OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS

2026/2027





Community & Connection



What a month for Middle School!

Tessie Middle School has enjoyed a jam-packed month! From student-led initiatives (*E-Waste Drive & developing Homework Platform for teachers*) to community events (*Mid-Autumn Festival, International Week, Costume Parade & Tessie MUN*) and a vast array of wondrous practice on campus as you will see! Tessie has been the place to be in October ! The Oaks welcomed the Grade 5 student to experience life as a Middle Schooler, and our MS Faculty welcomed prospective families at Open House! What a Community! The Compass continues to show the Tessellations way!

Bec

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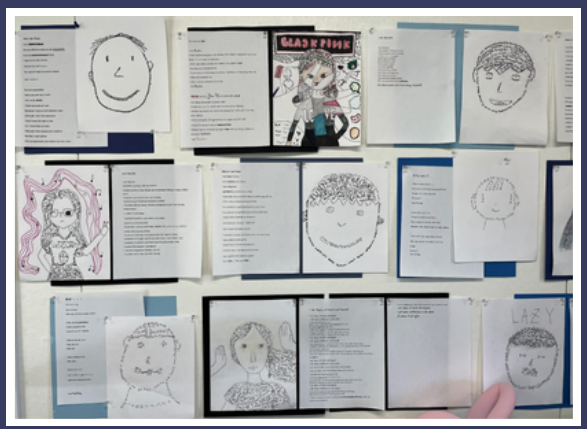
2026/2027

English updates

Grade 6



In English Language Arts, students continue their study of *Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhhà Lai. Through close reading, students annotate their personal copies to track key details, themes, and literary techniques. Working independently and collaboratively, they are analyzing the verse novel through three lenses; historical context, poetic devices, and character development, using shared digital documents to record their insights and interpretations. Class presentations allow students to share their analyses and discuss how Lai's use of free verse poetry captures the emotional landscape of displacement and cultural identity.



Building on this work, students have begun a reflective writing project titled "Being and Becoming." In this assignment, they will interview a relative or trusted adult about a meaningful childhood challenge, then write a reflective essay exploring the themes of struggle, growth, and identity. Inspired by Thanhhà Lai's poetic style, students will also compose two original poems—an *I Am* poem that captures the interviewee's voice and a free verse poem that mirrors Lai's craft of transforming personal history into art. This project invites students to connect literature, real-world storytelling, and their own developing voices as writers and thinkers.

Over the past three Wednesdays, the Oaks have welcomed our 5th-grade students for Shadow Day during English class. They have not only shared their work, reviewed their Tool Box Terms, and explored their creativity through poetry writing, but also practiced their hosting skills by helping our visitors feel welcome, included, and engaged in the classroom experience.

Mikki







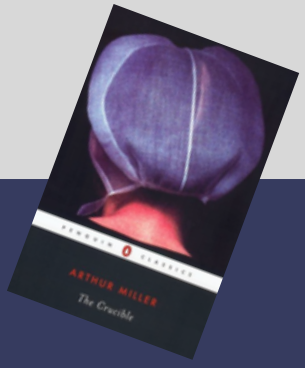


OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS 2026/2027

English updates





Grade 7

We recently finished our reading of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, examining how social pressure, moral conformity, and fear can influence human behavior and transform perception. Through close reading and discussion, students analyzed how societal forces shape individuals into either "heroes" or "monsters," depending on dominant cultural beliefs.

Building on these themes, students are investigating how beliefs form, gain influence, and become reinforced by the people and communities that embrace them. Through their monster research assignment and our reading of *The Crucible*, students are exploring the question: *How does a belief become powerful enough to shape how we think, act, and treat others?* This inquiry examines how fear, repetition, authority, social pressure, and shared assumptions can influence what people accept as truth, and how these forces can transform a belief into something perceived as monstrous or heroic. As we transition to our next text, *Animal Farm* by George Orwell, students will continue this inquiry by examining how leaders shape beliefs, how language and propaganda influence public opinion, and how power can transform the ideals of a community.



Mikki

OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS

2026/2027

English updates

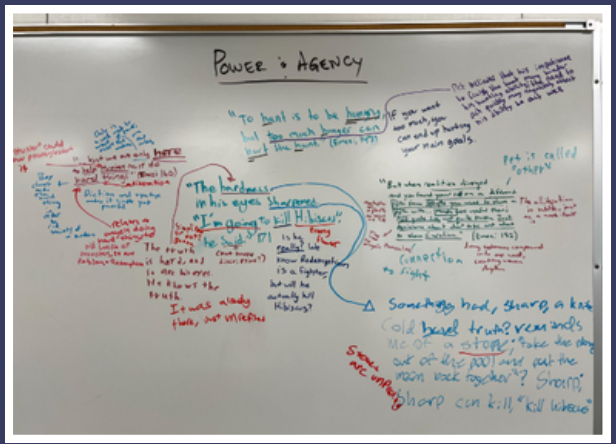


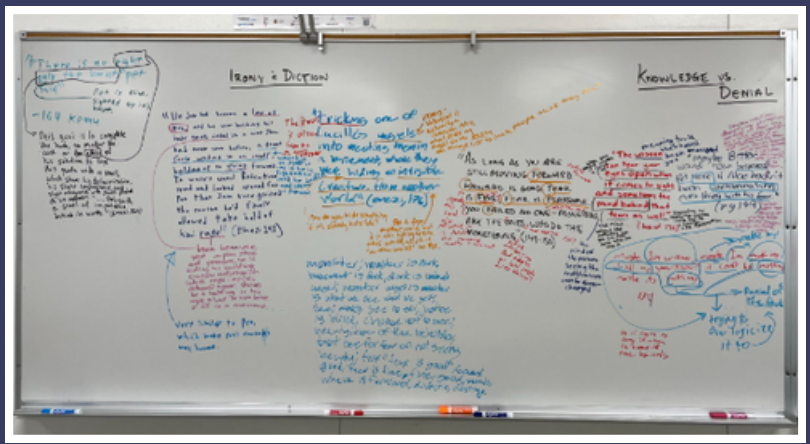
Grade 8

Deep in Akwaeke Emezi's novel, *Pet*, our 8th-grade scholars are cultivating, curating, and culminating their interpretations of literature by tracking complex themes to produce clear, compelling claims through close reading. By articulating the connotations of specific diction within their selected quotes, learners build unique interpretations from the ground floor of language up to larger, abstract expressions. By analyzing authorial craft choices, students dwell in and expand the depths of their inferences—elevating their writing, discussion, and critical thinking skills.

