

October 2, 2009

FMS NEWS

A LOOK AT WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FREEPORT MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

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Attached

Student Directory Form
Laptop Insurance Form

BUSINESS ADDRESS

19 Kendall Lane
Freeport, Maine
04032

PHONE:
865-6051

FAX:
865-2902

Principal's Corner

The students will be taking the NECAP (New England Comprehensive Assessment Program) test in October. The NECAP's are given to students in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island. They have replaced the MEA test students used to take in March, except for Science. The 8th grade students will still be taking the MEA in science later this year. The 6th and 7th grade students will take six tests that each last just under an hour. The 8th grade students will take 8 tests that each last just under an hour. The results of the test are used for school wide planning for instruction and are part of the student placement process. Please talk to your child about the importance of the test.

The **NWEAs** (North West Education Assessment) is a national test that RSU5 students take in early November and in May. It is an online evaluation of the students reading and math skills. The results are available immediately and help the teacher develop instruction to best serve the child. The results are also used as part of the student placement process.

Bullying Survey:

Freeport Middle School is conducting student, parent and teacher surveys to help us address the bullying issues the middle school students face. Please take 10 minutes to complete the following survey. We will be sharing the results with the students, teachers and parents in the future.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=vdfa0mHBhGPmFxoJ_2bVf_2bPO_3d_3d

Common Sense Media:

In the past newsletters you have read a few short descriptions of the Common Sense Media program we are doing with all of the middle school students in RSU 5. It is a program to help students, teachers and parents all work on making sure kids are safe users of technology. We would like you to take a quick survey from Common Sense to help us plan what we need to teach in the program.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=y3mTtz7WaQpKfx_2f_2flrKnhA_3d_3d

Laptop Insurance:

The 7th and 8th grade students will be able to bring their laptops home starting on October 5. If you have not filled out a school insurance form, please make sure you do and send it back to school ASAP. The form is attached to this email.

Upcoming Events

PTC Mtg. 6:30	10/5
NECAP Testing	10/5-10/23
Columbus Day – NO SCHOOL	10/12
Early Release – Dismissal 12:25	10/20
Magazine Drive Starts	10/23
Early Release – Dismissal 12:25	10/28
Picture Retake Day	10/29
Fab Friday	10/30
FMS Social	10/30

The **first PTC meeting** of the year is Monday October 5th at 6:30. The PTC is a small (hopefully growing), but active group of parents who work to help with various school activities. The school also provides some great age appropriate information to the parents at the PTC meetings to help the parents know what the middle schools kids are doing in and out of school. This meeting we will be discussing middle schools students as users of digital media.

Agenda:

1. The Port
2. Book fair
3. Magazine drive
4. Bullying survey
5. Quick update on 8th grade trip planning
6. Common Sense, Students as users of today's digital media

Parents:

The office is missing forms for many students. The following forms: emergency info, agreement to publish and permissions and policies are updated yearly in our system. Please check your student's backpacks for forms that were due back to the office the first day of school. If additional forms are needed, have your child stop by the office. Thank You

From The Guidance Office

Study Skills and Organization grade 6 Guidance Classes

Please check in with your 6th grader regarding the Study Skills/Organization class they will have during the week. I will be seeing all the sixth graders during the morning study hall to teach strategies that will help them stay organized. We will learn techniques for studying and best practices for homework completion. This is not a skill we are born with, but rather a mixture of strategies we develop over time. Please take a few minutes to talk with your child and see what plans they have for staying on top of their responsibilities at home and school. Share ideas that you have found helpful in keeping your busy life organized. I hope this introduction is helpful and I look forward to other opportunities to help them through the middle years.

KIEVE:

What a wonderful week we had at Kieve! It was all summed up for me as I rode home with a student on the bus. I asked her what she thought of her week away and she told me, "I loved it, I made myself go out of my comfort zone." We saw much of this courage from all students as they listened and shared in the classroom lessons, climbed the high elements, and stayed overnight away from families. We will work to keep the momentum and positive culture going in our sixth grade. Ask your child about LEAD STAR and they will share what they learned about communication skills. Bravo to all!

