

## A Message from the Principal

Dear Southwest Middle School families,

Thank you all for your support during this pandemic that has impacted all of us and changed the way that we have conducted school since March of 2020. I am hopeful that next school year will start with normalcy and we will be able to do all the normal things that enrich the learning of our Sea Lions. Our staff and Sea Lions worked incredibly hard this year to meet the unprecedented challenges that we have all faced, and I am proud to serve them. State testing has been very different and challenging this year with the addition of testing LaunchEd students. Please stay tuned to our school's website, my weekly newsletter, and Connect Orange messages for testing updates and other critical information. We will have announcements regarding summer school and other acceleration programs coming via the aforementioned platforms.

I would like to recognize **Aziz Ansari, JJ Hughes, Avery Kaak, Ana Valladares, and Collier Alexander-Sawyers** for making the **All County Honor Jazz Band!** I would also like to congratulate **Ella Beerenson, Sophie Gillespie, and Rachel Houdeyschell** for making the **All County Orchestra!** Finally, I would like to congratulate **Avery Kaak** for winning our **School's Reflections Contest** for a musical composition and our school's **oration contest!** We will be sending out information for our virtual student achievement recognition awards, so please stay tuned.

Thank you all for your continued support of Southwest Middle School, and remember, Go Sea Lions!

Raymond Yockel,  
*Principal*

### Important Telephone Numbers

Southwest Middle School  
6450 Dr. Phillips Blvd. • Orlando, FL 32819  
Phone: (407) 370-7200 • Fax: (407) 370-7210

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### Vision

A safe place where higher learning, creativity, and an appreciation for diversity lead to achievement.

### Mission

To create a safe environment where learning is our priority, diversity is respected, and achievements are celebrated.

### Core Values

We are committed to providing:

- A Safe and Respectful Learning Environment
- Rigorous Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments
- Supportive Interventions for Academics and Behavior
- A Caring Atmosphere Where Family Involvement is Embraced

**VOL 29 | NO. 2 | MAY 2021**

# the SEA LIONS

**FOR THE PARENTS, STAFF & COMMUNITY OF SOUTHWEST MIDDLE SCHOOL**



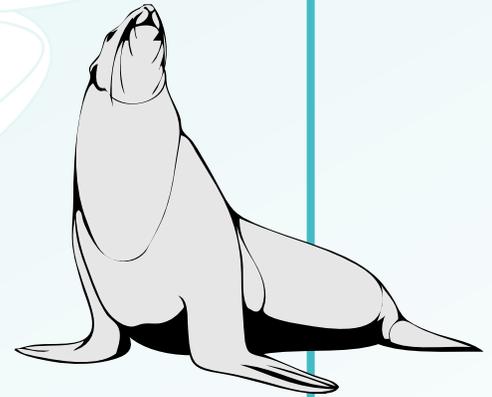
# Guidance News

Hello parents! As we enter the fourth quarter, please review carefully your child's grades for the year. If your child is failing a core course, s/he will need to complete courses in Edgenuity in order to recover them. If the courses are not finished before the end of the year, s/he will have to attend summer school in order to earn the proper credits for promotion. If you are unsure of your child's status, it is best to contact your child's grade level counselor.

**Sixth grade contact:** Peter Singletary – peter.singletary@ocps.net

**Seventh grade contact:** Kathy Belcher – kethleen.belcher@ocps.net

**Eighth grade contact:** Rene Guity – rene.guity@ocps.net



## Student Council

The student council class didn't let Covid stop them this year. We were required to have 1 project per category for the **Florida Association of Student Council Conference** and we completed 5 per 10 categories. Our students created virtual games for team building and enjoyed doing neighborhood clean-ups for community services. It wasn't an easy year, but we persevered!

We were also named a **FASC Council of Merit Award** winner for the state of Florida.

**Shout out to next year's, Executive Board!**



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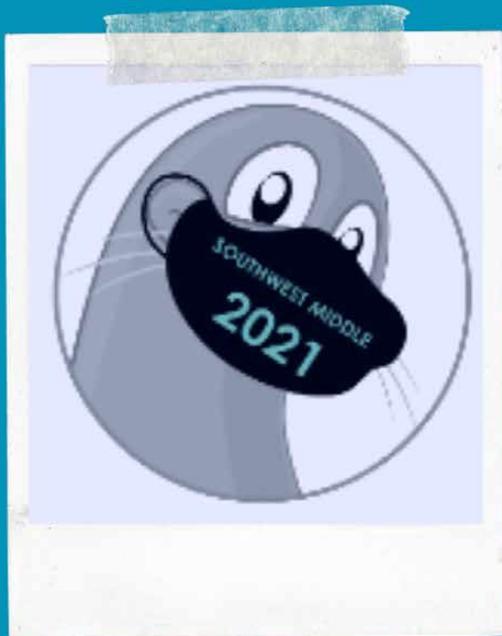
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## Math

### Sixth Grade Math

Sixth graders are preparing for two sessions of the Math FSA Test to be taken May 6th and 7th. These dates apply for Face to Face and Launched students. This quarter we will cover two and three-dimensional geometry, review for the FSA, and spend time after the test preparing for 7th grade math. We are confident those students who have stayed engaged have built a sound foundation for next year's mathematical challenges!

