

The Thunderbolt Times

The monthly newsletter for the Sky Ranch GATE Magnet Community



November and December 2021-Quarter 2

And just like that we are in the second quarter of this school year! The weather during this time is as wacky as the schedule of November! Please make sure to pay close attention to the dates listed below for events that are taking place during these next few months. Remember that late work for partial credit is usually collected a week before the end of the grading period so pay close attention to the team calendars and websites as this quarter comes to an end. Lastly, please remember to check our team websites as those are updated with information after newsletters have been sent out.

Please review the newsletter for important dates and information regarding our core classes and our team.

Important November and December Dates:

- **Thursday, November 11th:** No School- Veterans' Day
- **Wednesday, November 24th -Friday, November 26th:** No School-Thanksgiving Break
- **Thursday, December 16th:** End of Grading Period
- **Friday, December 17th-Friday, December 31st:** No School-Winter Break

From the GATE department:

8th Grade:

It's that time of year! Can you believe it? It's time to start planning for high school! The Department of GATE is excited to announce that applications for the GATE Institute are online this year! You can apply from November 15th through January 1st for the 2022-2023 school year. Applications can be found after November 15th at: <https://www.washoeschools.net/Page/13962>.

Representatives from the GATE Department and The GATE Institute will be visiting your students very soon and will be hosting virtual Family Informational Nights on November 15th and November 17th at 6 pm to discuss its unique offerings, such as accelerated pathways & GT courses, along with the [AP Capstone Diploma](#) and plans to move to the new high school at [Wildcreek!](#) In the meantime, please check your email on Monday, November 8th for more

information and a link to the virtual Family Information Nights. If you have any questions, please email Judith Lombard directly at Judith.Lombard@washoeschools.net .

6th and 7th Grades:

Families of all current sixth and seventh grade Magnet students will receive an email with a link to recommit to the Magnet program for next year. The recommit process is fully online and only takes a few moments. This is a key step in reserving a spot in the Sky Ranch Magnet program for the 22.23 school year. Please note that students currently in Magnet are requested to recommit only and do not have to submit a new application. The application window will run from November 15th-December 5th.

Wondering how to better support your child's academics in core classes? Here's what we suggest:

Step 1: Check our team websites and assignment calendars to see what assignments are due soon. This is a proactive approach - see what's due before it's due. With this approach, you can help your child break down large assignments and ask your child to show you and talk about their upcoming or completed work before it's turned in. This approach lessens the frequency of missing and late assignments. It's important to check this resource several times throughout the week as teachers do adjust frequently.

Team websites

7th/8th grade team: washoeschools.net/pilotsquadron

6th grade: washoeschools.net/griswold

Step 2: Check Infinite Campus. Infinite Campus is where we post students' grades after the assignments are graded. Some assignments are posted within hours, but some assignments take longer to grade; it may be more than a week before these assignments are posted in IC. Checking IC is more of a reactive approach - it may lead to chasing down missing assignments and backtracking whereas knowing what's coming up due keeps everyone up to date.

Classroom Updates

English/Language Arts 6 – Mr. Sorensen

Essential Questions:

- **How do myths, fables, folktales, and poetry communicate an author's perspective on life?**
- **How can writers construct persuasive arguments?**

Students have turned in their argumentative essays in which they heavily focused on citing their sources (MLA style), clearly organizing their ideas, and supporting their claim with relevant evidence. Students also ended the quarter by writing a literary analysis paragraph after finishing the novel, *A Face Like Glass*.

Students began reading Richard Adams' novel *Watership Down* and will be reading that throughout the second quarter along with weekly discussions on the book and an essay assignment toward the end of the quarter.

We have also continued our work with poetry, sprinkled sporadically throughout the year, and using vocabulary from our class novels. To supplement, we are also continuing our forays into Greek and Latin roots as well as practice with analogies.

English/Language Arts 7 – Ms. Tuttle

Essential Questions:

- **How do authors explore the meaning of identity?**

We're well into our next class novel, *Flowers for Algernon*, by Daniel Keyes which is a work of Science Fiction. All of our novels offer so much for the students to analyze and discuss, but this novel really opens up some diverse topics, from the nature of intelligence to issues of bullying to the scientific method.

