

Blythedale Buzz



MOUNT PLEASANT BLYTHEDALE U.F.S.D.

Principal's Corner

This year, our teachers and students maintained their eyes on the prize, teaching and learning for academic growth while navigating the obstacle of the COVID-19 pandemic. The data collected from the fall and spring school-based assessments indicated the significant growth of our students this academic year. Our team of teachers was relentless in ensuring their lessons engaged all students, in-person and remote. Technology played a significant factor in keeping our students connected to their academics. Google Workspace was the platform used to deliver instruction. Our teachers and students engaged with apps such as Pear Deck, Jamboard, Boom Cards, Smart Learning Suite, IXL, and BrainPOP to keep learning interactive. More importantly, these learning tools provided teachers, parents, and students with immediate performance feedback. I am proud of our upper elementary and secondary students who used the technology to track their own growth and challenge themselves daily.

Our students' resiliency motivated us on a daily basis to think outside the box and implement procedures that allowed us to safely keep the building open. Each COVID-19 challenge faced was an opportunity for reflecting on practices and pushing the community to accept new processes. I would be remiss if I did not thank the entire MPB community for contributing to the successes experienced this year despite the many challenges and obstacles faced. Specifically, thank you parents for ensuring the safety of all in our building. Each day you completed the "DAILY COVID-19 SURVEY." Thank you parents for being vigilant and proactive by keeping your children at home when they presented with symptoms. Thank you parents for your patience, understanding, and follow-through when asked to take your child to the pediatrician for clearance to return to school. We know it was not easy. Your actions kept all of our medically fragile children safe. We made it through the year with no closures due to COVID-19 exposure; our biggest accomplishment of the year, a feat we could not have done without your support.

To our students and families who are leaving us, all the best as you continue your educational journey. You will be missed. We look forward to seeing you at Alumni Day in December 2021.

I wish all members of our community a safe summer. I look forward to welcoming you back to our summer 2021 Extended School Year program in July.

Fondly,

Griselda Reyes

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ELEMENTARY



Pre-Kindergarten

The Adventures of Pre-K

Preschool students worked hard this year to learn their letters, letter sounds, numbers, colors and shapes. Students used their senses to explore these skills. They painted, enjoyed water play, used a light box, sang songs, and listened to stories. Students also worked on identifying and writing their first names in print. They enjoyed playing on the playground with peers. Students worked on their social emotional skills by learning how to share, take turns, play games and play in small groups. It has been a great year in preschool!

Kindergarten

Eric Carle Author Study



The students in Mr. Stephen's Kindergarten classroom worked hard all year in school, from home, and on the units of the hospital. They have been a motivated, determined and resilient group of children. Students recently concluded an author study of Eric Carle. Students focused on identifying characters, settings and major events in the classic stories, Rooster's Off to See the World, The Mixed-Up Chameleon, and The Very Quiet Cricket. Students reviewed each book with either a thumbs up or thumbs down. Judging by the results, Eric Carle's books were immensely popular with the students.

At the conclusion of each book, students were asked to make text-to-self connections. After reading The Grouchy Ladybug, Oliver stated that having to drink his smoothie every morning made him grouchy. At the end of listening to From Head to Toe, Anthony stated "I can bend my neck just like a giraffe."

To wrap up our author study, we conducted a poll to see which book students would select as their favorite. The Very Hungry Caterpillar received the most votes and was pronounced Kindergarten's favorite story by this wonderful author.

Ms. Katie's K-1 class has been hard at work this school year! Students demonstrated their sequencing skills through arts and crafts. They used pictures to retell a story in the order that the events happened. The students created story string necklaces using yarn. They placed the pictures on a piece of yarn and used necklaces to retell various stories.

One of the students' favorite stories was Rainbow Fish by Marcus Pfister, which is about a unique fish with shiny scales. Other fish in the story want to look like Rainbow Fish and they wish to share his scales. At first Rainbow Fish is resistant, but eventually finds that he enjoys sharing his scales with his friends. Students used the story string necklaces as physical and visual aids to master their sequencing skills. The students of K-1 continue to grow and expand their reading strategies each day!



