for the main idea, using textual evidence, identifying theme, comparing and contrasting, and organizing informative writing.

All of the 6th grade ELA classes are working as a team to incorporate the new curriculum and 1:1 devices in the classroom following the Common Core. The focus for the first quarter is the unit "Overcoming Challenges" in both reading and writing. The different reading strategies are being implemented in all classes. They include, but are not limited to, visualizing, questioning, predicting, rereading, previewing, and connecting. Students are responding to a variety of prompts with guidance to focus on sentence structure, grammar, and making sense in the flow of the response. Students are collaborating with one another to share ideas and create a "family and safe" environment in all of their classes. Presenting ideas to the class follows the Common Core with Listening and Speaking content. The novel Hatchet is our first anchor text to be studied. We are excited to be a part of and experience the growth of our students.