Rather than jumping to hasty conclusions, lingering in the space of *how* a text conveys meaning directly supports high school readiness. True insight cannot rely on grandiose claims made after a hasty read. Instead, slowing down the process allows students to use literary scholarship to investigate the most curious aspects of an author's creation.

Literature, as our students are discovering, is the artistic rendition of human expression through the tool of language. Creating deep meaning requires both the mechanics of literary analysis and the spirit of collaboration. A cohesive and compelling interpretation requires community—whether in person around our discussion table or in dialogue with texts written across time—to convey how a work speaks to our current moment or uncovers a truth about our shared humanity.





Our learners will be more than prepared for high school writing and discussion-based courses. They are actively mastering the strategies of student-governed dialogue through the Harkness model: deepening their understanding of a text in real time, shared among scholars. This deep cultivation of meaning directly serves our learners when composing analytical paragraphs anchored in original, close-read claims.

Evan

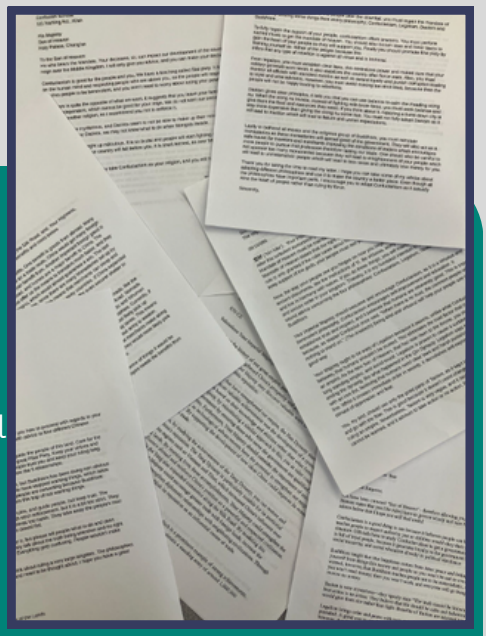
OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS

2026/2027

History updates

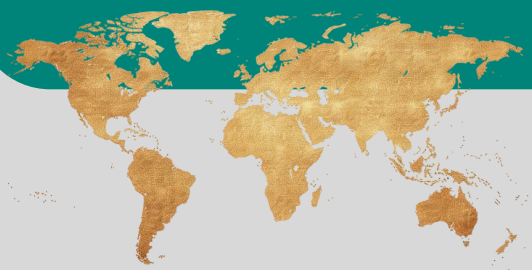
Grade 6



Since we returned from the Middle School Retreat about a month ago, the sixth graders continued to investigate Medieval China and the various factors influencing the perspectives of people in the past as well as societal, cultural, economic and political events and developments. In that stretch, we decided to focus more intently on developments in the Middle Kingdom and pause our extension into surrounding East Asian areas, as several skill areas needed development.

From note-taking to material management, we continue to practice executive functioning techniques and establish routines to enhance our historical thinking skills as well as our general approaches to classwork and homework. Particularly, to elevate our historical considerations and exercise our skills as writers, we started a new project - Letters to the Emperor. For about two weeks now, the sixth graders drafted and re-crafted historically informed advice to the Chinese Emperor or Son of Heaven. These pieces of advice concerned: how to best govern using four philosophies (Confucianism, Taoism, Legalism, and Buddhism), whether or not to expand along the Silk Road (a benefits and cost analysis), and which accomplishments of three Ancient and Medieval Chinese dynasties (comparing Qin, Han, Sui, Tang, and/or Song) could inspire help the Emperor to act on behalf of his realm in order to retain the Mandate of Heaven. Structurally and technically, the students practiced using claims (advice), evidence (historical examples), and reasoning (explanation) in a set of three professional letters from the perspective of a trusted government advisor and scholar. Given milestone dates, the students benefited from receiving revision requests for their drafts before the final deliverables were due.

Ahead, a case study on the Silk Road will transition our topical focus from China outward to its neighbors both near (Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia) and far (Rome and Medieval Europe). Our next unit will connect historical contexts worlds apart and across geographies; this opportunity allows students to construct stronger and persuasive arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources while also establishing broader historical contexts.



Nick

OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS 2026/2027

History updates

Grade 7



For the last several weeks, we have established a broader historical context of colonial life in America spanning 1500-1750. The students have examined the general narrative of colonial North American history while also reading various provocative and multicultural histories, giving voice to others from the past. To exercise our writing skills, students have engaged in prompted journal writing concerning that reading as well as a larger research project.



Extending a little over two weeks of research, the 7th graders published their Zines and Adverts, completing our second project - A Colonial Print Shop. The students selected five topics from a variety of provided terms, events, figures, and concepts and began to identify inquiries and deeper questions to perform research. Subsequently, the students assumed the perspective of colonial-era investigative journalists to develop written and creative expressions that would reach colonial audiences: three informative mini-briefs in Zine form and two public service announcements (adverts).

