

**Blake Middle School**  
**Term 2 Update for Families**  
**Grade 7**  
**1/22-1/26**

*Dear Families,*

*During this week we take time as a community to provide you with an update with regard to areas of curricular focus and student work. You may also receive an email from your child's teacher if there are specific areas of concern with regard to progress towards meeting the standards under consideration this term. Please know that you may reach out to teachers or your child's school counselor at any time if you have questions or concerns about their progress. We hope that the information provided in this document will help foster conversations at home.*

Subject	Term 2 Update <i>Priority Standards, Learning Skills, Student Work</i>
<b>Art</b>	Seventh grade artists are learning about graphic designers and how they can capture customers' attention with eye-catching design. Students are working on promotional posters to advertise a product or event. They are combining images with text and using color, composition and hierarchy to create their work. Ms. Jones' classes are creating works of Surrealism with mixed media (drawing and collage).
<b>English</b>	Students are currently at the midpoint of reading <i>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</i> . We have had good discussions about the text. Students have been working on writing analytical paragraphs each Friday, and many are showing good growth in this area. We will be finishing the book in a few weeks, and there are several end of unit assessments (Reading test, circle discussion, five-paragraph essay) coming up in the weeks before and after the February vacation.
	In French, we are learning about sports and activities and vocabulary related to them. Students also learned adverbs of

<b>French</b>	frequency and how to use them in a sentence. We are also reading our second book called “Pauvre Anne”, where students will be doing different activities about every chapter.
<b>Mandarin</b>	In our Mandarin classes, we've delved into expressing descriptions of both personal and others' appearances, enabling us to engage in conversations with classmates or teachers about our daily routines and hobbies. As for cultural highlights, we are excited to explore the festivities of the upcoming Lunar New Year!
<b>Math</b>	In math class, we are currently concluding our unit on percents. Students have gained knowledge about various concepts such as discounts, sale prices, tax, tips, and commissions. Our upcoming focus will be a small Geometry 'Boot Camp' centered around triangles. Following this, we will delve into our unit on Probability and Statistics. Meanwhile, in the math lab, students are engaged in learning how to solve equations using our new manipulatives, which has significantly contributed to enhancing their conceptual understanding.
<b>Science</b>	<p>In science, students have completed units studying Thermal Energy and Changes to Earth's Surface. Building a solar cooker prototype and collecting data through iterative testing was a highlight of the Thermal Energy Unit. After studying local and global changes to Earth's surface through geologic processes, students discussed how data collection helps us forecast geologic events. We are looking forward to beginning our next mini unit on Structural Systems.</p> <p>We have continued our work on all four of the Science and Engineering Practices; SE-1 Skills of Investigation, SE-2 Skills of Analytical Thinking, SE-3 Skills of Evaluating and Communicating and SE-4 Skills of Scientific Literacy during the first part of term 2. The benchmark students are expected to reach by the end of term 2 is linked <a href="#">here</a>. As students continue to develop these science skills, we are encouraging more independence as well as increased use of vocabulary and reasoning in their written work. Many students may be approaching the benchmark of the standard at this point in the term with the expectation that they will reach the standard by the end of the term.</p>

<b>Social Studies</b>	<p>Social Studies has been learning about the Islamic Empire. Within this unit students have been asked to demonstrate mastery in their note taking and study skills. Students will also be expected to make historical connections between this empire and others covered like Rome and Byzantium. Not only will students make connections to previous units, but also will take notes on how this time period of history holds relevance in the modern world. After the Islamic unit we will then move on to the Middle Ages, this unit will also be tied to previous units, but here students will develop presentation skills and go on a field trip to the Worcester Art Museum.</p>
<b>Spanish</b>	<p>7th grade Spanish students are adding lots of -AR action verbs to their speaking and writing. We are looking forward to completing the Brandon Brown reader with our students as well!</p>
<b>Wellness</b>	<p>Volleyball season is upon us at Blake! Grades 6-8 have started their Sport Education unit in Volleyball and we feel the excitement! The unit is comprised of 3 phases: pre-season, regular season and playoffs. Each student will be placed on a team where they will develop together and track their results as they move through their schedules.</p> <p>Additionally, each student will sign up for a team role/job to fulfill during the season. Job roles include: Captain/Coach, Statistician, Equipment Manager, Fitness Leader &amp; Camaraderie Captain. Throughout the pre-season and during warm-ups students will be developing skills in the forearm pass, the set and serve. This specific skill development will improve game play and hopefully increase enjoyment of the game.</p> <p>Towards the end of the unit, each class will run its own playoff tournament which will result in a class championship team. From there, they will move on to a grade-level playoff tournament. The final team will have the opportunity to face off against their grade level staff team in an assembly. This is a high spirited and exciting event for all that takes place the Friday before February break.</p>