Free Internet Access

The state is offering free internet access to students who qualify for our free or reduced lunch program. The information is located at the link below.

<http://www.maine.gov/mlti/parent/home-internet-access.shtml>

Fab Friday at FMS

Students will soon be signing up for a Fab Friday activity of their choice. Traditionally, Fab Friday is an OPPORTUNITY for a child to do a special day activity with a teacher. Some Fab Friday choices involve activities at FMS while others may travel off campus. Fab Friday is a special educational activity that a child may do with a teacher that he/she could not normally do. Some Fab Fridays incur a cost. In the past the staff has done: bread making, museum visits, apple picking, community service and service learning, canoeing, kayaking, biking to a special destination, flight lessons, digging for gems, the Portland Museum of Art, various sports at FMS, restaurant visits, humane society work, a community project, Project Adventure and much more..... Students will bring home a list of activities to pick from and you will sign the selection form of what your child's top picks are. The first Fab Friday is October 30th. Selection papers will go home the middle of October.

Library News

This week we celebrated Banned Books Week with displays of banned & challenged books, stickers to wear and colorful bulletin boards. Mr. Favreau brought his 8th grade Social Studies classes in to talk about how banned books relate to the class' recent studies of the First Amendment. The students were surprised to see many of their favorite titles listed! If you would like more information about banned and challenged books, check out the American Library Association's page (www.ala.org/bbooks) or the link on the library's webpage (Banned Books Week).

Calling 7th and 8th Grade Artists:

The PORT Teen Center is hosting the Sitting Pretty "Charity" fundraiser again this year and has invited five middle school 7th and 8th grade artists to participate. You would be painting a chair in your very own design and style. This chair will be displayed throughout Freeport and eventually auctioned off in the spring. Please contact Ms. Gosselin in the Art Room at FMS if you are interested, as they have asked me to coordinate this effort with five 7th or 8th graders (gosselinsrsu5.org). Also see the website: <http://freeportcreativeartsinitiative.blogspot.com/>
Thanks! Ms. Gosselin

STUDENT DESIGN COMMITTEE BEGINS OCTOBER 5TH!

The Student Design Committee will now be meeting each Monday from 2:30 pm. to 3:30 pm, beginning Oct. 5. This committee is dedicated to improving our school's appearance. Last year the group designed and painted colorful directional signs to show guests and new students where certain rooms and wings are in the building. The year before the group was able to participate in painting metal sculptures that now hang in our colorful lobby. The maximum number of students we can take is 18, so be sure to come to the first meeting. Our first project is to add to the design of the exercise room in the gym. Meetings are held each Monday in the Art Room 205 with Ms. Gosselin. See her if you have questions, or email at gosselins@rsu5.org.

Susan Gosselin
FMS Visual Arts 6-8

PARENT TEAM NEWS

The magazine drive will begin Friday, October 23rd with a Kick Off Assembly for all students. Magazine order collection days will be Monday, October 26th, Wednesday, October 28th, Friday, October 30th and Monday, November 2nd. This annual drive is the only major fundraiser at FMS. The proceeds go to entirely student activities. There are prizes for daily collection and overall winners. Many find this to be a fun and exciting 10 days and get into the spirit of the competition. Many decide that a direct donation is a better option for their family. In either case, the idea is to have the most participation possible to fill the coffers for the kids activities. Online ordering is available as well to spread the joy across the country. Volunteers are needed to help process orders and distribute prizes. Co-chairs are needed to help head up the effort.

Please try to volunteer for an hour or more on any collection day. Order processing 8:30 to 10:30
Prize distribution 10:00 to 11:30
Contact Liz Andrews
jackandjill@peoplepc.com
to volunteer or answer questions.

Unified Arts News

Spanish with Mrs. Robson:

6th grade students took a greeting quiz this week, look for quiz grades in binders on Monday. They are now studying the days and months in Spanish.