### All Grades

End of Course Exams and FSA assessments. The FSA Math assessments and End-of-Course Exams (EOCs) are May 6 and 7 for Face-to-Face and May 11 and 12 for LaunchEd students. Remember that Algebra 1 and Geometry are high school courses and the EOC counts for 30% of the overall average. Additionally, Algebra is a high school graduation requirement. For the Geometry students who have not taken and passed the Alg EOC (which is most), the Geometry EOC is also a graduation requirement.

**Here are some additional resources that students can use to help prepare outside of class.**

- FSA Training Test in the FSA Portal ([fsassessments.org](http://fsassessments.org))
- Personal Math Trainer in the online textbook resources for Math 6-8 and Algebra 1
- Homework Video Tutors in the online textbook student resources for Geometry (Pearson EasyBridge)
- Khan Academy
- Math Nation

**A few spots are left!**



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Elizabeth Newbold • [elizabeth.newbold@ocps.net](mailto:elizabeth.newbold@ocps.net)  
Southwest Middle School



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## Language Arts

### Sixth Grade Language Arts

In 6th grade ELA, we have been learning more about the writing process. We have been reading, analyzing, and synthesizing different types of texts and developing our writing through essays in response to the texts. The majority of our focus has been on writing well-developed paragraphs with topic sentences, transitions, evidence, and elaboration. We are showing definite progress in becoming more effective writers! We plan to conclude the year with continued reinforcement and practice in reading skills with some interesting and exciting activities. Don't forget that the FSA Reading test will be May 3, 4, and 5th.

### Seventh Grade Language Arts

During the month of April, 7th grade ELA students will take their final iready diagnostic and continue to prepare for the reading FSA. The reading FSA will be on May 3rd and 4th this year. After the FSA, 7th graders will close out the year reading the novel *The Outsiders*. Students will be provided with a free digital copy. In addition, in Mrs. Gippert's seventh grade reading class, students are preparing for their FSA exam as well as reading and analyzing, *The Kingdom Keepers #1*.

### Eighth Grade Language Arts

Students will take the FSA writing test on April 8 @ 9:30 for Face-to-Face students. Students will be working on various reading projects in their classes to wrap up the year. Students should continue to read books of their choice at home during the 4th quarter and summer.



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# Curriculum News



## Social Studies

### Sixth Grade World History

Sixth grade students will begin their journey to Ancient Rome—examining their architecture, engineering, government, and art. Roman civilization pioneered common language and money, and public works projects which have influenced western civilization today. We end the year with a CF Exam.

### Seventh Grade Civics

Seventh Grade Civics will be finishing this year by learning about different Forms and Systems of Government from around the world as well as international organizations and conflicts in which the U.S. has engaged. All Civics students will also be taking their EOC on May 13th!

## Science

### Sixth Grade Life Science and Comprehensive Science

Students in 6th grade have been continuing biology with our studies of the human body. We are finishing the year by studying the immune system and disease, including COVID 19. There will be a 4th quarter exam towards the end of May covering human body systems and disease.

### Seventh Grade Comprehensive Science 2

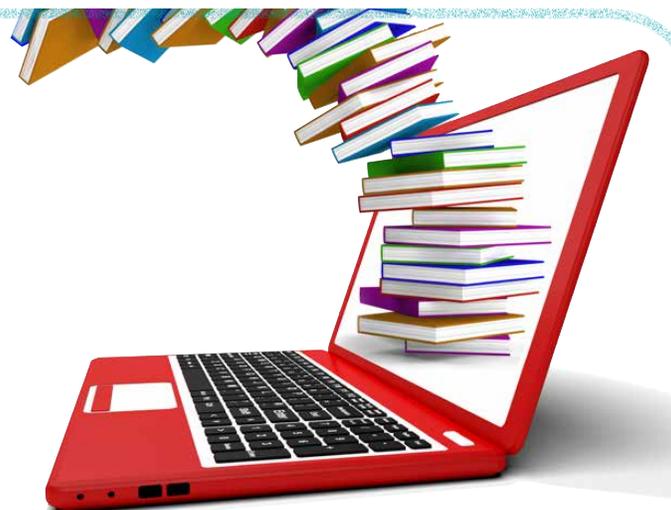
As we head into the 4th quarter we will begin by discussing scientific laws and theories. We will then look into the theory of evolution by natural selection and the evidence that supports the theory. Finally, we will end the year with activities focusing on biotechnology and the impact humans have on Earth.

### Eighth Grade Comprehensive Science 3

Eighth grade students are working hard to review for our State Science Assessment on May 10th. This test will cover content from 6th, 7th, and 8th grade science. We will close out the year with an 8th grade review for our End of Course Exam as we say goodbye to our Sea Lions sending them off to high school.

