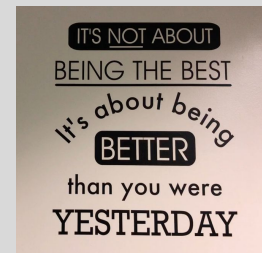


# Millis Middle

## Trimester 1 News

Fall 2018



Dear Middle School Families,

Our 2018-2019 school year is well underway! Since the beginning of the year we have shifted from the heat of summer to the crispness of fall! As usual, there is a whole lot going on in our classrooms and hallways. Here are a few highlights:

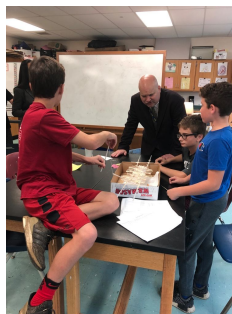
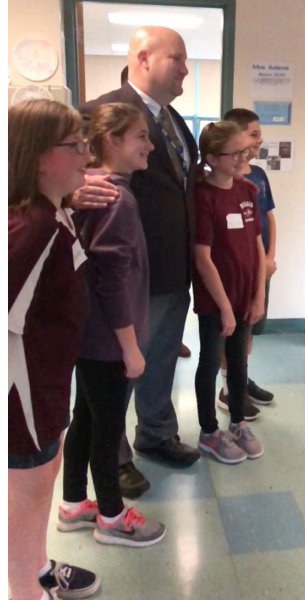
Currently the fifth grade is deep into their project-based learning activity involving solving the problem of plastic pollution. Fifth grade is also participating in the Global Read Aloud of the book, Amal Unbound. Sixth grade science classes have been working on a similar challenge and submitted their ideas to the National Geographic GeoChallenge. They reached out to Representative Shawn Dooley, who came to talk with students about how to create a bill to stop plastic pollution in Massachusetts. Sixth graders are also researching and creating presentations on immigration. Seventh graders have been busy with their engineering design project - building and testing bridges. They are also working on Genius Hour projects connected to Touching Spirit Bear. Eighth graders are discovering the Pythagorean Theorem, beginning a study of the history of Rome, reading The Giver, and wrapping up learning about chemical and physical reactions and phase changes.

Presentations of learning, in the form of slideshows, videos, and other creative means are the norm in our classrooms. Our students will be well prepared to communicate and collaborate as they move on in school and in life! We are proud of the work they are doing! During the year, watch for grade level newsletters that provide a more detailed look into student learning in our school.

*Maureen Knowlton, Principal*

### Happenings -

Department of Education Commissioner Jeffrey Riley visited our school on October 11! He was greeted by a group of 5th and 6th grade students and teachers in the library and conducted a brief question and answer session. Student tour guides led him through our classrooms, where he saw our blended learning in action! To wrap up his visit, Commissioner Riley met with a small group of 7th and 8th grade students and teachers. He was accompanied by Representative David Linsky and Senator Richard Ross, who were all quite impressed by our students!



## Curriculum and Instruction -

MCAS results are just one way that our school and district measures student achievement and growth in learning. This year, the Middle School was deemed to be "Meeting Targets" in our state accountability report. In both Math and ELA, the percentage of Middle School students overall who met or exceeded expectations was 10 percentage points above the state level. Our average Student Growth Percentile for all grades was between or above the 40-60% target range. These results show an improvement in student performance compared to previous years, and we plan to continue a cycle of reflection and adjusting our practice to keep this positive trend going!

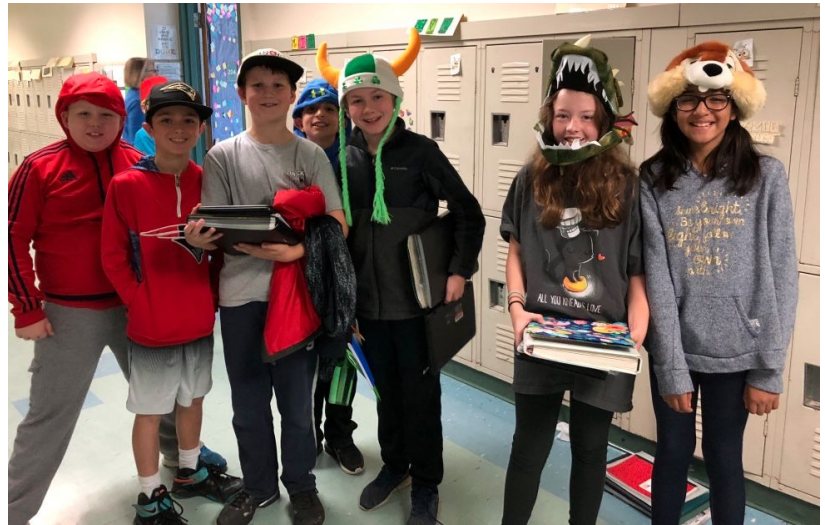
Since we know student learning cannot be measured by one test alone, we examine all sorts of other school data to keep tabs on our progress and make decisions about where to focus improvement efforts. Our ultimate goal is for all students to demonstrate one year's growth and for all to make effective progress toward meeting standards related to content and skills. We want students to take ownership of their learning and set personal learning goals that push them to achieve their "personal best." We want students to compare their learning to a benchmark standard, rather than to the learning of others.

To that end, teachers are beginning to build personal learning pathways for students who are ready for enrichment or acceleration. Students are challenged to read higher level texts and go deeper into topics they are learning about in the classroom through extension projects. Teachers encourage students to take a risk and to look beyond the obvious!

