

APRIL NEWSLETTER

Mrs. Hahn's ALA/SS Classroom



Dear Parents,

There are two things that stand out to me about last month--PARCC testing and novel projects. Without spending too much time on the former, let me just say that the kids were troopers, for the most part, and did their best on a test that was rigorous and time-consuming. The second round will come in early May.

I was so incredibly proud of the students' third quarter novel projects, especially the creative projects. Please take a look at new page on my website to see many of the outstanding projects that were created this quarter for students' historical fiction books:

<http://friendship.ccsd59.org/teachers/hahnkristin/independent-novel-creative-projects/> After



I returned the grading rubrics, students reflected on their year-long progress, comparing each quarter's feedback and rubric. They made a list of what their individual strengths and areas for improvement are; this will be a valuable resource as they embark on their final round of projects (due May 18). Your child should be able to show you this list, should you like to see it. I also encourage you to encourage your child to practice his/her presentation on you or other members of your family. Some students are still struggling with this; if you know you have a reserved child, please offer up your services as a "mock" audience member. Your constructive feedback will help your child gain the confidence needed to speak

effectively in front of a crowd...a valuable life skill!

We rounded out our *Of Mice and Men* unit with a final Socratic Seminar. Students prepared for this by generating discussion questions on an online resource called Padlet. They then prepared for the seminar by conducting research and gathering information from the book. If you are interested in seeing what one of these seminars looks like, please click on the link to see one group of students engaged in their seminar:

<http://friendship.ccsd59.org/teachers/hahnkristin/socratic-seminars/>

Fourth quarter began this week (eek!), and we have a lot going on over the next two months. We started our Holocaust/*Diary of Anne Frank* unit this week that will be centered around four essential questions:

1. What motivates people to act ruthlessly?
2. What motivates people to act selflessly?

3. Are people “really good at heart”?
4. What does it take to act courageously in times of extreme adversity? Is this a characteristic of a hero or a morally responsible citizen?

Our eighth grade team of teachers has recently crafted this unit, and we are very excited to get started. I hope your children will find it worthwhile and interesting.

In terms of major pieces of writing, we will be focusing our attention on argumentative writing this quarter. We have been preparing all year for this--students are equipped with the tools to craft a strong argument. I introduced students to the Toulmin Method this week; this is the organizational format the students will use in next year’s Honors Written and Oral Communications class. They seemed a little confused at first, but I tried to remind them that “good writing is good writing no matter what you call it!” I encourage you to ask your child what topic he/she will be delving into. I hope it is one he/she feels passionately about!

One final reminder: Fourth quarter marks the start of the Six Flags eligibility standard. Students who want to attend the class trip to Six Flags in June must not have any missing assignments or Fs in any classes this quarter. Students and parents should check Skyward frequently to ensure students are staying on top of things.

Important Dates to Remember:

- 4/2: Report Cards Issued; Graduation Picture Retake/Spring Sports Pictures
- 4/3: Good Friday--No School
- 4/7: Spring MAP Test (reading)
- 4/9: Spring MAP Test (math)
- 4/29: Portfolio Sharing, 3:15-8:15
- 4/30: Portfolio Sharing, 3:00-8:00
- 5/1: No School

Happy Spring!

Sincerely,

Kristin Hahn

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8th Grade Color Challenge, 3/18

P.S. I am proud to admit that I was the victim of a pretty darn good April Fool’s prank this morning when my 30 students hid in the lunchroom instead of reporting to class fourth period. I am even more proud to admit that I seriously pranked them back when I faked being angry with them after they returned. I am most proud, though, that they surreptitiously came together to organize this over email. Classroom camaraderie at its finest! :)