Students are also reading a book of their choice in preparation for their Independent Novel Project that's due December 2nd. We will share projects with classmates which makes for a fun day of exploration of new books! Please make sure to ask your child what they're reading and where they're at with their independent novel since I'll be asking parents to fill out a form before students can earn their grade for their project each quarter.

English/ Language Arts 8 - Ms. Tuttle

Essential Questions:

- **What techniques can authors use to influence or change society?**

We jumped into our class novel, *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair. *The Jungle* infiltrates the meat packing industry of the early 1900's and shines a light on the harsh conditions of factory workers in Chicago during that time. The constant adaptation of the Rudkus family shows students the hardships of the time period and the resilience of immigrants to America. This novel will carry us through the next two months and will provide plenty of content for discussion.

Students are also reading a book of their choice in preparation for their Independent Novel Project that's due December 2nd. We will share projects with classmates which makes for a fun day of exploration of new books! Please make sure to ask your child what they're reading and where they're at with their independent novel since I'll be asking parents to fill out a form before students can earn their grade for their project each quarter.

Earth Science 6 – Mrs. Clotworthy

Essential Questions:

- € **How do the materials in and on Earth's crust change over time?**
- € **How does the movement of tectonic plates impact the surface of Earth?**
- € **How does water influence weather, circulate in the oceans, and shape Earth's surface?**

- € **What factors interact and influence weather?**
- € **How have living organisms changed the Earth and how have Earth's changing conditions impacted living organisms?**

The students ended the quarter by presenting their Nature of Science Final projects. Please ask your student to share their project with you. I enjoyed watching students develop a question and design an experiment around that wonder.

We are continuing with our unit, Earth's Systems. The students will participate in two labs where they use specific tools to help them identify different rocks and minerals. They will also learned about the composition of Earth and Pangaea. We will continue learning about continental drift, seafloor spreading, and earthquakes and volcanoes through December.

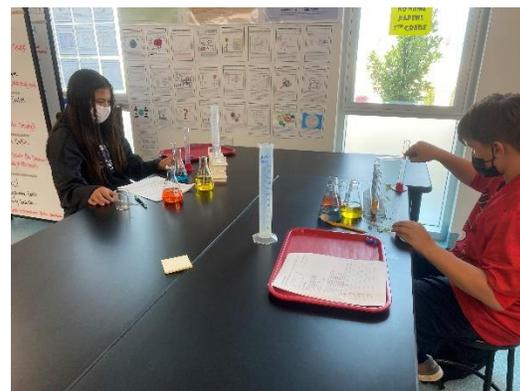
Your child will be receiving a study guide in December for their Final Exam. The final exam will cover all of the content learned during Semester 1. I would suggest that your child starts working on the study guide early so that they have more time to study for the exam.

7th Grade: – Mrs. Hill

Essential Question:

- **How do atomic and molecular interactions explain the properties of matter that we see and feel?**

We are currently in the middle of our Atomic Structure and Chemistry unit. Your child has learned/will learn about the periodic table, atomic structure and how to illustrate different elements at the molecular level, ionic and covalent bonds, balancing chemical questions, and acids/bases/pH. There are several hands-on activities that your child will/did participate in to apply their knowledge and make connections.



UNR's Chemistry Department will be visiting this month. They will be doing an in-school field trip with a lot of amazing demonstrations and activities!

- Universal indicator with dry ice to learn about acids and bases
- Quick demo with dry ice and flame
- Catching carbon dioxide in a ghost bubble
- Carbide cannon

After our Atomic Structure and Chemistry unit, we will move forward with a small unit on Green Chemistry to design and test shampoo. This mini unit allows the kids to review what they learned during the Atomic Structure and Chemistry unit and apply their knowledge to help them create a "green" shampoo from scratch. After this mini unit, we will move on to our Materials Engineering and Dimensional Analysis units.

The final exam will cover all units from Semester 1. A study guide will be provided in OneNote. I would suggest that your child starts working on the study guide once it is posted and use it as a study tool

nightly. If they have any questions, they can always email, ask through Teams, and/or see me in person.