Additionally, students complemented these five expressions with unique paragraphs conveying the relevance of their research findings and securing the rationale behind their approaches to the chosen topics. Lastly, the students practiced their skills at crafting bibliographies using MLA format. Now we can begin our march toward independence, having established life and society in colonial North America. Over the next couple weeks we will practice our skills of explaining multiple causes and effects and evaluate their relative influence on events and developments from the French and Indian War to the ratification of the US Constitution. We will detect possible limitations in the historical record, critically analyze source materials, and identify multiple factors that influenced perspectives in the historical era.

Nick

OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS 2026/2027

History updates

Grade 8



During International Celebration week, the eighth graders completed their Imperial Council project, delivering historically informed (physical) artifacts, completed (digital) Asian Empire dossiers, and well-prepared summit performances, where they role-played as imperial dignitaries. The last unit established an Early Modern Asian world of land-based empires (1450-1750) recovering from the collapse of the Mongols, ravages of the bubonic plague, and conquests of Tamerlane. We analyzed the governing practices and cultures of the Ming/Qing dynasties, Shogunate Japan, Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals. Ahead, we switch orientations to focus on Western Eurasian societies as they recover from the Middle Ages and enter the Renaissance, Reformation, Era of Exploration, Scientific Revolution, and Enlightenment (1450-1750).

In the previous unit we worked on skills of discerning how places and regions are connected to identities and cultures, developing historical contexts, classifying events as changes or continuities, and detecting the limits of historical records. Upcoming, we will be explaining causes and effects of historical development, evaluating the influence of those causes and effects, identifying evidence and drawing information from multiple sources to support claims, and constructing explanations using reasoning, sequence, and examples in deeper written expression. Over the next several weeks, students will be researching historical figures and factors that shaped the eras of Big Ideas mentioned above. This research along with written and creative expression will help us develop a portfolio of historical understanding and deeper learning.



Nick

OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS 2026/2027

Maths updates

Level 6

Level 6 mathematicians have been exploring percents and applying their learning to real-world situations involving discounts, sales tax, and shopping. Students recently completed their first assessment on percents, demonstrating their growing understanding of these concepts. Next, we'll revisit positive and negative numbers, practice all four operations, and explore how these skills apply to real-world situations.

Level 7

Level 7 mathematicians have been building their algebraic thinking by combining like terms and creating algebraic expressions to represent real-world situations. Students have been practicing how to simplify expressions and make connections between algebra and everyday problem-solving. We also put our skills to the test with a combining like terms game inspired by Uno, which quickly turned into some very competitive (and fun!) math practice!





Alyssa

Pre-Algebra

In Pre-Algebra, students have been working with scientific notation to represent very large and very small numbers in a compact and meaningful way. They learned how to write numbers in scientific notation and apply the properties of exponents to perform addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with these expressions. Through hands-on practice and problem-solving, students discovered how scientific notation is used in real-world contexts such as science, technology, and astronomy.

Students also developed strategies to compare numbers written in scientific notation with different exponents, strengthening their understanding of place value and magnitude. This topic not only reinforces their exponent skills but also prepares them for advanced mathematical and scientific concepts they will encounter in future courses.

Tooba

OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS

2026/2027

Maths updates

Algebra I

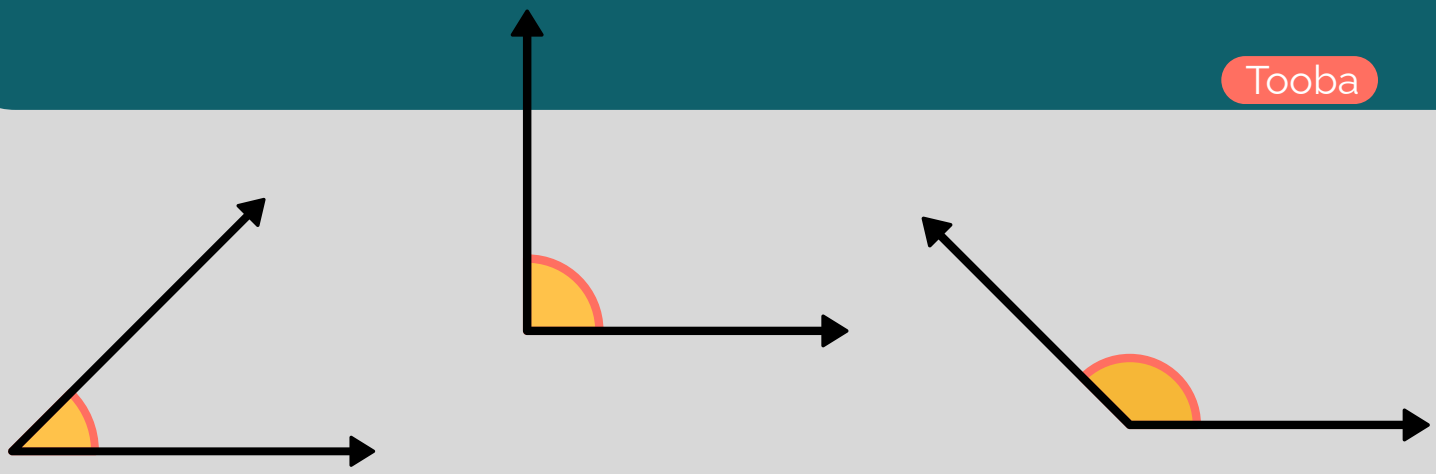
This month has been all about linear functions, taking our previous work with linear equations from Unit 1 and adding a second variable. We learned three different forms of two-variable linear equations– standard form Ax + By = C, slope-intercept form y = mx + b, and point-slope form y - y1 = m(x - x1)-- and how to get information out of each kind, so ask your student where they fall on the debate. Linear equations can be found all over, and we did more than our share of modeling using real-world (or at least quasi-real-world) scenarios. We also talked about altering functions by various translations or reflections, as well as finding and proving inverse functions. After the unit test, there will be a discussion of real and rational numbers and the controversial lesson on precision, accuracy, and significant figures!

