

---

# 8 White Spring News

April 2016

---



March and April have been full both in our individual classes and on team, and the capstone event was Spirit Week! Above are some pictures from various Spirit Days. We earned top honors with our "Welcome to White-KiKi" Hawaiian Beach Day. With that distinction, we were awarded several points for the coveted Color Cup. We also did a great job representing our team on "8 White Spirit Day" on the Friday before vacation. Check out, watch, and listen to our team chant! There is a youtube link on our Schoology page.

---

## History

We've had a very eventful spring thus far in World History on 8 White. Mr. Cola, our student teacher from Assumption College, did a great job working with our students. He quickly acclimated to life on 8 White and our students welcomed him with open arms. Over this time we covered what has been some of the "cooler" topics in our curriculum. We studied about the entire era of the Middle Ages, also known as the Dark Ages or Medieval Period. It allowed us to recall the Fall of Rome, which we studied at the beginning of the year and how life in Western Europe dramatically changed in all aspects of life since that time. We then studied five major events which helped bring Western Europe out of the "Dark Ages". They were the Magna Carta, The Crusades, The Revival of Trade & Growth of Towns, the Black Death, and the Hundred Years' War. Mr. Cola and I decided to use a Project Based Learning approach to this part of the unit. It allowed students a bit more freedom to research and learn about their topics as they worked on their project. Students did a phenomenal job on this very extensive project that we worked on in class and at home for two weeks. Recently we've begun to study the Renaissance, which was a time of "rebirth" for Western Europe. It's been great to see students grasp the idea that Western Europe began this transformation for various reasons, all of which have allowed students to have a more analytical, higher level approach to the information we've covered in class. We also become Art Historians & Critics as students can now differentiate between Classical, Medieval, and Renaissance art with ease. Down the homestretch, we'll continue to learn about the Renaissance prior to learning about the Reformation and finally the Age of Exploration, which will be our last unit of the school year. Wow! This year is flying by!

## English/Language Arts with Ms. Egan

Our study of the historical fiction novel *Crispin: The Cross of Lead* by Avi, brought us back to the Middle Ages. This novel nicely dovetails with what your children were learning in History. In addition to learning about the genre of historical fiction, and how authors connect history with fiction, we stepped into the shoes of Crispin, the main character in the novel, and considered what it would be like if we did not know our true identities. Your children wrote moving poetry about identity. We also looked closely at how a mentor can impact how a character develops in a novel. While we were reading, we had excellent small group and whole class discussions. Your children also had the opportunity to do a bit of acting, as they reenacted key scenes. We always embed technology in our learning, and your children created presentations of pivotal moments in the novel using the app Explain Everything. During the final section of the novel, we began focusing on and deepening our research skills. As a way to connect the Middle Ages to today, our choice of research topics include: Lead-the

---

History and Causes of Lead Poisoning; Epidemics - Ebola, Zika, the Plague; The Influence of Medicine in the Middle Ages on Medicine Today; Advances in Farming - GMO's, Farming Techniques; Advances of War, Weapons & Battle Tactics. In learning how to effectively research, we will use at least four non-fiction sources including a book or magazine, a data base, and websites. We are working with Ms. Bedard, the Media Center Specialist, to guide us in effective research techniques. After we finish our research paper, we will move on to the play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, by William Shakespeare. We will learn about the art of Shakespeare by living the play. We will also have the opportunity to watch a professional, and very lively production of the play. Conveniently, Shakespeare turns 400 this year, so there are many opportunities to learn about how and why Shakespeare is still relevant today.