8th Grade Honors Biology- Mrs. Hill

Essential Questions:

- **How do organisms live and grow?**
- **How and why do organisms interact with their environment, and what are the effects of these interactions?**

We have transitioned into the unit on Photosynthesis and Cellular Respiration. In this unit, students have/will learn about how the two processes work individually and together to show the cycling of matter and flow of energy in living ecosystems. Students are collaborating with groups to answer our driving question “How is climate change impacting the biogeochemical cycles of my community” and create PSAs to educate the community. They have/will participate in different hands-on activities and labs to help them learn the information needed to answer the question. After this unit, we will head back to the Chemistry of Life and Cell Structure and Function units.

The District final exam will cover all units from Semester 1. There are two different components to this exam: a written portion and multiple-choice portion. The final exam is worth 12% of your child’s semester grade. A study guide will be provided in OneNote. I would suggest that your child starts working on the study guide once it is posted and use it as a study tool nightly. If they have any questions, they can always email, ask through Teams, and/or see me in person.

6th Grade: Ancient Civilizations – Mr. Sorensen

Essential Questions:

- **What effect did Indian geography have on its settlement and growth?**
- **How did ancient Indian ideas develop, especially regarding the caste system, Hinduism, and Buddhism?**

November is giving way to our collective exploration through Africa and Asia as we follow civilization growth. This will include the geography, culture, and achievements of the ancient Indian subcontinent, including the Indian developments of mathematics, the caste system, and the first three of our five major world religions. Judaism will expand on our previous lessons by returning to Canaan and introducing the concept of monotheism. Hinduism will introduce the students to the concepts of karma, dharma, and reincarnation; Buddhism will explore the creation of the belief system and the ideas it applies to its Eightfold Path.

7th Grade: U.S. History – Mrs. Porter

Essential Question:

- **How does exploration affect interactions?**

During the month of November up we will be focusing on the beginning structures of our government. Students will analyze the balance of powers between branches as well as look at the presidency of George Washington. The Constitution is a difficult document to understand, so we will be using a variety of methods to analyze this living document. Students will strive to understand the amount of

thought that had to go into making these big decisions for the young nation. We will continue by looking at the impact the War of 1812 had on America, specifically the creation of our national anthem and will finish out this quarter with looking at President Jackson's years in office.

8th Grade: Accelerated Analyzing War - Mrs. Porter

Essential Question:

- **How does imbalance require resilience?**

As we start November, students are beginning our Imperialism unit. During this time students will look at multiple cases where our nation expanded and adapted to new lands and cultures. Students will look at the Philippines, Guam and Hawaii. We will participate in structured academic controversies to utilize argumentative skills. We will also be looking at events such as the Spanish-American war and what went into building the Panama Canal. Students will create report cards and recipes to show they have mastered the content of the lessons but in a fun and innovative way. We will round out this quarter with our WWI unit. For this unit students study trench warfare, what life was like at home during WWI and what it was like in Europe. Students will have a project that allows them to be creative while highlighting what they have learned when it comes to propaganda techniques. Be on the lookout for these propaganda posters at the end of the quarter!

Math 6 – Mrs. Clotworthy

Essential Questions:

- **How can LCM and GCF be used to combine or separate fractions?**
- **How can fractions be constructed and deconstructed using the four arithmetic operations?**
- **How can our understanding of fractions develop our understanding of other ratios?**
- **How can the structure of our number system can be used to analyze numbers?**
- **How can numerators and denominators be explained?**
- **How can representations show why two fractions are equivalent?**

We completed our unit on number theory, which included divisibility rules, greatest common factors and least common multiples. Number theory is very important to future success in mathematics. Next up is fractions and decimals. In advanced 6th grade math that means working all operations with both positive and negative fractions and decimals. This is often a particularly challenging concept for 6th graders. There will be additional resources in each unit for students to review and practice. Ultimately, these concepts should lay further groundwork for further work still ahead, dealing with ratios, proportions, decimals, and percent.

