



THE ROOST REPORTER



The Newsletter of Record for Sixth Grade

Jan. 26, 2018

Happy Halfway Mark!

Next week marks the halfway point in the school year. It has been a busy time in sixth grade - SOTA auditions, iReady testing, working with resident artists, launching Passage - it's a lot to manage! This also begins a developmental shift in sixth graders to becoming 12 year-olds. Greater confidence, greater empathy, a little more self-awareness. Perfect timing for our Better World Project!

Speaking of which, we are excited that our work with artist Shawn Dunwoody starts in February and students will have the opportunity to meet adults and other kids from Rochester's diverse neighborhoods. Our work with Ms. Whitis continues and we will be at Writers and Books this week to finish up that residency. In book club, we are exploring foreshadowing in narrative work and hunting for "Easter eggs" (or secret bits of info) that the author left for us. There are some good ones we have already discussed.

In math, we are gearing up for a look at the coordinate plane and putting what we know about integers and rational numbers to work for us (that new classroom configuration may just help with this concept!). We finished up our expedition work on the "science" of race and are moving into an exploration of racism, starting with a case study of apartheid in South Africa before bringing it home to Rochester.



Going Old School (for Success!)

You may have heard that we've shaken up the room arrangement a bit - rows of desks have replaced the crew configuration we've had since August. While some of it is reactive to social sidetracking that has become an issue, we also wanted to give students a better sense of independence and personal accountability. It can be easy to not be heard in a crew (or feel like you're the only one working). We hope as we move into the second half of the year, sixth graders are able to devote more energy to their own personal best.



What Actually Happens in 6th Grade

Hello again, faithful readers. Last week we took a field study to the Phillis Wheatley Library. We talked to Shawn Dunwoody about some work we'll be doing with him, and we're super excited about that! We also looked at an exhibit in the library's community room called "Take it Down", about a piece of racist art that was on a carousel. Then we also talked to some of the members of the Take it Down committee about racism, the types of racism, and how it affects us. Thank you for reading, and I'll see you next week.



- ✓ Spelling is back! Shout out to Mrs. Jones who has taken on our ELA Skills block this year. Spelling looks a little traditional, but we are excited to see improvements already. Spelling work is assigned at the beginning of the week and is assessed at the end of the week. Unsatisfactory work will need to be resubmitted.
- ✓ These kids play hard. Capture the flag means lots of heat and perspiration under those coats and jackets. After recess that odor wafts through the classroom. Perhaps a little antiperspirant/ deodorant in the backpack would help? Just a thought...
- ✓ Savers fundraiser is coming up - gently used clothing and housewares (not furniture) can be bagged and brought to school this week or dropped off at the Webster Savers location (950 Ridge Rd.) on Saturday, Feb. 3rd between 2-4 pm.
- ✓ Don't forget to come out to Brue Coffee on Friday, Feb 9th at 6:30 pm and hang with the Bureau Cats in support of our Four Cities trip!

Passage 2.0 Launches!

Last week we explored the purpose behind Passage and Student Led Conferences with the class but this week we dove right in. We introduced the first of four written Passage reflections and "unpacked" the scoring rubric. Rather than bombard you with paper (which you may not even find in your sixth-grader's backpack), we will be sharing all documents on the class webpage. The first piece is the most involved, Reflecting on Rochester. Students will develop a research question that arises from their own experiences with the school's local history focus.

Reflecting on Rochester	Fail	Developing	Pass	Pass with Honors
	1	2	3	4 5
Quality of Writing Students are able to express their claims in written form, paying special attention to organization of ideas, fluent transitions between ideas, and mastery of grade-level specific conventions. Word choice and voice reflect a confident author and a final draft features minimal errors in grammar, usage, mechanics, and keyboard skills.	Student presents ideas with some use of academic and domain-specific vocabulary. Sentences are short and simple in construction and do not support coherence of claims. Student voice is lacking. There are several errors in conventions and keyboarding errors distract from the readability of the piece.		Student presents ideas clearly, succinctly, and with a balance of academic and domain-specific vocabulary. Sentences flow across and between paragraphs to support coherence of claims. Student voice is present and supports the topic. Conventions are followed with minimal errors and keyboarding errors are few.	Student presents ideas clearly, succinctly, and with a command of academic and domain-specific vocabulary. Sentences flow across and between paragraphs to support coherence of claims. Student voice is active and drives understanding of the topic. Conventions are followed with no errors and keyboarding errors are absent.
Quality of Reasoning Students are able to see the "big picture" or themes of history as well as the specific events that link past to present. They make coherent claims based in fact and can trace cause-effect relationships across multiple time periods. Students pose a guiding question and conduct research to answer it.	Student lacks a clear thesis and/ or does not trace Rochester's evolution. Research offers no new insights. Fewer than three cause and effect relationships are evaluated and/or presented in the piece. No new understanding of the historical significance of our city's past or present is revealed.		Student presents a clear thesis and traces Rochester's evolution relative to the guiding question. Three cause and effect relationships are evaluated and presented in the piece which support the reader's understanding of their historical significance of our city's past and present.	Student presents a clear thesis and traces Rochester's evolution relative to the research question. Three cause and effect relationships are evaluated and presented in the piece; these creative connections challenge the reader's previous understanding of the historical significance of our city's past, present, and future.
Quality of Information Students are able to select, assess, and use a variety of print and digital resources in their work. They cite their sources and bring personal experiences to life in support of their claims. Works cited are paraphrased or directly quoted with credit given to the authors.	Student uses one or two sources and may cite text-based evidence within essay. Sources are listed but may not be credible OR work facts are inaccurate as presented. Information from previous expedition experiences is present but may not add insight to the student's work.		Student assesses and uses three reputable sources and cites text-based evidence within essay. Sources are listed in a formatted bibliography. Information from previous expedition experiences supports claims and adds insight to the student's work.	Student assesses and uses three or more reputable sources and cites text-based evidence within essay. Sources are listed and annotated in a formatted bibliography, free of errors. Information from K-1, 2-3, 4-6 experiences supports claims and adds insight to the student's work.

Students have folders to organize all of their work- and keeping organized is half the battle! We will scaffold the process but expect sixth-graders to do the lion's share of the work. We will offer feedback and 1:1 conferencing, but Passage is intended to be a reflection of the student's best effort. Success and Failure and Responsibility for Learning will guide us on the journey.

For families who have been through this process before, it has changed enough that you will want to take a look at the revised documents we have created. We are hoping to have a long-range calendar ready to share with students next week so they can get a better sense of the timeline and how to begin to budget time for this capstone event.

Your Sixth Grade Team

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