Story String Necklaces



Kindergarten—First Grade



Planting Pals



Ms. Jen's Kindergarten learned how important it is to protect the planet. Determined to make a positive difference, Kindergarteners decided to grow plants. Students learned about the soil, sun and water that seeds need to grow. They learned what happened when one of the components was missing... the plants really didn't like that!

Kindergarteners also used their senses to make observations and learn about living things. They enjoyed celebrating their hard work with culminating science stations on Earth Day! Kindergarten worked hard making the earth beautiful and healthy with the addition of more plants.

Buzzing Learners

First Grade—Second Grade

Mrs. Varbero's first and second graders have been busy this semester adding words to their sight word list. Students used the sight words to read and write. It was exciting to reach over 100 sight words. Students also learned about the butterfly life cycle. The students were able to see and experience some of the stages with real live caterpillars. Students participated in engaging lessons involving the SMARTBoard, read-alouds, songs and crafts to make sure they remember each cycle.

In honor of Memorial Day, students learned how to commemorate the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving our country. Thank you to all the men and women who served!

Helpful



Habitats

First and second graders in Ms. Christine's class are growing up fast! While students are growing big and strong, so are the plants and animals in their surrounding world. Students observed how plants and animals in nature require a specific environment so they may grow and survive. Students learned plants and animals reside in habitats, or homes, in order to thrive. To facilitate their understanding, students explored the life cycle of a plant and the life cycle of a butterfly.

Students learned that a life cycle is a series of stages. Students planted their own seeds and learned that in order to help the seed grow it needs water, nutrients from soil, and sunlight. Students placed their plants by the window so they could easily absorb sunlight. Students proudly took on the responsibility of watering their plants each day. Students were thrilled as they watched their nurtured seeds thrive in the habitat that was created for them!

Students continued to learn about and celebrate growth by welcoming caterpillars into the classroom. Students were excited for their new critter companions and instantly began investigating the four stages of the butterfly life cycle. Students understood that caterpillars first hatch from an egg, which means their new friends were already in the second stage of their life cycle. In order to transition to their third stage, caterpillars must chomp, chomp, chomp away at green leaves within their habitat in order to grow strong enough to build a chrysalis. Students made predictions about what was happening inside the chrysalis during metamorphosis, and before they knew it, beautiful butterflies emerged! Students appreciated observing and investigating the specific habitats that plants and animals need in order to grow, thrive, and flourish!

Blythedale Buzz

Second Grade—Third Grade

Observation Detectives

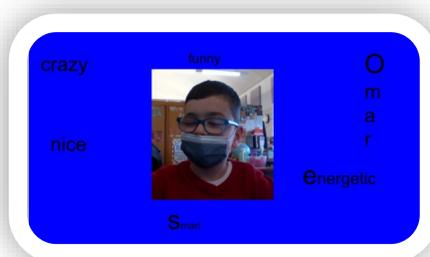
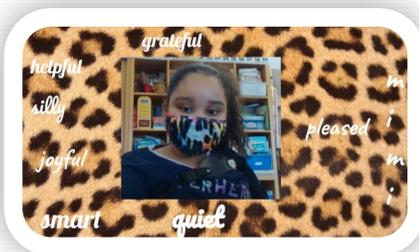
Ms. Stephanie's second and third graders continue to grow here at MPB. Students became observation detectives by participating in lessons in order to further their understanding of topics. Students learned that when making observations they use their five senses: sight, smell, touch, taste and hearing. Students stepped into the role of detective and enjoyed using their observation skills to identify plants and animals from different habitats through a hands-on approach. Based on what the students observed, they were able to infer where the plants and animals could be found. Students answered the inquiry question, "How do you know?" to help guide discussion and facilitate meaningful connections to the newly learned vocabulary. Students are excited to continue developing their observation skills as they learn new topics!



Third Grade—Fourth Grade

Super Selfies

Ms. Corryn's third and fourth graders engaged in many lessons to learn about character traits. Students learned that character traits are adjectives that describe how a person is on the inside. Character traits are often expressed through actions, dialogue, or internal feelings, requiring the students to use their inferencing skills to draw conclusions about specific traits for each character. Students created their own character selfies, choosing traits that best describe them. Each student was then given the opportunity to share their selfies and support their character trait choices with evidence and examples from their own lives.