Eugene

Geometry

This month, students have begun developing a deeper understanding of geometric reasoning and proofs, a critical component of the Congruence and Proof Standards. They've been introduced to the foundational ideas of postulates, axioms, definitions, and theorems, which serve as the building blocks for constructing logical arguments in geometry. Students are learning that there are different ways to prove a theorem including two-column proofs, paragraph proofs, and flowchart proofs, but the class is currently focusing on mastering the two-column proof format. In these proofs, students are learning to organize their reasoning clearly by pairing statements with justifications, helping them see how each step logically follows from the previous one. This structured approach builds both precision and confidence in mathematical communication, laying a strong foundation for more advanced forms of proof and logical reasoning later in the course. In the last few weeks the main emphasis was on proving theorems on parallel and perpendicular lines. Students also learned their application and learned to calculate the angles by using properties of parallel and perpendicular lines.

Tooba



OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS 2026/2027

Maths updates

Algebra II

Teamwork made the dream work this month, as we tackled the sometimes-overwhelming topic of polynomials. After learning how the principles of long division can be applied to polynomials and learning a new method to speed up the process (synthetic division!) we moved on to the meat of the unit: factoring polynomials to find their zeros (otherwise known as *roots*). We learned the very helpful Rational Root Theorem, which produces a list of candidate roots given the leading coefficient and constant term of the polynomial. Unfortunately, those lists can get very long, so for classwork our intrepid students worked together to share the work (and occasionally double-check it) between themselves.

Once we were able to identify the zeros of a function, we proceeded to the archetypical Algebra 2 topic: graphing. The key features of a polynomial graph are the x-intercept(s), y-intercept, and end behavior (relative extremes are sketched for now, as students will learn their exact locations in calculus). We have now finished up our assessment for this unit and started in on a topic Descartes would love (and not for his Rule of Signs): rational expressions, equations, and functions (just remember not to divide by zero....)



Batu organizing the class's factoring efforts

Robin

OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS 2026/2027

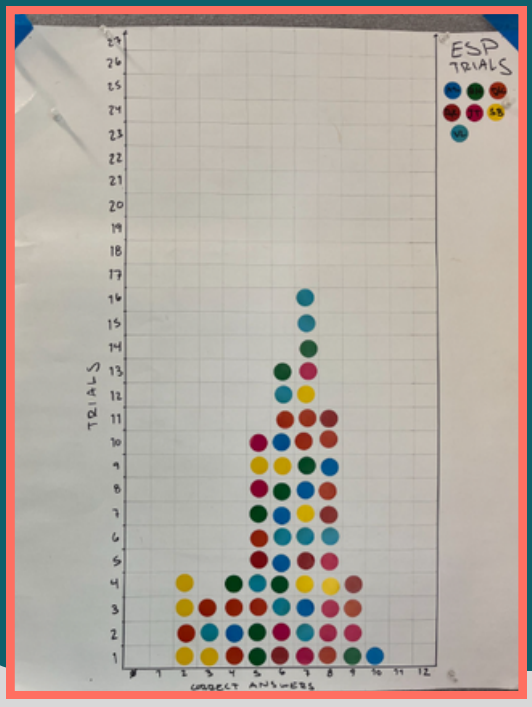
Maths updates



Statistics

In the last month we finished two more units in our pursuit of statistical knowledge. First, we finished our study of bivariate data and linear associations. Students learned about all the information we can get from a least-squares regression line (LSRL), and how we can use the equation of an LSRL to make predictions. Especially useful are r (the correlation coefficient) and r2 (the coefficient of determination)-- ask your student about the difference and their uses!

Second this month was the unit many students are surprised by: data collection. Before we can use all this good math to interpret data, first we have to acquire an unbiased and properly-collected data set! We discussed both experiments and observational studies, and methods for randomizing both (but don't get us going on the proper definition of "random"-- we started using the abbreviation REAP: random enough for the AP test). We discussed sources of bias in data collection, both from the method of collection and from the collectors themselves, and ways to avoid or mitigate the effects of bias. While ethics in studies and experiments are not an official AP test topic, we did take some time to discuss the importance of informed consent and confidentiality in human subject research.



In the realm of applied probability and statistics, during the recent power outage students learned a classic card game called Take-5 (or, for our German friends, *6-nimmt*) that involves making choices based on probability and risk management. It also involves a fair bit of shouting, but maybe that's just our students.

Update on the hunt for a psychic student: still no psychic powers. We'll keep trying! (Methods: we draw twelve cards from a half-deck and subjects students predict whether each will be a diamond or a spade.)

Total correct predictions per student per trial are plotted here to the left!

Robin

OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS 2026/2027

World Language updates

Chinese I

Grade 6

Chinese I students continue to make enthusiastic progress! They are HUGE fans of the number song we learned in class—just ask them, and I'm sure they'll happily sing it for you!

Students can now confidently express dates in Chinese and are discovering that date formats vary across countries and cultures. They are also learning to share short, rehearsed narratives to introduce themselves and are developing similar skills to describe their families, both orally and in writing, through typing and handwriting.

Students have begun learning how to type Chinese characters on their devices and are starting to plan for their upcoming Family Scrapbook Project!

In celebration of the Mid-Autumn Festival, students designed and hosted a variety of interactive stations for their Middle School peers, creating a wonderful opportunity to share Chinese language and culture. They also transformed round white paper plates into original illustrations inspired by the symbols and traditions of the festival.

Lyn





A heartfelt thank-you to all our parent volunteers for helping make this celebration such a success!

S



Chinese II

Grade 7 & 8

This month, Chinese II students reviewed **Hobbies & Interests** and expanded their use of grammatical structures related to time, including frequency and duration. These skills will help students describe their hobbies and activities with greater accuracy and detail.