7th grade students will begin their Spanish speaking country projects on Monday. They will be doing research in the library for the next couple of weeks and then put together a Keynote to show the class. For project requirements email Señora Robson at robsona@rsu5.org.

8th grade students put on a fashion show this week. This is to reinforce clothing vocabulary, colors, and present tense verbs. They were very creative in coming up with outfits to wear for the show!

Le français (French) avec Madame Davis:

Exploratory French, Grade 6

We are practicing French greetings and reviewing the numbers, up to 100. Students should be practicing at home! Ask your child about “la tapette” (the flyswatter) and “L'étoile” (the star), two games we like to play for review.

French Prep, Grade 7

Students are working on a project using Photo Booth on their laptops. They are using French adjectives and the verb être to describe themselves. They should be studying Vocabulary 2 (adjectives, pronouns, and the verb être) in preparation for a quiz next week.

French Prep, Grade 8

Students in 8th grade French are learning the vocabulary for shops and shopping in France. They are finishing a project in which they are designing a French town and labeling items in French. I encourage all students to practice speaking at home!! Have your child teach you a little French!

Grade 8, Independent Study

Our French-speaking student has just finished reading Tintin en Amérique, par Hergé. Her next project will be to create her own French cartoon. We will also look at Maine's French history and discuss the culture and language of Maine's Francophone population.

8th Grade Spanish and World Cultures with Ms. Rowe

In Spanish we are reviewing present tense -ar verbs, numbers, the alphabet, telling time and more. We are also going to be having an interdisciplinary Math/Spanish class with Mr. Briasco-Brin. We will be starting a unit on clothing and will be having a fashion show later this trimester.

In World Cultures we are talking a lot about what culture is and we have been working on an extended study of Mexico. We are going to begin working with Ms. Hall-Riddle in the library on research and cultural activities. We will continue our exploration with a guest speaker from Mexico and a taste of Mexican cuisine before we move on to our next region of study.

Wellness Department:

7th grade Physical Education and Health classes will be traveling together to the YMCA to participate in a swimming program on October 5 through October 13. All PE classes continue their work in fitness development as well as units in Soccer, Basketball and Volleyball.

6th Grade Health just finished learning about stress management. They are now learning about Personal Health / Grooming.

7th Grade Health will be learning about basic nutrition.

8th Grade Health is learning about healthy relationships.

SIGN UP TO RECEIVE FMS DAILY ANNOUNCEMENTS/ WEEKLY NEWSLETTERS/GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION VIA EMAIL AT WWW.RSU5.ORG. CLICK ON FREEPORT MIDDLE SCHOOL, EMAIL ALERTS AND FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS TO ADD /CHANGE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS.

Unified Arts News Continued

Music Notes

7th Grade General Music

The 7th grade general music classes have been learning about program music and composing their own program music compositions using Garageband. Next week we will be preparing for the rock/alternative band 'The Sunstreak' to visit. The Sunstreak is one of only two bands in history to chart on the Billboard Top 40 without a record deal. The band will perform several of their songs acoustically for our students and then answer any questions students might have about performing, writing their own music, music tours, rehearsing, recording, and more! The Sunstreak will perform for all 7th grade general music students on Tuesday, October 13th.

6th Grade Band

Sixth grade band has had a great start to the school year. What a talented group! Each student has been given a new band schedule that we will begin to follow next week. If you have any questions regarding the schedule, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. York. Also, students will need to remember to fill-out their practice logs. Students must log 80 minutes each week and get a parent to initial it.

7th & 8th Grade Band

The 7th & 8th Grade Band is also off to a strong start to the school year. As we get back in the 'swing of things' students are reminded to bring their instruments home. The instrument storage area is only meant for use during school hours. It is not a long term home for instruments! Instruments are safer at home and have a higher likelihood of being practiced. I understand that many students have sports and many things to juggle on their way to school. In some instances instruments may need to stay overnight. However, ALL instruments must go home on the weekends. Also, band agreements are overdue! Please check Mrs. York's website to print another if you have still not returned yours. Thanks!