Fifth Grade

Figuring it out in Fifth is our Motto!

Together, Ms. Jodi's fifth graders learned that 'cause and effect' always happens in that order; but when it is written in a sentence, it can be stated either way. Students practiced identifying the conjunction or transition word between the cause and the effect in a sentence; asking the questions "Why?" and "What happened?" to isolate the cause from the effect; and then explaining their reasoning. This practice continued through two focused stories read in class and online during virtual meets: a biography called *James Forten* by Walter Dean Myers and a science fiction story called *LAFFF* by Lensey Namioka. Follow-up activities included independent readings of shorter pieces and books from the classroom library.

One book students enjoyed - around Saint Patrick's Day - was *Fiona's Luck* by Teresa Bateman which was accompanied by students writing about why they themselves feel lucky. One student said that she feels lucky because she has a nice family. Another student graciously stated that he feels lucky because his teacher and teacher's aide help him with his English Language Arts and Mathematics. Fifth grade wrapped up this quarter's E.L.A. with reading *The Black Stallion* by Walter Farley; revisited cause and effect; and reviewed how writers use literary elements to shape a story.

Students' focus shifted to mathematics which was all about fractions and decimals: converting between the two, adding and subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Students created paper pizza pies and were then asked to identify pieces indicating whole, half, a third and a quarter. This activity was followed by independent practice in an online application where students worked at their own pace.

In Science students explored the Scientific Method and generated the hypothesis: A Ferris wheel made out of popsicle sticks will move faster and go more times around - in one minute - than a Ferris wheel made out of cardboard because popsicle sticks are lighter than cardboard. Ask a fifth grader to find out the conclusion to this experiment!



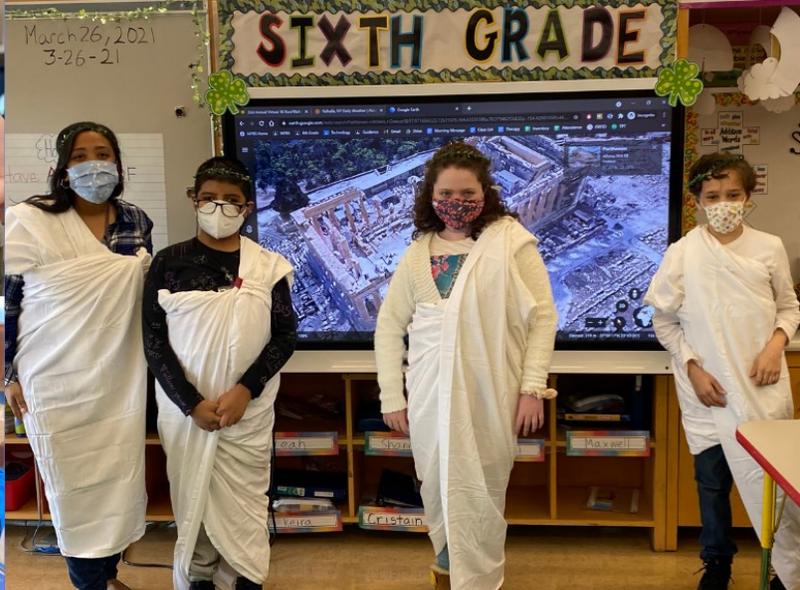
Sixth Grade Ancient Greece

During the second semester, Ms. Lisa's sixth grade students studied Ancient Greece. They learned about the geography of Greece and how it affected Greek lifestyle during ancient times. They learned about city-states and democracy, as well as ancient architecture, arts, and entertainment.