Students also began learning vocabulary for parts of the body and ways to describe common ailments. They explored similarities and differences in diagnosis and treatment between Traditional Chinese Medicine and Western medicine.

In celebration of the **Mid-Autumn Festival**, students designed and hosted a variety of interactive stations for their Middle School peers. Everyone had a wonderful time sharing Chinese language and culture! Some students built upon their station ideas from last year, while others explored new topics and developed fresh ideas.

Students also created original illustrations on round white paper plates to accompany the Tang dynasty poem 《静夜思》 (*Thoughts on a Still Night*) by the famous poet Li Bai.

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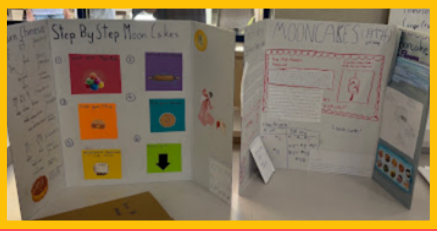
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2026/2027

Mid-Autumn festival























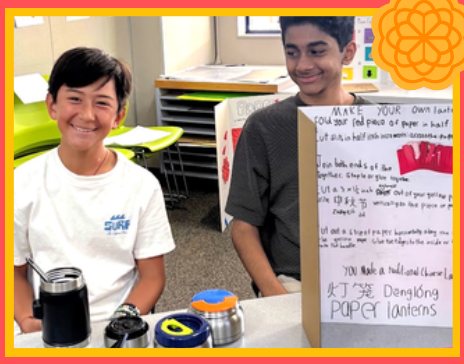


OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS

2026/2027



















OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS

2026/2027

World Language updates



Spanish I

Grade 6

Students have been making wonderful progress as they learn to describe the people who are important to them! They have been building vocabulary for physical appearance and personality and using it to share more about their families. Students can now show a family picture, introduce each person, and explain how they are related. They can also describe what their family members look like, what they are like, and why they chose those descriptions.

It has been a pleasure to see students use their growing Spanish skills to talk about people they know and care about. Each new conversation gives them another opportunity to express their ideas and grow in confidence!



Federico

Spanish II

Grade 7 & 8



Students have been exploring cities and towns while building vocabulary for stores, landmarks, and other interesting places. They can describe what there is in different cities, ask and answer questions about places, and step into the role of tour guide to help others discover a destination. These conversations are helping students see how useful Spanish can be beyond the classroom—whether they are visiting a city abroad or welcoming Spanish-speaking visitors to places they know and love. It is exciting to see them become more comfortable using the language in practical, real-world situations!

A special shout-out to Spanish students at all levels for their contributions to International Week! Students reviewed content from Unit 1 while learning about la merienda, a favorite Argentine tradition. Thank you to everyone who assembled the alfajores de maicena and volunteered their time at the Merienda Argentina booth, helping us share this tradition with our visitors. We would also like to give a special thank-you to Maya, Charlotte, Andrea, and Margaret for kindly baking the cookies used to make the alfajores. We are grateful for the enthusiasm, teamwork, and generosity that made the celebration so special!

OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS 2026/2027

Science updates

Grade 6

Exploring the Universe Through Constellations

Our 6th grade science students have been expanding their knowledge and understanding of the universe through an exciting hands-on project! Students constructed three-dimensional constellation models inside banker boxes, exploring how stars are positioned in space and how distance and perspective influence what we see in the night sky.

Throughout the project, students reinforced their understanding of **scale, distance, and spatial relationships** as they carefully positioned stars within their models. They discovered that although stars in a constellation appear to form recognizable patterns from Earth, the stars are actually located at vastly different distances from us.
By observing their models from different perspectives, students gained a deeper understanding of how constellations change depending on the observer's location. They also explored how stars move through space over time, meaning that the familiar constellations we see today will gradually change shape over thousands of years.

Building Resilience and Persistence Through Science

Beyond developing scientific knowledge, this project provided valuable opportunities for students to strengthen their resilience, patience, and persistence. Constructing accurate three-dimensional models required careful measurements, problem-solving, and attention to detail. Not everything worked perfectly on the first attempt, and that was an important part of the learning process!



Students were encouraged to embrace challenges, learn from mistakes, make adjustments, and persevere when faced with setbacks. We emphasized that **scientific discovery rarely happens without trial and error**, and that persistence and a willingness to revise one's approach are essential parts of both science and personal growth.
Through this experience, students practiced approaching challenges with a growth mindset, recognizing that frustration and mistakes are not signs of failure but opportunities to learn and improve.

This project brought together creativity, critical thinking, mathematical reasoning, collaboration, and scientific modeling while reinforcing an important lesson: **Success is not always about getting something right the first time, but about having the resilience and determination to keep trying.**

Ben & AP

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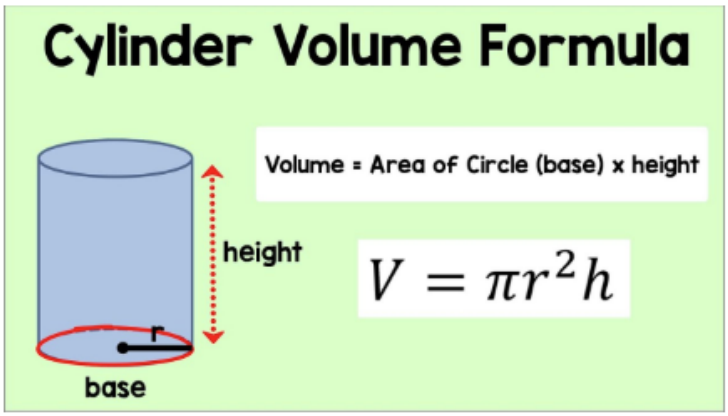
THE COMPASS 2026/2027