Students will have a semester final for this class. The final is cumulative for all of the work this semester and is 20% of the final grade. Your child will be receiving a study guide in December and we will be doing review activities in class. If you would like to further support your child please see OneNote come December for additional resources to help your child review and practice.

Integrated I - Mrs. Sellers

Essential Questions:

- **What determines whether a relationship is proportional graphically, numerically, and algebraically?**
- **How are permutations and combinations related to finding the probability of an event?**
- **How do mathematical relationships help us make sense of the world?**

This month brings an end to basic geometry and geometric application. We have used relationships to help us solve and understand different types of problems. We are now studying proportions and percent problems. Students will investigate proportional relationships and discover what determines this type of relationship. We will finish the semester with probability and counting. Students will use tree diagrams to understand the outcomes possible for a given event and then dive into permutations and combinations of a given situation. At the conclusion of this unit, we will begin reviewing for semester finals. The final will cover all topics from the first semester. This final will count toward 20% of their quarter grade. Students should be utilizing Microsoft Teams to check for what is assigned nightly. All assignments are posted as if a student was absent so that students can keep up with content.



Integrated II - Mrs. Sellers

Essential Questions:

- **How can you prove geometric relationships algebraically?**
- **What creates a logical argument to prove geometric relationships algebraically?**
- **How do mathematical relationships help us make sense of the world?**

We just finished coordinate geometry and we are beginning geometric transformations. Students will transform coordinate points using reflection, translation, and rotations. Students will investigate these relationships and come up with rules that work for these transformations in the coordinate plane. We will then move to geometric proofs. Students will use all knowledge of geometry to create logical arguments and prove relationships. Students will continue being “mini lawyers” and will have to justify all statements with reasons, theorems, definitions, and relationships learned. After proofs, students will be moving into polynomials, where they will learn to add, subtract, multiply, and factor. Multiplying and factoring polynomials are completely new topics for the students, and it is important they master this topic in order to succeed in the quadratics unit. We will not finish this unit before the end of the

semester so we will continue work on polynomials in quarter three. We will review for the semester final during the last few weeks of school. This final will cover all topics from the first semester. This final will count as 20% of their semester grade.

Algebra I - Mrs. Sellers

Essential Questions:

- How can we compare linear relationships?
- How do mathematical relationships help us make sense of the world?

Over the next few months, we will be studying systems of equations and inequalities. Students will learn through investigation what a system is, the different types of solutions that systems can have, and what the solution represents. Students will be able to solve systems through graphing, substitution, and elimination; and be able to compare these linear relationships. These methods add to their wealth of knowledge in solving algebraic problems. Students will be able to model and write systems of equations through real world problems. We will round out the semester with absolute value graphs and piecewise functions. This unit involves graphing linear equations and extending to restricting the domain of these equations. We will bridge the gap between absolute value and piecewise by defining the graph of absolute value as a piecewise function. We will review for the semester final during the last few weeks of school. This final will cover all topics from the first semester. This final will count as 20% of their semester grade.

Enrichment:

7th and 8th Grade:

Throughout the week, students are watching CNN student news, completing Second Step SEL (Social/Emotional Learning) lessons, independent work time (study hall), and working on their independent novel project. Their independent novel project is an English grade and is due **November 13th**.

6th Grade:

Enrichment time has been used as an opportunity to give the students time for (distanced) teambuilding, Second Step SEL activities, and independent work time. (Pictures from the Color Fun Run)



Counselor's Corner:

GT Counselor: Ms. Ivans, our GT counselor, has shared some resources for parents. Her newsletters can be found on each of the team's websites.

Teacher Contact Information:

Mrs. Clotworthy Sierra.plumb@washoeschools.net

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Mrs. Porter Lindsey.Porter@washoeschools.net

Mrs. Sellers Ksellers@washoeschools.net

Mr. Sorensen Lsorensen@washoeschools.net

Ms. Tuttle jtuttle@washoeschools.net

*Mrs. Porter has a long-term sub while out on maternity leave. Please email Ms. Harger with any social studies questions and cc Mrs. Porter. Mrs. Porter will be back on December 17th.

Ms Harger: sharger@washoeschools.net

GATE Office Contact Information:

WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT GIFTED AND TALENTED EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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