## Math with Ms. Madan

In math class, students spent a month exploring aspects of geometry through transformations. The main focus question was:  
HOW CAN WE USE MATH LANGUAGE TO COMMUNICATE MOVEMENT?  
Students quickly realized that using directional words such as “left, right, up, down, over” can still lead to confusion because of perspective, as well as not everyone understands the meaning of those words – like a non-English speaker or a computer. We discussed how we could use numbers on a coordinate grid to pinpoint the exact location of an object. The main transformations we studied were translations, rotations, reflections, and dilations. The students got introduced to “DARRT”, the plastic fish that helped us remember all the transformations and was the object that we moved around on the board. A group of honors students used transformation to create their own Doodle Jump game using a coding app called Hopscotch. Their work was featured in the weekly OMS update. We discussed that animated movies, like those of Pixar and Disney, are made by using transformation coding in order to “move” characters across the screen. Students became very comfortable using operations such as addition and multiplication to describe movement of points and lines on a coordinate plane. Moving on to our next unit, we switched gears and went back to working with algebra. The main focus question of the systems unit was:  
HOW CAN WE USE LINEAR EQUATIONS TO HELP US SOLVE PROBLEMS?  
We focused on word problems that were asking to solve for two unknowns, or two variables. In most problems, there were two requirements that had to be met by the two unknowns. We spent time discussion strategies that would help us figure out these unknowns. Students made tables, graphs, and equations to represent the word problems and then find the answers. There was a lot of work with solving equations and graphing linear functions – which was a great review on the first unit we did in September! Students in honors made posters showing a variety of ways to solve word problems and presented to the whole class. Students presented their work daily in class

---

on the board and explained to the class their methods. We took the unit test right before April vacation after many days of review and hard work!

## English/Language Arts & Math with Mr. Shaw

### English/Language Arts

We finished our third novel, *Crispin: Cross of Lead*. During this unit, we worked thoroughly on expanding our explanations in our writing. We looked closely at movie trailers that were broken down second by second which demonstrated to the students a different approach of expanding their writing. Students worked hard on peer editing and revising their own work. We used different workshops to help brush up our skills. At the end of the unit, students were asked to create either a short movie clip or explain everything that showed Crispin's change throughout the book. Student's needed to use direct quotes as evidence, pick a song that goes with each part, and find or draw pictures that help communicate what is going on in the scene. As the culminating activity, students needed to provide an exemplary explanation of what they chose. Students worked hard on this project and it was a great way to transition into break. When we come back from break we will be starting our research paper.

### Math

Transformations and Transversals. Students had two big Geometry Units back to back. First, we looked at transformations and how figures move on the coordinate plane. We looked at the implications of transformations in graphic design and even used coding to help develop and show our understanding. Next, we learned about transversals where students built on their previous knowledge of angles and created their own city to demonstrate their knowledge. Students designed a road map of their city which applied the vocabulary and understanding in a meaningful way. Before break, we began working on Systems of Equations where we will use both Geometry and Algebra to prove our answer. We will continue this unit when we return from break.

### Science

In science, our latest topic of study is energy. More specifically, calculating mechanical energies, recognizing energy transformation between potential and kinetic, as well as the law of conservation of energy. We began by trying to explain and define the idea of energy based on prior knowledge of the word. Then, we practiced quantifying and calculating energy through labs where we built ramps and dropped different types of balls to observe the

behavior of the balls as they rolled down the ramps. This allowed us to explain changes in their energy. We completed an internet-based simulation, which somewhat resembled a game, that introduced friction in a skate park and the role it plays in energy transformations. Finally, right before break, students worked with their groups to design and build a roller coaster for a marble out of foam tubing that practiced, as well as demonstrated, their understanding of everything we have learned so far. To date, your student(s) have an understanding: that energy is the ability to do work or cause change; that energy is transformed- not destroyed; of the formulas for calculating gravitational potential energy, kinetic energy, and total mechanical energy; and can identify types of energy, as well as energy transformations. Moving forward, we will continue to refine our understanding of these rather abstract ideas before moving into heat transfer as the final unit of the year.

## Dates to Know

### State Testing and Upcoming Events

Friday, April 29	Math PARCC	9:00 - 10:45 and 12:30 - 2:15
Wednesday, May 4	Math PARCC	12:30 - 2:15
Wednesday, May 11	Science MCAS	8:00 - 11:00
Thursday, May 12	Science MCAS	8:00 - 11:00
Friday, May 20	ELA PARCC	8:00 - 10:45 and 12:30 - 2:15
Monday, May 23	Shakespeare Performance	9:00 - 11:00
Wednesday, May 25	ELA PARCC	8:00 - 10:45 and 12:30 - 2:15
Thursday, June 16	8 White Celebration	9:00 - 11:00
Friday, June 17	Carnival Night	6:00 - 8:30
Monday, June 20	Field Day	8:00 - 2:30