VISUAL ART 6TH - 8TH

Sixth grade artists have completed their drawing unit, exploring four basic shading techniques and sharpening their observation skills with blind contours, contours, and full value renderings. Focusing on the elements of line, shape, and value, students have completed a preliminary self-portrait, a graphic design with the letters of their first name, a drawing of their shoe, nature objects, the palm of their hand, their hand in a sign-language position, and a manikin study. Observation skills encourage students to look more closely in all their subjects. Ask your student if they can describe the four shading techniques to you. Next we will be exploring color and shape with watercolor skills.

Seventh grade artists are working with texture, depth, and three-dimensional form by exploring ceramic hand-building and glazing skills. First they experimented with pinch pots, coils, and ceramic glazes. Next they focus on composition and depth techniques on a clay relief slab in their "Favorite Places Postcard". Ask your 7th grade art student how to use the "Rule of Thirds" when taking digital pictures.

Eight grade art students are working with color theory and composition to reverse the warm and cool colors of an artist's painting. Besides doing research on the artist and learning about the artist's style and genre in art history, students are analyzing the elements and principles of design in their chosen painting. By utilizing the grid transfer process to draw their painting onto a canvas board, students will produce an acrylic painting with their own unique color scheme. To do this, students must examine the color wheel to find the reverse warm or cool color of their painting's primary, secondary, or tertiary (intermediate) colors. Ask your 8th grade artist which painting they have chosen for this project, and whether their own painting will consist mainly of warm or cool colors.

Please note: We are looking for an old tricycle and any old musical instruments for our drawing and painting units. If you have such an item that you would like to contribute, please email me at gosselins@rsu5.org. We also need color buttons for color studies. Thanks on behalf of the students.

Susan Gosselin
Visual Arts FMS 6-8
School website:
http://fms.freeportpublicschools.org/pages/FMS_teachers/sqosselin/index

GT / Enrichment News - Karin Gamache

Grade 6 GT LA: We have just finished reading, The Giver by Lois Lowry, and students are working on creating their own societies. These societies will have their own rules, regulations, traditions, and their own government. Each will be unique and students will create their citizens and the roles each plays in helping the society survive over time. They will present their societies on Friday. Students are also working on autobiographies, which are due Monday. We will soon be reading our next novel, Catherine Called Birdy by Karen Cushman. We will also be into a set of grammar units and creative writing.

Grade 7 GT LA: We will soon be completing our first novel, Flowers For Algernon by Daniel Keyes. Students will do a five-paragraph essay test as closure. We have also been working on vocabulary from the Vocabulary Workshop Series by Sadlier-Oxford. Additionally, students have been writing creative writing stories. We will soon go on to our next novel, The View From Saturday by E. L Konigsburg.

Grade 8 GT LA: We have just completed a John Steinbeck unit. Students began the unit by first researching and presenting information on Steinbeck and the Great Depression time period. We then went on to read one of his most famous novels, Of Mice and Men. Students have just presented projects on the unit, based on the themes they selected, which to them represented the book. We will now go on to an indepth study of poetry, where students will learn about various types of poems and then get an opportunity to write their own poetry.

Future Problem Solving Program: We have four FMS teams this year, one experienced team in 8th grade that has been to the nationals twice, two 7th grade teams and a 6th grade team. I am working with each grade separately, some during activity periods or study time, and some after school. Along with teaching them the six-step problem solving process, I am also working with them to study the topic: "Sensory Overload". The first in-school competition is due by Friday, October 23. The other topics we will be studying this year are: Invasive Species, Orphaned Children and Food Distribution.

Debate / Speech Team: We have two debate teams this year and so far, no speakers. We work together on Mondays after school. We are presently researching the topic: pros and cons of having a requirement that seniors do a year of community service before graduation. There are three other schools involved in this program: Yarmouth, Brunswick, and Cape Elizabeth. We will be hosting the first meet here after school on Wednesday, November 4. We are always in search of judges, so if you would be interested in judging either debate or speech, please contact me at: gamachek@rsu5.org.