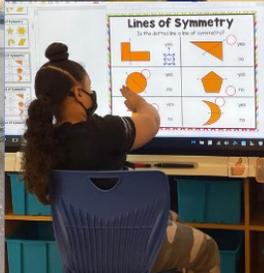
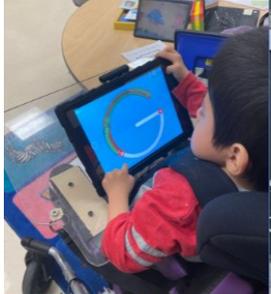


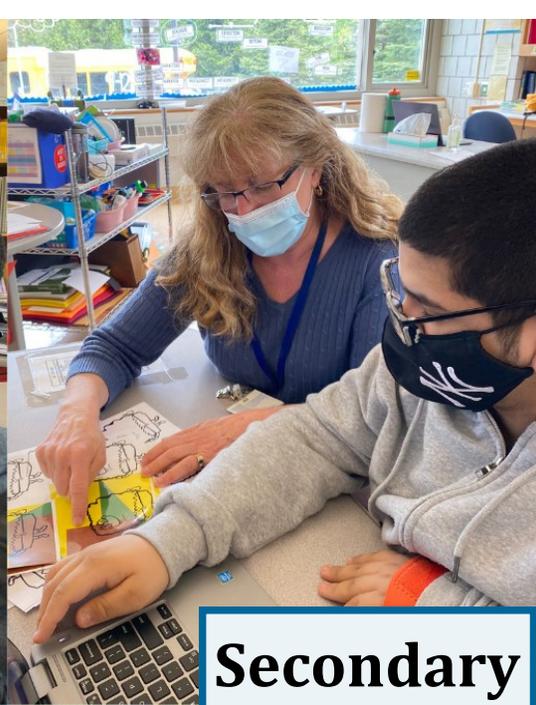
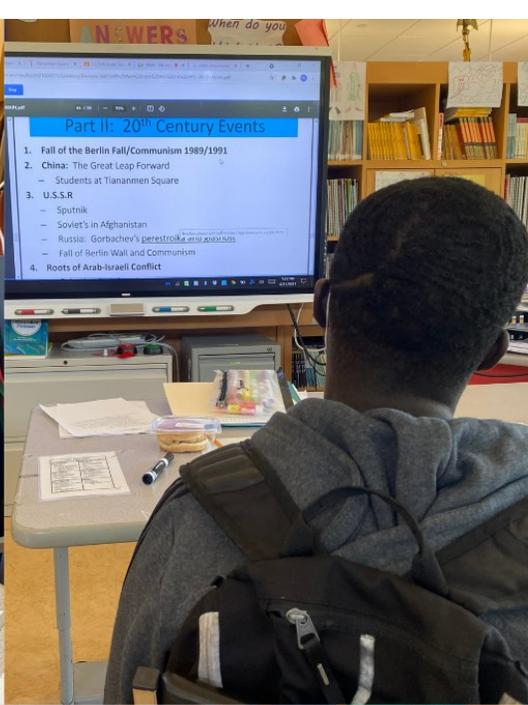
As part of the unit, students learned about mythology. They read myths such as "The Hero and the Minotaur," the myths of Hercules, Bellerophon, Perseus, and Icarus. Students studied and researched different creatures in Greek mythology, including the Cerberus, Sphinx, Minotaur, Basilisk, and Gorgons.

Students learned about the ancient statue called the Colossus of Rhodes, which once stood in the ancient Greek city of Rhodes. They learned that the Colossus was the inspiration for the Statue of Liberty and that the two share many physical features, but symbolize different ideas. As a culmination of the unit, students read and analyzed the poem "The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus, which stands at the base of the Statue of Liberty today. This analysis of the poem and the two statues made students realize the lasting impact of ancient Greek culture.



Elementary





Secondary



Art

Secondary Art 2021



The secondary students began taking art in the second semester of the 2020-2021 school year during which they studied various Pop artists. Students began with an overview of “What is Pop Art”? They learned about Andy Warhol, James Goldcrown, Chris Uphues, Britto Romero and Keith Haring. For artist assignments, students created a project based on a specific artwork of the artist being studied. Students studied the artistic style and applied it to their own work through digital and non-digital assignments. Many students also participated in printmaking.

Additionally, students learned about various art professions through a terrific Netflix series on YouTube called Netflix Abstracts, as well as using the sketchbooks they created for sketching, doodling or following draw-along videos.

Managing the materials and projects has been challenging; however, creativity is a strong force here at MPB! We are very proud of all the effort, energy and inspiration from our secondary students this semester!