Science updates

Grade 7

Our class has continued to explore the wonderful world of atoms and molecules through experimentation, exploration, and study. Atoms are almost impossibly small to conceptualize, but we performed a series of experiments to help imagine and calculate their size. Taking advantage of a very simple mathematical concept, we can use the relationship of the volume of a cylinder, V = 2 π r x h, to calculate the height of an atom. Imagine making a pancake one atom tall. We modeled this concept with BBs, which allowed us to estimate the 'height' or diameter of a BB by simply measuring the diameter of a large circle, or pancake, of BBs and measuring its volume. We then did a follow up experiment with Oleic Acid, which can be made to form a monolayer in a small plate of water. Following the same steps, we were able to calculate the volume and diameter of a known quantity of this polar molecule. Voilá! Well, not quite, Robin led us through the mathematical gymnastics in order to get our very, very small answers (some around 1 x 10-7 m)





Seeing atoms and atomic interactions is impossible in the classroom. However, we dug into the many wonders of the periodic table through discussions & visualizations of electron orbitals and chemical reactions using a variety of tools and approaches. One of the tools your students explored is called Molecular Workbench, a suite of interactive models examining a range of atomic and molecular phenomena. The non-profit that my father began, the Concord Consortium, created this tool and many others which are freely available to explore.

Ask your students about the Blue Bottle Experiment, or the Elephant Toothpaste reaction, and see how well they can explain the chemistry involved!





Aaron

OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS

2026/2027

Science updates

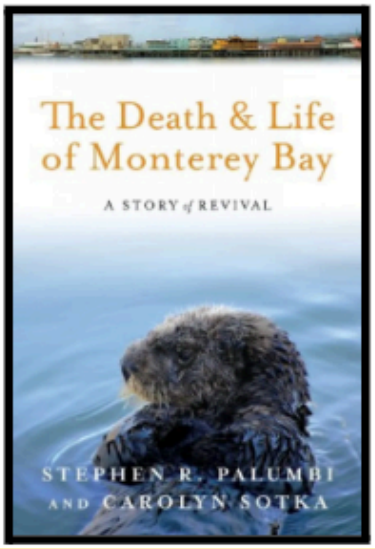
Grade 8

At the end of September, our class examined the fundamental requirements for keeping an important species alive - ourselves! Groups researched the Essential Nutrients to support themselves, and broadened the lessons to apply to many types of organisms. The groups presented their results in the format of an infographic, and useful and creative way of summarizing and presenting complex topical information.

In recent weeks, our 8th Grade Science class has taken a very serious dive into a frank confrontation with the state of the global environment. We've examined atmospheric concentrations of CO_2, thought about threats to biological diversity, and seen the timeline of our actions over the last centuries. A guide we have been using is the inspirational story, Death and Life of Monterey Bay. The book chronicles the decades of serial which impacted indigenous people, otters, whales, and ultimately the sardines and entire ecosystem of Monterey Bay. Our class has just reached the nadir, but the future starts to brighten. In parallel with the story, we next begin to learn the tools and techniques of conservation biology, and examine the powerful tools science brings to the table.







Aaron

OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS 2026/2027

Art updates

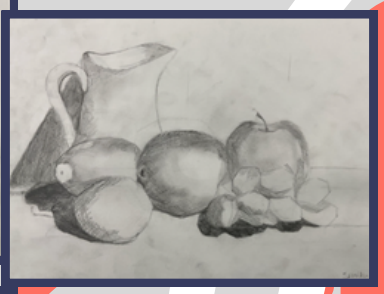
In our Art class we delved deeper into the process of stage design in progressing with our collaborative piece together with the Drama department. 8th graders were able to research, plan, and design proposals for the stage decorations for the upcoming Dinner Theater. As part of a team, they were able to pitch their ideas to team members, and all the teams came up with a mock up version of the design to be produced on the actual panels. It has been an incredible experience with all the students actively participating in the design process.



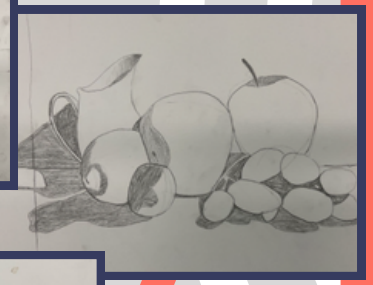














Gabriel

With the 6th and 7th graders, we concentrated on developing visual accuracy and hand dexterity with the drawing of a still life. This exercise is aimed at getting students to have a sense of control over the working space in terms of composition. The challenge is to judge the size of the objects to be drawn in relation to the space available for the picture. Students started the process of feeling for balance and proportion. The other aspect to be developed by this exercise is the process of identifying the underlying geometric shape or form hidden within every object. Once the student is able to identify the underlying structure of something, the process of depicting the object accurately becomes more manageable. The final part of this still life project is the development of value sensitivity, which is the ability to perceive accurately how dark or how light an object is in relation to the surrounding elements. We use cross hatching to develop the darker areas of the drawing. Here are some examples of student work at different stages of production.

OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS 2026/2027

Music updates

In full Swing!



Music at Tessie is tremendous as ever! We're running on our own track this semester, which means fewer hours of class time—but certainly not less commitment or a dip in musical quality. These dedicated musicians have even given up flex time to make music together, and they're getting ready to **wow you with their tunes** at the upcoming Winter Concert!

From traditional folk and classical to choral music, theater tunes, pop, avant-garde compositions, and yes—you know it—rock and roll! These students are making more than just music. They're building relationships, honing a wide range of technical skills, and dazzling the campus with the sounds of the season.

And if you missed **Voce's performance at the International Fair—wow, what a treat!** You'll have another chance to hear them at the Winter Concert, so come enjoy their music!