Thanks!

SPORTS INFORMATION
TO ACCESS ATHLETIC SCHEDULES,
DIRECTIONS AND HAVE
CANCELLATIONS SENT TO YOU
DIRECTLY - GO TO:
<http://fms.freeportpublicschools.org/athletics> AND REGISTER.
YOU CAN ALSO CALL THE SPORTS
HOTLINE FOR DAILY CANCELLATIONS
AT 865-4706 EXT. 320

6th graders will have NECAP testing October 6th - 8th. The first test of the day will take place from 9:30 - 11:00. The second test will be from 12:30 - 2:00. Each test will take 45 minutes, with another 45 minutes available for students who need additional time.

Parents can help make this a successful experience for their children by seeing that students get a good night's sleep and eat a healthy, nutritious breakfast. Please be sure your child has a good book to read while he or she is waiting for other students to finish testing.

Social Studies-we have covered the Six Essential Elements of Geography and have moved on to looking at how land, water, and climate have affected human life. We had a very energetic and creative session of "Vocabulary Charades" in recent classes. Have your 6th grader act out the definition of "continental drift" or "climate!" Soon we will be moving on to looking at how natural resources might have impacted the development of human societies. **Mrs. Brown**

Loren Coleman: Famous Cryptozoologist/Author

On Nov. 16th the 6th grade will have an opportunity to hear noted author Loren Coleman talk about cryptozoology. Loren lives in Portland and has a cryptozoology museum in Portland. Mr. Coleman has written dozens of books (check out the nice student made bulletin board display in the library) about subjects like: Bigfoot, Loch Ness Monster, Mothman, Lake monsters, New Jersey devil, Champ, and so on. Parents are invited to this program. More information will be forthcoming.

Science Notebooks: parent check-in's requested!

All sixth graders should have an approved 3 ring binder for science. A cover collage with name, core, and science should be inserted under the plastic cover. An index with 5 or more pages recorded should be their first page in their notebook. Behind the index should be 5 - 6 science papers, all numbered. After that comes a neatly labeled divider: A, B, C's of Science. In this section there should be 26 pages, each labeled with a letter of the alphabet & the phonetic name. There should not be anything else in the notebook.

Space Camp Applications

Students (and/or parents) interested in going on the Alabama Science Adventure should pick up an application from either Mrs. Brown or Mr. Carkin. Along with the application is a parent brochure with all the details involved in the program. Applications must be typed and are due on October 30th. The trip is composed of: Pathfinder program at the Space and Rocket Center, fossil collecting at the Vulcan Quarry, flight lessons at the Athens Airport, spelunking in a local cavern.

ELA is deep into narratives. We are reading, discussing, and currently writing our own. September Reading Calendars are due! and the October calendar has been distributed. Thank you for reminding, initialing, encouraging; it does make a difference. **Ms Cavanaugh**

Literacy News - Mr. Witte The 6th graders are finishing up their biography paragraphs that we had to set aside last week for the trip to Kieve. This is our first opportunity to use the laptops—always more professional looking (and fun too). Next we will draw portraits to accompany the paragraphs.

Sniffles and runny noses are everywhere! We are going through tissues very, very quickly. We would greatly appreciate the donation of boxes of tissues. Thank you in advance!