Music

Jamming with Jamboard

Despite all that has been going on this year, students have still been able to have some musical fun through a virtual world!! The preschool and lower elementary students have continued to learn new songs. Students have been singing, dancing and playing instruments (both real and homemade) to songs about holidays, seasons and a few just for enjoyment.

The upper elementary students have also been able to enjoy music instruction. These classes found Google’s Jamboard to be quite useful as means of interacting with the SMARTboard, teacher, and peers from home. Students learned about the musical staff and different types of notes that can be placed on the staff, representing different note lengths. They used Jamboard to place quarter, half and whole notes into boxes adding up to a predetermined number value.



SCHOOL WIDE

Thank you for all collaborative efforts between Special Education Itinerant Services (SEIS), Long Term Care (LTC), Mount Pleasant Blythedale Schools (MPBS), and Blythedale Children's Hospital (BCH).



LTC Unit & SEIS

Collaboration at it's Finest

SEIS students have learned so much during school this year! After establishing a familiar daily routine, students enter class each day ready for their "Hello Song," "Days of the Week," calendar and weather updates, followed by the letter, number, color, shape, and word of the week. The multi-sensory approach to instruction afforded every child the opportunity to engage with new content in unique ways. Students also demonstrated their love for music and the exploration of different instruments and melodies as they joined Corey, the music teacher, every Friday during the second semester. SEIS students are excited and ready to build on their learning during their extended school year summer program!

Our LTC and Unit students continued working closely with MPB school and BCH staff to join their Google Meets daily with their teachers and classmates. Additionally, MPB created a space for secondary students guided by our medical director to provide Unit students with in-person learning opportunities. Through the assistance and coordination of MPB staff and the BCH community, students in LTC and the Acute Care units have increased their peer collaboration and participation in school.

Social Emotional Development & Learning

To culminate the school year, our students continued yearly traditions. With Spring in full bloom, students learned about the life cycle of a butterfly. They witnessed first-hand the different stages of the life cycle and released the butterflies outside. MPB has an exciting summer planned for our students. We look forward to rolling out Summer 2021.

Guidance Department

"We are incredibly proud of our students for navigating this unprecedented year."

Moving Up Ceremonies



Moving Up Ceremonies will continue on a virtual platform this year, affording all families the opportunity to join the celebration from anywhere! We are incredibly proud of our students for navigating this unprecedented year. As we reflect on the academic, social, and physical achievements, we congratulate all students as they move forward into their next grade. MPB also commemorates those students who will be moving on to new schools and hope that your motivation to succeed continues beyond the doors of MPB.

Mathematics

Predictions Vs. Practicality

Students worked diligently over the last semester to understand and apply new concepts in mathematics. 7th graders have been undertaking a unit on probability to determine the likelihood of outcomes in different situations. Students took a hands-on approach using experiments to show how their predictions, based on calculations, do not always play out perfectly in practical activities.



8th grade students retained a focus on algebra, creating and utilizing equations. These equations were based around concepts they studied such as perimeter, area and volume. Students performed inverse operations to show how to create and solve new equations based on given parameters.

Algebra I students have been doing remarkable work. They have been dedicated to their studies and made huge gains in their understanding of complex topics. They spent this semester solving systems of equations and systems of inequalities in two variables. In their explorations they solved these problems by graphing, substitution and elimination methods, using their best skills and the given situation to determine the best method. These operations were used to model real world situations and solve for multiple variables.

Geometry students undertook a unit on circles, reviewing basic concepts such as circumference, area and the ratio pi, but continued onto more complex topics such as ratios between intersecting chords and tangent lines. They applied their knowledge of the Pythagorean Theorem and right triangles to seemingly unrelated circles to solve for unknown values and to prove characteristics.

11/12 students have studied statistics, calculated standard deviations and applied a standard normal distribution to discover outcomes for different situations. The work these children have accomplished is astonishing as they have adapted to an extremely difficult way to learn. Their desire to succeed has been impressive and their dedication should not be overlooked.

Social Studies

Wars, Rebirth, and Varying Opinions

What a year!! Our 7th grade learned about the causes of the Civil War and the long lasting impact it had on our nation. 8th grade students studied a unit about World War II. Students recently turned their attention to the Holocaust. Many of the resources students have used were given to us by former MPB Board President, Andy Cahn.



