



Abbott Middle School

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Joe Hadley, Principal
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Principal's Newsletter, Sept. 15, 2017

Dear Abbott parents:

This is the second of my monthly principal's newsletters, which are intended to provide parents with updates about what's currently going on at Abbott. In this newsletter, you'll find updates on new curriculum, PBIS, outdoor education, sports, electives, an upcoming earthquake drill, and an upcoming assembly for 7th/8th graders.

Solar Eclipse

On August 21st, all Abbott students participated in viewing the solar eclipse using special safety glasses generously purchased by Abbott's PTA for the event (see picture at right). Many students also created special pinhole viewing boxes in their science classes, and used these boxes to observe the progress of the solar eclipse.

PBIS Updates

As noted in my prior newsletter, Abbott has been rolling out the implementation of our Positive Behavior and Intervention Supports (PBIS) framework this year. The first phase of our roll-out was to create a detailed behavior matrix for each area of our campus with clearly defined expectations for what safe, responsible, and respectful behavior looks like. In the opening weeks of the school year, each teacher reviewed lessons for each area of our campus with their students. Our next phase of roll-out is to expand the practice of acknowledging the many students who regularly demonstrate appropriate behaviors at school. Our teachers and staff will be doing weekly in-class and school-wide recognitions and rewards for students who have demonstrated outstanding character.

Curriculum

This year, our district adopted a new English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum for grades 6-8, and that curriculum is called SpringBoard. The SpringBoard textbook is a consumable textbook which allows students to mark text selections as they read and to record their responses to readings directly in the textbook. Each grade level textbook is built around a theme. In 6th grade the theme is **change**, in 7th the theme is **choice**, and in 8th the theme is **challenge**. In the front of each SpringBoard textbook in a section titled "To the Student", you will find information about the structure and content of the textbook, and you will also find information on the California Common Core State Standards for ELA and the English Language Development Standards. You can also find information about the



Abbott students view the solar eclipse on August 21st using special glasses.



Leadership students add handprints during a teambuilding activity in Ms. Bollbach's class.



7th graders learn how to build a circuit in Mrs. Rose's science class.



Students practice scientific drawing in Mrs. Ayala's new art elective, Bioreativity.

SpringBoard curriculum at the following link: <https://springboard.collegeboard.org/ela?state=ca>

While reviewing the new ELA curriculum adoption, our district's educational leaders concluded that the new curriculum would be more effectively taught in a two period block of instruction. Abbott had traditionally done a single block of ELA in 6th grade with the addition of a separate period of a course called Reading. In 7th and 8th grade, most Abbott students had a single block of ELA. With the new ELA adoption, all 6th and 7th grade students now have a double block of ELA instruction. Our fellow San Mateo middle schools, Borel and Bayside, also have double blocks of ELA instruction at 6th and 7th grade. Our 8th graders will continue to have a single period of ELA, and most 8th graders will have space for two electives in their schedule. In SchoolLoop, parents will see the double ELA block as the pairing of a period of Language Arts and a period of Reading. Although these appear as separate course titles, they function as a two period block of ELA instruction.

We are also in the midst of a new science curriculum in our district. Several years ago, our district's science teachers elected to shift to an integrated model of science instruction where each of the major middle school science disciplines (earth science, life science, and physical science) would be integrated at each grade level. Last year, our 6th grade teachers rolled out the integrated approach to science instruction, and this year our 7th grade teachers are rolling out the integrated model. The final year of the science roll-out will be for next year's 8th grade class.

Outdoor Ed Info.

During the week of October 2nd, our 6th grade students who applied for Outdoor Education will attend Camp Jones Gulch in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The four day retreat at Outdoor Education provides students with a unique opportunity to engage with the natural world, explore forest and beach ecosystems, and live in a community with their fellow students and environments. This will also be a fun occasion for our 6th graders to make new friends and strengthen existing friendships with their fellow students from the Abbott Class of 2020.

Sports Updates

Our fall sports season is underway, and we have a record number of Abbott teams participating this season. We have 4 girls' volleyball teams, two co-ed flag football teams, and a co-ed cross country team. As many of you know, our district sports program is funded primarily through voluntary donations from families and businesses. The San Mateo-Foster City Education Foundation supports our middle school athletics program, and we want all Abbott parents to be aware that the Ed Foundation will be hosting a "RUN2FunD Education" event for TK through 8th graders on **Sunday, September 24th from 2-5 PM** at Hillsdale High School Track! We hope to see many Abbott students and families at this fun event. To register yourself or a team of friends, or for more information, please go to their event page at smfcedfund.org/run2fund.

New Electives

Abbott has a number of popular new electives this year, including AVID, Science Fiction, and Bio-Creativity. The photo at right above comes from Ms. Ayala's new Bio-Creativity class, which combines elements of both art and science as students explore the science of art and the art of science. The class just finished a unit called "Insect Anatomy and Scientific Illustration", and will next begin a unit titled "You can learn a lot of things from the flowers", where students will create giant flowers while they learn about scientific classification of flowers and plant adaptations.

Earthquake Drill

On the morning of Sept. 28th, our district will be doing a comprehensive earthquake drill. As the recent natural disasters in Florida, Mexico, and Houston remind us, we all need to be prepared for natural disasters, especially those of us who live in a region that periodically experiences major earthquakes. Families can find lots of information and resources about preparing for earthquakes at the following links: <https://www.ready.gov/> <https://www.shakeout.org/california/>

Nightmare on Puberty Street

On Nov. 2nd, Abbott 7th and 8th graders will see a performance of a stage show titled Nightmare on Puberty Street, which is a fast-paced show featuring current music and dance that encourages students to talk about critical health issues and ask questions. The show is specifically designed for middle school audiences and is produced as a free community service by Kaiser Permanente. We will be sending home more information about the performance in the coming weeks. You can read about the show at the following link: <https://etnortherncalifornia.kaiserpermanente.org/nightmare-on-puberty-st/>

Those are the updates for this edition of the principal's newsletter. Our October intersession break (Oct. 6-20) will be here soon, and I hope you and your student have some opportunities to relax and to spend some quality family time during the break.

Sincerely,

Joe Hadley, Principal