A Message From The Principal by Corey Graves

Dear SMS Parents/Guardians:

We were thrilled to welcome our students back to 4 day a week in person instruction on April 12th. I want to thank all of you for the support you have given your children and our staff during this unprecedented school year. The positive attitudes and flexibility everyone has shown throughout the many challenges while getting used to these new learning and teaching methods has been incredible.

The 4 day-a-week schedule has allowed us to increase daily instructional time for students while allowing more students to be together in the building at the same time. I believe this is an important step towards a return to normalcy and a positive start to next school year. We will still need to be vigilant with all of our COVID-19 prevention measures. We are also looking forward to the return of some of our traditional social events and ceremonies. While the events will look different from previous years, we are excited that we will be able to offer these events in a modified format. Stay tuned!

Sincerely,
Corey Graves

This month’s Spotlight Students are Yana Gulev and Adrian Alvarez, both 8th grade students at Solvay Middle School. Get to know them below!

What’s your favorite book?
Yana: As Brave As You by Jason Reynolds
Adrian: Refugee by Alan Gratz

What’s your favorite thing about spring?
Yana: The change to nicer weather
Adrian: The break from school

What does it mean to you to be a Bearcat?
Yana: Being part of a community
Adrian: Pride in the school

What’s your favorite outdoor activity?
Yana: Roller skating
Adrian: Playing basketball

What’s your favorite place to visit in the summer?
Yana: Florida to visit family
Adrian: I’ve always wanted to visit Hawaii

What’s your favorite dessert?
Yana: Pastries
Adrian: Brownies

PERSONAL IMAGE
6th Grade:
Math - A critical area of instruction at grade six is writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations. In previous grades, students wrote numerical equations and simple equations involving one operation with a variable. In grade six, students start the systematic study of equations and inequalities and methods to solve them.
Social Studies - We wrapped up our Ancient Greece unit, and we’re moving on to Ancient Rome. We’ll study Rome from 1,000 BC when the Latins first arrived through the collapse of the Roman Empire in 476 AD. Highlights include the Colosseum, Julius Caesar and Spartacus’ journey from slave to rebel Gladiator.
Science - Earth’s temperature has increased over the past 120 years. Scientists believe this is due to increased levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. During our current unit, students will explore interactions between factors that affect Earth’s climate. They will explore temperature data from multiple sources including classroom greenhouse effect experiments. We will also use computer-based models to explore the challenging dilemma of Earth’s changing climates.
Students will not be able to answer the question at the end of the module, but they will be able to explain how scientists can be certain that Earth is warming while not being entirely certain about how much Earth will warm. As quoted by Neil deGrasse Tyson, “One of the great challenges of this world is knowing enough about a subject to think your right but not enough about the subject to know your wrong.”
ELA - Students are currently reading Ghost by Jason Reynolds! Coming up, students will be designing their own track shoe and will write to describe why they chose the design that they did.
Health - We are continuing in the Health unit of Decision Making. In this unit, we will cover topics of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs (including Electronic Cigarettes). We are focusing on healthy choices, while learning refusal skills for times we are faced with decisions that are less healthy.

7th Grade:
Math - Students are learning how to set up and solve different algebraic equations
Social Studies - Students are making their way towards the division between the North and the South.
Science - Students will be studying evolution in Mr. Marshall’s class, while Ms. Fey’s class is studying plant life cycles, weather, and ecology.
ELA - Students are reading their independently chosen texts and working on writing fiction or nonfiction narratives.
Spanish - Students are working through creating and describing their dream homes entirely in Spanish, and will be learning stem-changing verbs next!
Italian - Students will be learning about "are" and "ere" verbs.
Health - Students are continuing to discuss Decision Making. In this unit, we will cover topics of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs. We are currently learning about Electronic Cigarettes. We are focusing on healthy choices, while learning refusal skills for times we are faced with decisions that are less healthy.

8th Grade:
Math – Students will be starting to learn about systems of equations. Students will be learning how to solve for two variables at a time. This skill will be important as they start to prepare to enter the high school next year and begin Algebra.
Algebra – Regents review is currently running on Sunday’s from 3pm - 5pm. Early sign up is not required, any Algebra student is welcome. In Algebra students will start to explore what qualifies as a function, comparing the differences between linear and quadratic equations.
Social Studies – Students are beginning their unit on World War 2. They will study the United States’ role in the war, and study the Holocaust.
Physical Science - For the next several weeks students will learn about what happens to objects during a collision as they work their way through a unit designed to meet the new Next Generation Science Standards. They will be conducting experiments, analyzing data, drawing models, and having discussions about their findings with partners and in small groups.
Biology - students will be starting new units on Natural Selection and Ecology in the coming weeks. They are currently evaluating population data for Rock Pocket Mice and trying to figure out why the fur color of the mice has changed over time.
ELA - Students just completed a story about a vacation they researched. Before completing the stories they learned about the parts of PLOT and learned how to write dialogue. We will begin reading Night by Elie Wiesel, which centers around the Holocaust and Elie Wiesel’s experiences.
Advanced ELA - We just finished reading To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee. Students will be writing a literary analysis essay where they explore the heroes within the text. We will then begin reading Night by Elie Wiesel, which centers around the Holocaust and Elie Wiesel’s experiences.
SMS recognized "March is Reading Month" with its own March Madness Tournament of Books. A 'book selection committee,' consisting of ELA and AIS teachers, along with the school librarian nominated the top 16 books 5th-8th grade students typically enjoy during the school year. The books were organized into a bracket and each week, students and staff voted on their favorite books in each matchup. After four weeks, the 16 books were narrowed down to one winner - Wonder, by R.J. Palacio.

Students and staff also had a chance to fill out their own "office pool" style bracket to predict who they thought would win the tournament. Ms. Geist had the most accurate bracket for the staff and Jason Ash completed the most accurate student bracket. Here are the final results!

Student Council held their “Pie the Teacher” event in March. Members of Student Council sold raffle tickets for a chance to pie one of the teachers, or principals, in the face. SMS Students raised $298! Student Council will be donating some of the proceeds to both Helping Hounds Animal Rescue, and the Cystic Fibrosis foundation. Good job SMS students!
COUNSELOR’S CORNER

“Being a teen can be really stressful! Mindfulness is a powerful way to handle stress and live life more fully. Mindfulness is all about living fully in the present moment, without judgment, and with an attitude of kindness and curiosity. It’s about breathing, noticing what’s happening right here and now, sending a gentle smile to whatever you’re experiencing at this moment (whether it’s easy or difficult), and then letting it go. You can be mindful anytime, anywhere, no matter what you’re doing. It sounds simple, but it’s not always easy to do, especially when you are stressed!”

Give mindful breathing a shot. Slowly breathe in for 3 seconds, hold for 3 Seconds, Slowly breathe out for 3 seconds. Try to focus on your breath and be present in the moment! Start with 3 breaths and build up.

FINE ARTS

Above, our 7/8th grade band has a very productive and safe rehearsal while social distancing!

Farm Fresh
Shyla Cox – Grade 8

Pears
Yana Gulev – Grade 8

Rainbow Painting
Joseph Dennee – Pre-K

Rainbow Painting
Yeva Korobii – Pre-K