## Computer Education

Our computer students have been successful learning all year about Internet Technology Fundamentals! This included topics such as security online, computer systems and databases. Currently we are learning the Microsoft Applications. We started with Word and soon will be starting Excel. The last few weeks of this quarter we will finish up with PowerPoint. This will give our students a good foundation in the Microsoft Applications.



# Performing & Fine Arts News

## Band

The SWMS Band has been busy preparing for our LIVE SPRING CONCERTS!!! We are so excited to get back to some sense of normalcy with the approval of our end of the year concerts. We have strict social distancing and COVID guidelines for all performances. Please check your email regarding the upcoming performances or email Mrs. Wacksman (amy.wacksman@ocps.net).

The band is also excited to welcome any new students to join our class next year! If you have any interest in learning a musical instrument and experiencing all the crazy awesomeness that is middle school band, don't hesitate to reach out! We have a place for you!

To finish out our year, the students will be working hard on concert music, solo and ensemble, and practicing for the End of Course Exams in May. Thank you for a great year so far in band!



## Drama

The Theatre Department, in conjunction with the YMCA After School Zone, has just wrapped filming of this year's movie production of MIDSUMMER MIDDLE SCHOOL'S DAYDREAM, based on the original version of Shakespeare's classic play and adapted by the Southwest Middle School Theatre Department. The film is currently in post-production with the SWMS TV/ Media studio and should be ready in May to share with the entire Southwest Middle School family! Stay tuned for more information!

## Art

All art classes are currently working on the principle of design: Proportion. They have been using formulas for typical proportions to draw some beautiful portraits. Next we will be working on proportions for the human figure. Look for links to virtual art shows in the near future to showcase all the awesome artwork from our Southwest Students.



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## Social Media and Teens

The current generation of teens, sometimes referred to as Generation Z or iGen, have grown up taking for granted two humongous society-changing innovations: social media and smartphones. According to a 2018 Pew Research study, today almost 95% of young people in the U.S. have access to a smartphone and 45% of teens are online “almost constantly”. Most of the online activity revolves around the current big three of social media: YouTube, SnapChat and Instagram. According to a 2018 Harvard study, most teens have mixed views on social media. Many stated that it gives them increased opportunities to connect with others, but concerns among teens were raised about online bullying and harassment.

It often seems that safeguards and warnings lag behind the pace of innovation, and in the case of these two technologies we are starting to see some concerning trends. One of the biggest is the growth of mental health disorders. According to an international 2016 study, the United States has the highest rates of mental health or substance abuse disorders among both males and females in the world with over 20% of both genders suffering. One researcher found a 50% increase in mental health incidents among U.S. teens between 2011 and 2015. She noted that the trend mirrored the rise of smartphone and social media use among teens. Anecdotally, if you talk to school counselors and teachers, many will point to these technologies as definite factors in the rise of mental health disorders among our students. In light of the research that is catching up to current usage trends, here are some commonly mentioned suggestions to help students monitor their own usage of technology and its effect on their lives:



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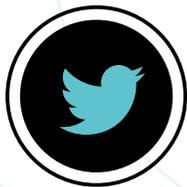
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- **Turn off notifications** - For at least part of the day turn off dings and buzzes that draw you back to your phone. Everyone needs to take breaks from the constant stimulus that a phone can provide.
- **Block bullies** - The best way to keep yourself mentally healthy is to avoid people and groups that humiliate or bully you on social media. Unfollowing or blocking prevents the 24/7 stress of dealing with negative peers.
- **Take breaks** - A day or even a week or two away from social media is one of the best things you can do to reclaim your other interests and face-to-face friendships.
- **Meet up** - Speaking of face-to-face friendships, fewer and fewer teens are actually meeting in person these days. Schedule time each week to sit down and hang out in the same space. Physical proximity and eye contact are essential in the development of true relationships.
- **Seek help** - technology addiction is a real thing, and so is anxiety and depression. If you feel you are being affected by phones and social media see a counselor or trusted adult and tell them. Many times the power and allure of technology is more than one person can handle individually.



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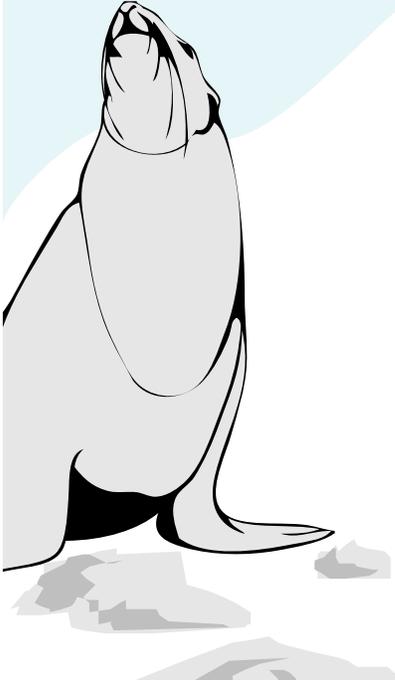
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