Save the date! Our 4th–8th Grade Winter Concert is Wednesday the 16th at 7 p.m. You won't want to miss it! T- Band will be bringing down the house with their aftershow, do make sure to wear your dancing shoes!

Sarah

OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS 2026/2027

PE updates





Our Activities this month: Hockey, Flag Football, Capture the Flag, Ultimate Frisbee, Basketball, Soccer, SMART Goal Setting

In October, students jumped into exciting variations of classic Capture the Flag! We introduced a "spy" version, where one player on each team was secretly working for the opposition. This added a layer of strategy that forced students to collaborate and watch out for a teammate working against them.

We also kicked off our frisbee unit with a 12-hole disc golf course, where students played in small groups to try and score under par on every hole. From there, we moved into Ultimate Frisbee, focusing on team dynamics specifically off-ball movement and how every player can impact the game regardless of ability.





Nate & Kyle

OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS 2026/2027

Electives updates

Drama

We are actively preparing for the Dinner theatre, which is a wonderful community event, all catered by Tony and Alba's Italian restaurant. Come and enjoy the comedy "Meet the Creeps" while being served a delicious meal from our 5th-8th grade servers! The drama students have been working hard to memorize lines, create over the top characters and to make this a very special evening of theatre and community. See you there! All tickets must be reserved by clicking the link on this flyer.

Adrienne



SEPTEMBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS 2026/2027

Electives updates



Computer Science

In Computer Science, students have recently explored how computers represent data via the binary number system, and have been introduced to both lossless and lossy compression.

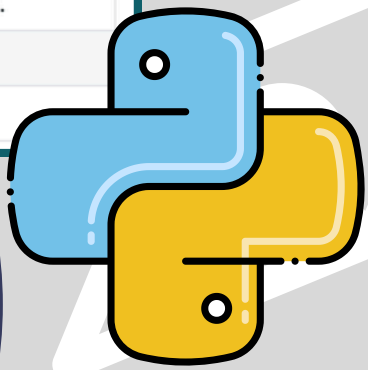
At the end of the second unit, each student created a calculator, customized towards their personal interest, which can be viewed here. This applied their knowledge of conditional statements, input/output handling, and software engineering techniques such as flowcharts and pseudocode.

student-work-october

Student Python Showcase

Programs written by students in our intro Python class. Open a program to run it right in your browser.

Program	Student	What it does
Baking Measurement	S. H.	Converts units of measurement used in baking.
Baseball	N. D.	Computes advanced baseball stats from fundamental ones.
Grade Calculator	J. H.	Computes the average grade over multiple classes.
Metric Converter	W. A.	Converts units from metric to imperial and back.
Tip Calculator	B. Z.	Calculates the tip needed for a meal.



Eugene

OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS 2026/2027

Electives updates

Sophia & Olivia

Nature Connections: Herbalism

The Herbalism Nature Electives class met for the first time last week. On our first day together, we participated in some "getting to know you" activities. Since I, the teacher, am new to the group and most of the students are fairly familiar with each other, I had them do an uplifting activity in which they took turns writing positive traits and things they like about one another. They also wrote a bit about themselves to introduce who they are to me and to each other. After discussing "who we are," we talked about how "we are nature" and how who we are in nature has an impact on the world around us.

On our second meeting, we collected small redwood sticks to assemble our herbal journals. We gave gratitude to the redwood trees, decorated our journals, and enjoyed the cooler fall air.
The next day, we watched a short video of Robin Wall Kimmerer, a Potawatomi botanist and author of Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants. In this video, Robin discussed the concept of the "Honorable Harvest."
Next students scribed these practices into their nature journals. We then discussed and journaled about the meaning of the word "honor," as well as our personal relationships to plants and herbs specifically.





HONORABLE HARVEST:
Know the ways of the ones who take care of you, so that you may take care of them.

-Introduce yourself.
-Abide by the answer.
-Never take the first.
-Never take the last.
-Take only what you need.
-Take only that which is given.
-Never take more than half.
-Leave some for others.
-Harvest in a way that minimizes harm.
-Use it respectfully.
-Never waste what you have taken.
-Share.
-Give thanks for what you have been given.
-Give a gift, in reciprocity for what you have taken.

Sustain the ones who sustain you and the earth will last forever.

OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS 2026/2027

Electives updates

Nature Connections: Nature Art

The Nature Art Elective had their first couple classes last week! We started with get-to-know-you games, sharing our backgrounds in art and the ways we enjoy being creative. We then warmed up our drawing skills with an activity where students took turns describing a landscape painting to a partner, who had to draw what they heard. This was a fun way to practice observation and communication while introducing their first project: decorating their journal covers with their own landscapes!

For their covers, students experimented with scale and composition to collage their own imaginative ecosystems with magazines, drawings, and fabric. By bringing people, plants, and animals together in their collages, students reflected on how humans are part of nature and how our actions shape the environment around us. As they worked, we talked about the semester and the many forms nature art can take, from drawings and paintings to temporary sculptures made from natural materials and plant-based dyes. We also looked at several artists and learned how art can be used as a tool to communicate scientific ideas, culture, and environmental issues.

Next up is nature journaling! This week, students will learn techniques for drawing landscapes and animals while discovering how observing, drawing, and recording what they notice can help them connect with and better understand the living things around them.