The 7th Grade has been in and out of Acadia National Park this week! In two groups (overlapping on Wednesday), students traveled via coach bus to the SEA Research & Learning Center at Schoodic Point. At the Park, ranger-educators lead small group investigations into environmental science topics, including habitat hikes, forest succession mapping with GPS, marine environment studies, and shoreline geography. Students on the trip are up at 6:30 and not in bed until 9:30! Back at school, the 7th grade teachers are leading investigations into topics related to the trip. Mr. Mason is storytelling ghost stories of Down East. Students will then try their hands at writing or acting out stories. Mrs. Mac is using the Library's collection of digital cameras to have students build portfolios of their own "school habitat" photos. Either the indoor (thematic) portfolio or the outdoor portfolio will be used to create a podcast or mini-film with voice-over narration. Completed projects will be made available on the FMS LA7 wiki. Ms. Smith is exploring the history of Acadia Park and environs through documentary films. Mr. Rose will do GPS activities that teach students about this important technology, using the FMS Garmin units. **NO HOMEWORK!** but Team 7 does anticipate that this special week-long experience will result in a great deal of learning - about one of Maine's unique environments, about working and learning in a group, about Maine's stories, and about laptop technology. Thank you to all of the parents who have supported this experience!

Facts about Acadia National Park and surrounds abounded in the FMS Acadia Jeopardy Competition held on Tuesday. Using the format of the popular game show Jeopardy, students asked questions about answers such as Ellsworth Schist, Samuel Champlain and the Somes Sound fjord. The winners in Division 1 were the Acadian Porcupines (Emily J, Taylor S, Kristi SP, and Kati R). "The Bubbles " - (Chloe W., Devin R. Rachel R. and Brian S.) won the Division 2 match and in the Division 3 match the "Sky Muffins" (Erik L., Blake E. and Conner C.) prevailed. Good job on the part of all the students. **Grade 7 Ms Smith**

Students are completing or have completed two Keynote presentations. For Social Studies, they are combining images and words to teach (themselves and others) about major geographical features (exactly what is a fjord?). For Literacy, they are creating "bullet point" slides to support an informational oral presentation about one of the key players in the REAL Salem witch trials. Literacy project presentations will be followed by a reading of a historical novel about the witch trials - [A Break With Charity](#). If you have the time next week, ask your child to show off his/her presentation and oral speaking skills!

Mrs. Mac's classes will complete the Middle Ages research unit by submitting the journey (notes, organizers, rubric), posting their written product to a webnotebook, and participating in a Speed Teaching session. We will then jump right into the readings for a fairy tale compare/contrast essay. Our first vocabulary and spelling lists will be distributed next week. These will be 2-week study lists.

There is a 2nd math packet for HW.

Next week we will complete five of the new NECAP tests. A sixth test will be taken on the Tuesday after Columbus Day. Please remember that 7th graders need lots of rest and a good breakfast if they are to do their best on these state tests. We will be having academic and UA classes, but we will follow a somewhat altered schedule. You will see some HW, but not a full load. It will be important for parents to check the agenda so that students can continue to develop "the HW habit."

Reminders: (1) Laptops will not be going home unless all paperwork and the insurance payment (or waiver of insurance) have been received. (2) Students who are absent are generally responsible for the work missed. This means seeing every teacher the first day back in school. If there is an extended absence, parents should call the Office or contact Kathleen Brown or Betsy Skv-McIlvain so that notes and other materials can be gathered and picked up at the school.

World Strides Washington DC Fall Trip

We are in our final stages of planning for the 7th grade trip to DC. There was a parent meeting on Oct. 1st discussing the itinerary. If any parents missed the meeting please see me. Our group will be leaving on Oct. 10 from the Portland Jetport with connections to Baltimore. This year we are having our own bus, driver, and tour guide: WOW!!!!!! Our itinerary includes: White House tour, Smithsonian, National Zoo, Fords Theater, Mt. Vernon, a night ghost tour in Alexandria, Capitol, Washington monument, Holocaust, Viet Nam Wall, an FMS wreath laid at the Tomb of the Unknown soldier, Changing of the Guard ceremony, FDR memorial, WWII memorial, Postal Museum, Archives, a group photo at the Capitol, 4 star hotel accommodations, and more. We will be returning Monday evening to the Portland Jetport. Children should be picked up at the Jetport. Sixth graders will receive registration packets in October to sign up to go to DC in the fall of 2010.