The 9th grade looked at the Renaissance and this “rebirth” of the classics and studied art from this time period. 10th Grade students learned about the Cold War, with a focus on the Korean War. Students discussed how this war fractured a nation, and led to almost 70 years of uncertainty on the Korean Peninsula. The 11th/12th grade studied world events. The topic of the Palestinian and Israeli conflict led to some very interesting conversations which has tied into their ELA unit on social justice. The students have been very respectful of one another’s varying opinions on this topic.

Science

The Scientific Process Galore



This semester students in 7th and 8th grades learned about circuits and magnetism. They made models of parallel and series circuits using simulations and hands-on materials. Students made a battery with pennies and washers to test hypotheses about voltage. In addition, they used a simulation to conduct experiments about color and heat produced from white light.

In 9th grade, students completed all four required labs: diffusion through a membrane, beaks of finches, relationship and biodiversity, and making connections. Labs were modified to accommodate virtual and in-person students. Additionally, students started the evolution unit by collecting and analyzing evidence for each of the major conditions for evolution by natural selection. Students then developed an explanation for how populations change over time.

In 10th grade, students analyzed a case study to create the profile of a victim. They compared their evidence to a missing person report to identify who the skeletal remains belonged to. The 11th and 12th grade students researched indoor and outdoor pollutants, then proceeded to present their findings to the class. Students took the role of first year medical interns at a hospital and were assigned a case study. They applied their gained knowledge to diagnose what pollutant the patient was exposed to.

English Language Arts

Courage, Shakespeare's Madness and Social Justice

Students in 7th and 8th grades “walked” their way into discussions and writing pieces on courage while reading the novel, *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park. Students shared personal experiences in which they have demonstrated courage and found ways to connect to the main characters, Salva and Nya. Students also learned about the water crisis in Sudan and discussed the importance of water for all humans.

While students in middle school learned about courage, high school students in 9th through 12th grades read William Shakespeare's, *Macbeth*. Not only did students question character motives, explore conflicts in the text, write expository pieces on the text, but they also debated on who is to blame for all the unfortunate events in the play. Students worked with Katie, a resident actor with Hudson Valley Shakespeare over the course of the unit as they dug deeper into the themes and conflicts of the play. There are definitely some future thespians in these classes!

During the fourth quarter, students immersed themselves in social justice topics including voting rights, gender inequality, and age discrimination. Students were given opportunities to read fictional and non-fiction literature centered on these ideas. Students tackled their classroom discussions and assignments with maturity and great insight. The unit wrapped up with students completing research on methods for advocacy to combat these social injustices in our world.



The Mount Pleasant Blythedale UFSD staff continues to ensure our families and students remain connected to us and to each other. During the 2020-2021 school year, MPB has provided close to 100 devices including iPads and Chromebooks to students learning from a distance! We thank our families, teachers and staff, students, healthcare providers and hospital staff for working together to make this year of teaching and learning possible!



Important Dates:

July 12st — August 20th Extended School Year Program

August 12th — Ice Cream Truck Visit

September 1st — First Day of 2021-2022 School Year

Save the Date:

September 24th—We will commemorate 50 years of educating students while their bodies heal. On July 1, 1971, the Mt. Pleasant Blythedale School was constituted and designated a separate Union Free PUBLIC School District responsible for educating the patients of Blythedale Children’s Hospital. Be on the lookout for monthly mini-events that will help us celebrate this incredible milestone as the Mt. Pleasant Blythedale School District continues to provide a public school education, within a typical public school setting, to patients of Blythedale Children’s Hospital.

Mount Pleasant Blythedale UFSD

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Mount Pleasant Blythedale UFSD (MPB) is a district responsible for educating patients of Blythedale Children’s Hospital. MPB was chartered by the New York State legislature as a Special Act Program in 1971. In 2004, the Special Education Department approved a 4410 Preschool Program to provide educational services to medically fragile children. We are the only public school district in New York created to educate a hospital population. Our students are inpatient and day hospital children and adolescents receiving rehabilitation and medical services through Blythedale Children’s Hospital.

A community where students can learn while their bodies heal.