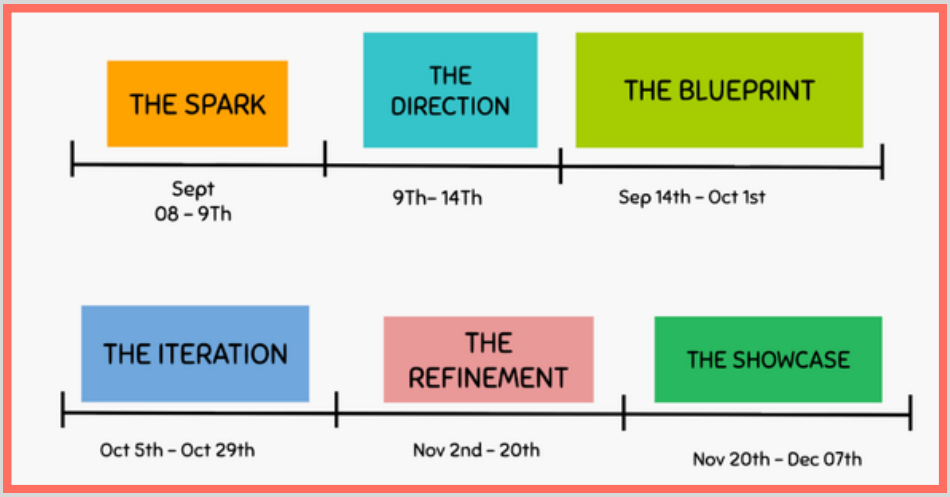


OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS 2026/2027

Electives updates

Mastery



Mastery Timeline

Following their exploration of curiosity and purpose, our 8th-grade Mastery students are moving into the next stages of their journey: **BLUEPRINT and ITERATION**. Some are developing their Blueprints, turning their ideas into workable plans, while others have begun Iteration, bringing their ideas to life through experimentation, creation, and testing.

As students work through these stages, they are developing a deeper understanding of **feasibility**: *Is my idea achievable with the time, resources, skills, and support available?* These questions are prompting some students to rethink, refine, or redirect their projects. Learning to recognize when an idea needs to change is an important part of the process. Students are discovering that adapting a plan is not a setback, but an opportunity to make more informed decisions and move forward with greater purpose.

Students have also been interviewed about their projects for upcoming videos showcasing the Mastery program. Preparing for these conversations invited them to pause, reflect more deeply on their ideas, clarify their purpose, and articulate what they hope to learn or create. The interviews also gave them an authentic opportunity to practice public speaking and communicate their thinking to an audience. Mastery continues to be about much more than bringing an idea to life. It is about learning to navigate uncertainty, respond to challenges, make thoughtful decisions, and take increasing ownership of the process.

Agency is about developing the knowledge, judgment, and responsibility to decide what to do next, and why.

This is what the Mastery program is all about. As students move from direction to action, they are developing the persistence, flexibility, and confidence to turn meaningful ideas into purposeful work.

AP

OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS 2026/2027

Electives updates

Mastery

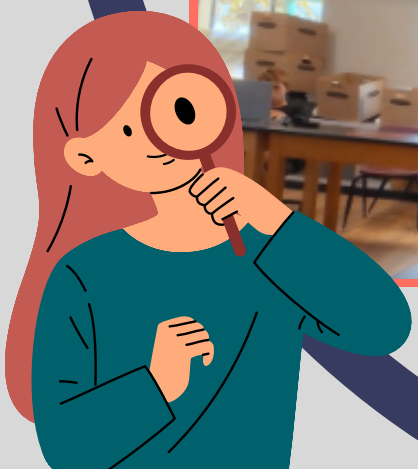












OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS 2026/2027

Electives *updates*

Painting & Mixed Media

In our Painting and Mixed Media Art elective, we started learning and practicing the foundational building blocks of art. Over the past few weeks, we have studied the seven elements of art—line, shape, form, color, value, space, and texture—while experimenting with different color compositions and practicing color mixing. Through these explorations, students have been developing a stronger understanding of how these elements work together to create balance, depth, contrast, and visual impact in an artwork.

Building on these foundational concepts, students created self-directed projects in which they selected three elements of art to explore and incorporate into their compositions. This approach encouraged them to make independent artistic decisions, experiment with new techniques, while learning the basics of art. Students also had the opportunity to work with a variety of mediums, including watercolor, acrylics, gouache, oil pastels, pencils, and acrylic markers, exploring the unique qualities and possibilities of each material. Throughout this process, students have been strengthening their artistic skills, developing visual problem-solving abilities, and building confidence in their creative expression. Most importantly, they are learning to embrace experimentation, take creative risks, and appreciate the journey of making art, understanding that the process of exploring and refining ideas is just as valuable as the finished piece.







Shazia

OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS

2026/2027

Electives updates

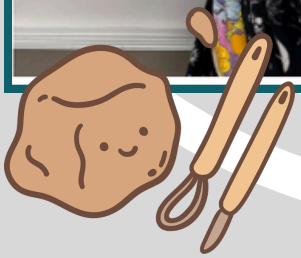
Mindfulness in Clay (Mind & Body)

This month in our Mindfulness in Clay class, students have been working with the slab-building technique to create unique and functional clay pieces. Using rolled-out sheets of clay, they learned how to cut, shape, and assemble their forms with precision and creativity. Students explored ways to add texture and detail using tools, stamps, textured rolling pins, and natural materials like leaves, giving each piece its own personality and style. Along the way, they practiced patience, craftsmanship, and problem-solving—important skills for any ceramic artist.

We also had a two day open studio in which students created some sculptured pieces using air dry clay. They also learned to use wire armature to support their sculptures.

Through this process, students gained a deeper understanding of how clay transforms from a soft, flexible material into a strong, lasting artwork. Their finished pieces beautifully reflect both their creativity and growing technical skill.





Shazia

OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS

2026|2027

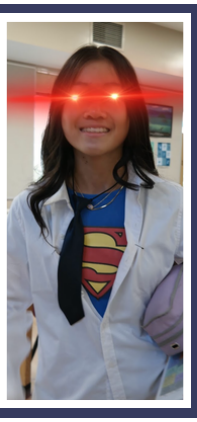
MS Costume Parade

















OCTOBER EDITION 2026

THE COMPASS

2026/2027