All cores grade 8

Students in the 8th grade participated in a number of team building activities last week, as well as listened to a presentation from Thom Harnett, the assistant Attorney General, who provided oversight to the Civil Right's Project. Through stories and actual situations Thom told of the consequences of discriminatory behavior both to the perpetrator--legal involvement with law enforcement and the courts, and to the victim--emotional and psychological damage, as well as the loss educational opportunity--when such acts interfere with a student's ability to learn and thrive. Our goal is to work on team-building and to create stronger connections to our FMS community culture. This is an area that we will continue to address throughout the year.

Language Arts - Ms Murphy

In LA students have read a short story and reviewed elements of plot and figurative language, as well as have been assessed on specific vocabulary from the story. Currently the students are writing a persuasive communication to Mr. Grogan. In the upcoming weeks we will learn about a variety of poetic forms and techniques used when creating poems.

We will interpret a number of poems, add reflections to our logs, and create pieces of our own. We will also begin the novel Lizzy Bright and the Buckminster Boy by Gary Schmidt, which is about the events that took place on Malaga Island off Phippsburg, ME in 1915.

NECAP Testing for 8th graders will take begin October 6th and will start promptly at 8:00 am for the 10 following school days (no Mondays). These assessments are taking the place of the MEA's. 8th grade students will have 3 assessments in reading and math and 2 in writing. Each assessment is provided 90 minutes.

• **Please make every effort to see that your 8th grader is rested (as much as you can), has had a breakfast (of sorts) and arrives at school promptly. Thank you in advance.**

Social Studies-Mr. Favreau

Students have just finished an in depth look at the 5 freedoms of the 1st Amendment. We still have several to go but we will now take a break and begin our look at the Reconstruction Era. Previously I had mentioned that October would be spent on our Maine Forest Unit, but due to scheduling conflicts and the upcoming standardized testing, there are simply not enough class days to give the students our complete lessons. The unit will not go away, we will simply look to the spring and when we can get back outside to implement that full unit. Look for textbooks and laptops to be coming home soon, and the start of regular homework. Be sure to check my webpage for regular updates. <http://web.me.com/hythr>

Math - Mr. Briasco-Brin

The score to beat in the 4's Golf Challenge is now 43. The all time record is 42 if anyone is interested in getting some "above and beyond" credit before the math contests start in November (American Mathematics Competition and the first Continental Math League meet).

Fifteen of the Baby-M projects have been selected to be used during my presentation on the Mandelbrot Set at the annual Maine Association for Middle Level Education Conference at Sugarloaf on October 22. These fifteen students demonstrated extraordinary number sense, creativity, organization and effort.

Kids recently brushed up on their knowledge and skills with angles in preparation for our future forest unit. Kids also began making a set of clinometers so they will be able to measure the heights of trees. They will then find the percent errors of the Biltmore stick measurements from social studies class.

On Monday, kids will finish up the last two rotations of our first set of team building activities. The NECAPS will then begin on Tuesday. The three math tests will be administered on October 9, 13 and 14. Kids will be taking the tests in their home bases, and are reminded to bring reading books with them. Testing will begin at 8:00 and end at 9:30 each day.

Mr. Amory will soon be having kids work on some physics in Tech Ed. In preparation for this, I will be showing them how to use trig ratios to calculate the x- and y-components of force vectors.

I'd like to thank Ms. Rowe for inviting me into her Spanish class today. Our math/Spanish lesson allowed kids to get some practice spelling and pronouncing numbers through discovering the alphanumeric cycles that exist in both languages.

Congratulations to my 8th grade students (and parents for their support) for keeping the no zeros on homework assignments streak alive. It's now two years and five months old and counting.

Now that kids can take their laptops home, I'm hoping they take advantage of using the programs and applets I've written for them. Cores 5 and 1 can take advantage of this right away (there's a quiz on Monday - hint, hint).

Finally, I'd like to remind parents to continue e-mailing me with questions and updates. I only ask that you please use the briasco-brina@rsu5.org address instead of the coconet address.