**Blake Middle School**  
**Term 2 Update for Families**  
**Grade 8**  
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Subject	Term 2 Update <i>Priority Standards, Learning Skills, Student Work</i>
<b>Art</b>	How can we create the illusion of depth in a painting that is flat? Students are designing a landscape composition and using color theory and atmospheric perspective in their acrylic paintings. Students in Mr. Knaus' classes are beginning a unit on Clay. Their focus is on craftsmanship—building work primarily out of coils.
<b>English</b>	After reading their dystopian novel and selected short stories with a focus on independent and proficient reading comprehension, students are composing their final analytical essay concentrating on the Writing and Language Priority Standards: <i>Uses logical reasoning and relevant evidence to support an original claim. Plans, revises, proofreads, and edits to produce clear and coherent writing. Demonstrates command of standard English</i>

	<i>grammar and usage. Creates meaning through the use of grade-level vocabulary and word choice. We will meet with students in individual conferences to provide personalized feedback in both the content and style of their essay.</i>
<b>French</b>	In French class, the students are learning vocabulary related to town/city life. They will be able to discuss places, where they are in relation to others, and also give directions around town. There will be a variety of activities along the way!
<b>Mandarin</b>	In Mandarin language class, students are currently studying school facilities and subjects. They can introduce their school's facilities, the courses offered, and describe their typical daily schedules. As part of the cultural highlights, they have gained insights into the daily schedules in middle schools in China.
<b>Math</b>	<p>Math 8: In Term 2, the math 8 classes focused on functions, domain, range, and graphing linear functions. The students examined the structure of equations of a line in the form <math>y=mx+b</math>. This skill incorporates identifying y-intercept and slope in order to graph equations. Currently, we are starting to explore subtraction fraction to find slope given two points.</p> <p>Alg1: In term 2, Algebra 1 students have been working with all things linear. They have graphed lines using a variety of methods, investigated slope and rate of change, and written linear equations in a variety of forms, including slope-intercept form, standard form, and point-slope form. They have also investigated parallel and perpendicular lines. We will be beginning linear regression to model real world data and make predictions.</p>
<b>Science</b>	In science, students have completed units studying States of Matter and began Astronomy with a focus on Tides. We are

	<p>looking forward to continuing Astronomy with a focus on gravity and seasons.</p> <p>We have continued our work on all four of the Science and Engineering Practices; SE-1 Skills of Investigation, SE-2 Skills of Analytical Thinking, SE-3 Skills of Evaluating and Communicating and SE-4 Skills of Scientific Literacy during the first part of term 2. As students continue to develop these science skills, we are encouraging more independence as well as increased use of vocabulary and reasoning in their written work.</p>
<b>Social Studies</b>	<p>In our 8th-grade civics class, we're exploring the three branches of government and delving into the system of checks and balances. Through engaging discussions and activities, students are gaining practical insights into how these principles operate.</p> <p>Simultaneously, we're closely following the unfolding presidential primary process, providing students with the opportunity to witness democracy in action and stay informed about current events. Our integrated approach aims to build a strong foundation in civics, encouraging active participation, fostering critical thinking skills, and instilling a sense of civic responsibility.</p>
<b>Spanish</b>	<p>Eighth grade students have been talking all about what they eat at different meals! They are expressing their opinions about specific foods and drinks and practicing how to order in a restaurant, while learning about some foods that are popular in different Spanish-speaking countries.</p>
<b>Wellness</b>	<p>Volleyball season is upon us at Blake! Grades 6-8 have started their Sport Education unit in Volleyball and we feel the excitement! The unit is comprised of 3 phases: pre-season, regular season and playoffs. Each student will be placed on a team where they will develop together and track their results as they move through their schedules.</p> <p>Additionally, each student will sign up for a team role/job to fulfill during the season. Job roles include: Captain/Coach, Statistician, Equipment Manager, Fitness Leader &amp; Camaraderie Captain. Throughout the</p>

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