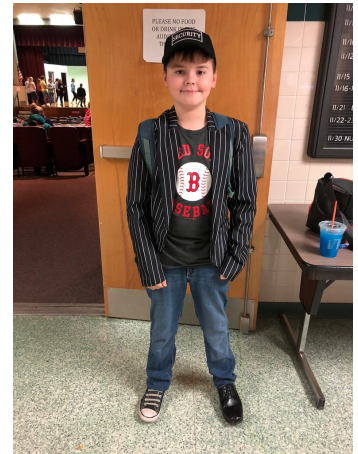
It is our goal to continue to try to communicate student learning more clearly with parents. We have improved the PowerSchool parent portal to show ratings on specific standards connected to assignments and assessments. Parents can also see what assignments have been turned in and read comments posted by teachers. Recently we reinstated our process of sending home midterm progress reports on paper. This year, we have also arranged for an additional afternoon of parent conference times in November.

At any time during the year, we encourage parents who have questions or concerns about how their child is doing to contact the teachers. Team meetings are scheduled on an ongoing basis as needed.

## Student Activities -



We celebrated Red Ribbon Week! Theme days such as Crazy Hat day and Mix It Up day reminded us to make healthy choices and stay away from drugs that could make us crazy!



## Student Council & Student Leadership -

Plans are in the works for Mix It Up at Lunch Day and a number of community service and community building activities that promote kindness, tolerance, and respect for others.

## Sports -

Winter sports registration is just around the corner - participants in all sports should register at [FamilyID.com](http://FamilyID.com). A Listserve has been sent out and information is posted on our Facebook page. For more information contact Chuck Grant, Athletic Director at [cgrant@millisps.org](mailto:cgrant@millisps.org) or Jamie Farias, Athletic Trainer, at [jfarias@millisps.org](mailto:jfarias@millisps.org).



## **Standards - Based Grading -**

How do learners know how they are doing with this type of grading process? Students need to listen carefully when the teacher introduces a lesson or unit and pay attention to the learning goals and how the teacher defines what they should know and be able to do by the end. Teachers generally share this with students in the form of a rubric with the expectations of an assignment - and provide ongoing feedback.

Feedback might be in the form of a written comment, a conference with the student, or a rating on a standard that helps them to know how they are doing. When a student receives a rating of a "2," it should tell them that they are on track but have more learning to do. When a student receives a rating of a "3," it should tell them that their effort has paid off, they have met the learning goal, and they are exactly where they need to be. They should also know that they can always improve and push themselves further. If they don't know how, they can approach the teacher and ask; we encourage self-advocacy as it is an important life skill to develop. Learner Expectations (below) are important for self-assessment and reflection.

We will soon be publishing Proficiency Scales, which provide detail about the expectations for each level for each standard. This will help parents understand more specifically what learning is needed to show mastery.

## **Teacher News -**



We are happy to welcome Mrs. Deanna Degon to our staff as our new Art teacher. Mrs. Degon is replacing Ms. Weber, who took a position in another district.

Mrs. Adams, Ms. Muldoon, Mrs. Maguire, Mrs. Robinson are participating in FUSE MA as Lighthouse Classrooms. They will be working together with teachers from other districts toward the goal of increasing student ownership of learning.

## **Clubs / Homework Clinic / Late Bus - all have begun!**



**Board Game Club** - Tuesdays - Rm 216 - Mrs. Colwell

**Yu-Gi-Oh Club** - Tuesdays - Rm 228 - Mrs. Hickey

**Art Club** - Tuesdays - Art Room - Mrs. Degon

**Pop Culture Club** - Wednesdays - Rm 224 - Mrs. Monaghan

**Scratch Club** - Wednesdays - Room 230 - Mr. D

**Chess Club** - Fridays - Rm 212 - Mrs. Saccardo

**Biking Club** - Weekends/Varies - Mrs. Monaghan

**Book Club** - Tuesdays - School & Public Library - Mrs. Divver

11/13 - Public; 12/11 - Public; 1/8 - School;

2/12 - School; 3/12 - Public; 4/19 - Public

**Writer's Club** - Wednesdays - School Library (starts Nov)

Mrs. Divver & Mrs. Robinson

**Homework Clinic** - Tuesdays and Wednesdays - by grade level  
Various teachers

*\* Students MUST be with a teacher, for Homework Clinic, or for a club after school in order to take the late bus home.*

## **Upcoming Events -**

11/7 - Afternoon Parent Conferences 12-2:30pm

11/8 - Afternoon Parent Conferences 12-2:30pm

11/9 - Metrowest Health Survey administration

11/12 - No School

11/13 - Evening Parent Conferences 6-8:00pm

11/20 - Picture Retake Day

11/21 - Early Release at 10:55

11/22-25 Thanksgiving Break

11/30 - T1 Grades Close

## **We communicate in a variety of ways -**

- Keep up with the learning on Twitter @MillisMiddle
- Check for announcements and sign up for our Listserve on our website:  
<http://millispsms.ss9.sharpschool.com/>
- Follow us on our Millis Middle Facebook page  
<https://www.facebook.com/millismiddleschool/>

# Learner Expectations



## Self Direction

**Independently prepares for classes and takes ownership for learning**

**Self reflects and thinks critically for problem solving.**

## Accountability

**Uses resources to complete assignments with accuracy and care.**

## Perseverance

**Persists to complete challenging tasks**

## Collaboration

**Participates and works cooperatively toward group goals**

## Citizenship

**Demonstrates a positive attitude and respects school community**

**Thoughtful and considerate in words and actions**