

Begich Middle School Science

December 7th is national Cotton Candy Day!
Thought you'd like to know.

Volume 1, Issue 1
December 7, 2006

Periodic updates about what's happening in the science department at our new school. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to give me a call. Thanks, Scott Kluever.

Ordering equipment and supplies. *The Sixth Grade Curriculum*

- ❖ List item orders have been given to Kelly Holt.
- ❖ As for the rest of our order, I've been going over many different catalogs and have compiled quite a list of materials to order. I have a pretty good idea about what is needed for the seventh and eighth grade curriculum. John Gallup and Rebecca King have both provided me with lists of materials that they would like to see at the new school. As you work through your school year, please take note of what you use and need so that we can be well prepared for next year.
- ❖ If you'd like a copy of the items that I'm submitting to Kelly, let me know and I'll send you a copy through ASD mail.

Again, this is simply my attempt to keep everyone in the Begich Science Department informed about things happening and questions that I have. Feedback is always appreciated.

Enjoy the rest of your week.

K.

- ❖ Dave Gillam, Robby Bear, Gail Raymond and I traveled to Mirror Lake last week and met with several sixth grade science teachers. We were able to discuss various methods of delivering science to sixth graders. (Science is currently delivered mainly through a series of packaged kits in elementary schools.) Mirror Lake utilizes these kits and augments the lessons with other activities.
- ❖ As we met with teachers and discussed current methods of delivering the sixth grade curriculum, it became clear that there really is a disconnect when it comes to blending sixth grade science into the middle school concept. Kits do not provide enough material to cover a full year of science. And rather than let each individual teacher "fend for themselves" to try and fill the voids, we're in the early stages of making middle school science truly a 6-8 curricula.
- ❖ Dave, Robby and I, with the help of other ASD curriculum staff, will meet again on the 19th of December to continue our work. If you have any suggestions or ideas that you want to share, please let me know! These are exciting times and the more ideas we share the better things can be.

Begich Middle School Science

Dec. 15-22 is International Languages Week.

Volume 1, Issue 2
December 20, 2006

Periodic updates about what's happening in the science department at our new school. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to give me a call. Thanks, Scott Kluever.

Meeting with David Gillam, Trisha Herminghaus, Jeanne Fischer, Gail Raymond, Sharon Vaissiere, Robby Bear, and Leslie Vandergaw on December 19th.

On December 19th I met with the above science/curriculum staff at the Boniface Center. Our main goal was to address the sixth grade science curriculum. We had a great session and below are some notes from the meeting. I'm asking that you review the notes and please email me any comments that you might have.

Items decided for sure, (or at least 98% sure):

- ❖ Sixth grade science will complete **health lessons** every Friday. This will cover nearly all of the **Body Shop** lessons.
 - **First Quarter:** Allergies + Asthma, Healthy Environment, Addictions
 - **Second Quarter:** Eat Smart Look Good, Keep Body Safe, Stress
 - **Third Quarter:** Cells, Sports Report
 - **Fourth Quarter:** Human Growth and Development, AIDS

- ❖ Sixth Grade Science topics to cover each quarter
 - **First Quarter:** There is No Away (Waste Management)
 - **Second Quarter:** Astronomy
 - **Third Quarter:** Structures
 - **Fourth Quarter:** Application and Investigations
 - (Investigations based on prior knowledge gleaned earlier in the year)

Other discussions:

- ❖ During the Applications and Investigations quarter (4th), one possibility for our sixth graders is to focus on the umbrella topic of "Simple Machines". (Trisha will be contacting the elementary schools in search of kits titled "Levers and Pulleys" which were dropped from the elementary program a few years ago. These could be a foundation for the fourth quarter science classes in sixth grade.)

- ❖ Marine Science studies are also an option for sixth grade, fourth quarter. This includes the "Sea Week" curriculum.

- ❖ Gail Raymond will be getting more information about an opportunity for Begich being promoted by the "Concord Consortium" <http://www.concord.org/>. Anchorage, (Begich), would be a pilot program for the Consortium. It is a non-profit organization that promotes technology in education. Gail will get back to us after she meets with those folks.

Other Discussions continued:

- ❖ The Discovery Channel is publishing a new Health curriculum that may eventually be used in the sixth grade science classes. Sharon Vaissiere will be monitoring this new program and will let us know if it is adopted or if we can pilot it at Begich.
- ❖ At the end of quarters 1,2 and 3 (in sixth grade) there are between 5 and 10 days "left over" where students will be involved in various culminating activities.

First Quarter: (There is No Away) Students will investigate industrial waste with in our city and in our neighborhoods. They will create proposals/displays that they will share with community members/council members.

Second Quarter: (Astronomy) Students will participate in the Planet Walk Webquest (available on the ASD science website) or they will design a settlement for one of Jupiter's moons.

Third Quarter: (Structures) In conjunction with Engineer's Week, students will participate in the citywide "Create-a-Community" contest. Or, students can participate in the UAA Engineering Fair in February.

- ❖ Throughout the day, we discussed the possibility of including "intensives" throughout the school year. Options included:
 - Cross-grade-level intensives that occur each quarter for roughly five days.
 - Cross-grade-level intensives that occur at the end of the semester. Again, roughly five days in length.
 - Intensives that are offered only in houses or pods.
 - (I think that there were others, but I didn't get them all written down)

Regardless of which format we choose for our intensives, (if we even choose to do them) I would like to have one day at the end of the intensive where students line the halls with presentations on their specific intensive experience. Students could rotate and view other presentations and write comments for those presenting. We would invite business partners, parents and the media to these events.

- ❖ We identified the need to establish a uniform format for teaching the scientific method. Vocabulary would be introduced in sixth grade and formalized in lab write-ups in seventh and eighth grade.
- ❖ Jeanne will be checking on how we can have students sign their Science Safety Contract during registration rather than in their individual science classes when school starts.

*Sorry if these notes are a bit disjointed.
If there is something that you do not understand, please give me a buzz.*

Thanks, K.

Questions that we're pondering. (But ran out of time to fabricate an answer)

1. What do we do with 6th grade gifted science students?
2. How many science texts do we order?
3. Time Capsules?
4. Research Tracks?
5. Bringing in Mirror Lake to the discussion regarding sixth grade MS Science?
6. Begich as a pilot for sixth grade science and future adoption by ASD?
7. What are we going to offer for remedial services for students in science?
8. Should 7th and 8th graders be receiving the same material at the same time, vs. staggering instructional units?
9. 6th grade Camp or end of year field trips?