

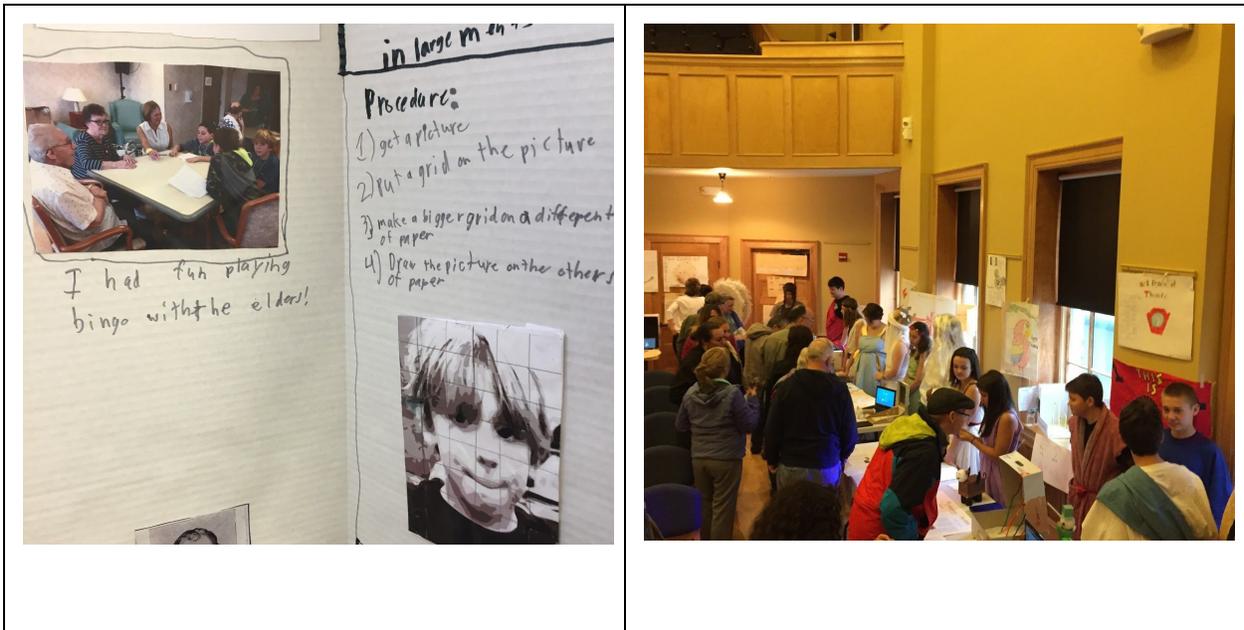


# Gorham Middle School

Quarterly Newsletter

December 16, 2016

We are off to an amazing school year so far. The Learning Expeditions in grades 6 and 8 were both amazing experiences and we can't wait to see what the 7th grade can do. It is wonderful to see our students apply their knowledge.



As always feel free to call or stop in with any questions or concerns.

**Geography** ~ Both seventh grade classes recently completed atlases of the United States. Classes were divided into groups, and each group was responsible for creating the atlas pages for one region of the US. Students used their knowledge of the Five Themes of Geography to organize their research and information. They produced some very informative and appealing pages! Seventh graders are currently learning about Canada, and they are studying for a series of political geography quizzes. Quizzes started with the US states, the US capitals, and currently the Canadian provinces and capitals. After vacation, quizzes continue for the rest of the year and will include the countries and their capitals for each region of the world we are studying. Students will progress at their own pace because they can retake each quiz until they get at least an 80. There will be regular quiz dates to keep everyone moving along. So, 7th graders will always have a quiz to be studying for! We've been studying with fun games on [Sheppardsoftware.com](http://Sheppardsoftware.com).

### **Colonial Unit**

We are now starting our Colonial unit for the 8 th grade. This is a unit which involves both Social Studies and Language Arts.

The focus in Social Studies will be the history of the time period. In Language Arts, the students will read *My Brother Sam is Dead*, a novel set in this time period. They will also read "Paul Revere's Ride", a narrative poem, and biography about Paul Revere written by Esther Forbes. In both classes the students will review the process of researching and note taking.

Students will research a chosen topic and be responsible for submitting a minimum of 25 note cards on the subject. We will also review the process of writing outlines. An outline will be created using the note cards. Students will learn the skill of writing and giving effective speeches. They will demonstrate this ability with a speech on their topics and visuals to accompany their presentations.

The following is a list of tentative dates:

Students will pick a topic Dec. 12

Students will review note taking and research.

Students will research from Dec. 15 – Dec. 19

Note cards will be due Dec. 21

Students determine visuals to accompany research by Dec. 16

Outlining will be covered in class during the week of Jan. 3

Outlines will be due Jan. 13.

Speeches will be covered in class during the week of January 16.

Oral presentations will be given starting on Jan. 25.

Rubrics will be given at the beginning of each new phase of the project. Each phase is graded separately and an average is used to determine the overall project grade which will count for both Language Arts and Social Studies.

Thank you in advance for your support and if you have any questions feel free to call your son or daughter's homeroom teacher.

### **Unified Arts**

**STEM Gr. 8:** What makes a plane remain in the airspace? The 4 principles of flight are lift, gravity/force, thrust, and drag. Applying these principles to the parts of various aircraft results in flight. Students will investigate these properties using paper airplanes and Flybrix drones.

**FACS Gr.8** Students are working on four sewing projects:

- . an apron to wear in the culinary lab
- . a decorative pillowcase for Conkerr ( these will be donated to ConKerr, an organization that provides cheerful pillowcases for seriously ill children.)
- . a project of their choice from the Haan craft company

I also sent a letter home requesting an item that needs repair, ie mending. Please ask your student to view it. This will provide a practical opportunity to use their new skills.

### **Student Council**

Our student council has had a very productive beginning of the year. We have held our monthly birthday celebrations. The September and October were in house celebrations. November was a trip to the Monarchs' Game in Manchester. We are now planning a movie for December.

The students have also participated in our yearly fundraiser. We did a combination magazine drive and Chubby Charm bracelet sale. Both were very successful. The kids will

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have the funds needed for their activities this year. We would like to thank all of our supporters during this drive. A big thank you to friends, relatives, and parents.

The community service project for this quarter was purchasing Toys for Tots. They used some of their earnings from the fundraiser to purchase toys.

**We are looking for a very busy quarter ahead.**

## **Help Your Student to Improve Writing Skills: Some tips from Eduguide**

- **Read it aloud.** Your child can either read the writing piece out loud to you or, if he's shy about it, to himself in the privacy of his own room. Either way, have him read from a print-out so he can edit/mark changes as he goes
- **Revise it.** Remind your child that writing is a marathon, not a sprint. Scientists conduct many experiments before reading a conclusion. Writers are no different. They expect to go through several drafts before they finish a piece of writing.
- **Look for help.** There is a wealth of information online, including grammar help, research resources and writing tips--all geared toward kids.
- **Get involved.** Experts agree that the best way to become a better writer is to write.
- **Reading.** It is one of the best ways kids can improve their writing.
- **Conversation.** Children need to spend more time with adults in conversation. It makes a huge difference.

### **Middle-School Learning and Writing Resources Online**

- **New York Times Learning Network.** (<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/>)
- **Newsela.** Students are required to read, respond, and write to news articles in their weekly homework in 6th, 7th and 8th grades.

<http://www.eduguide.org/article/help-middleschool-students-improve-writing-skills>

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