

The SMASHing Friday Letter



smash@smmusd.org

August 31, 2018

SCHOOL CLOSED

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3 - LABOR DAY

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10 - LOCAL HOLIDAY

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 - LOCAL HOLIDAY

Dear SMASH Families,

Please join us at the upcoming SMASH Site Council meeting Wednesday, September 5, 2018 3:15 PM in Anne's Room. The full agenda is posted below and includes 3 topics that might be of interest to you. 1) If you have any ideas or want to hear others' ideas for new play structures on the little yard, come to this meeting or email Jessica at jrishe@smmusd.org your ideas. 2) At 3:45, come hear Caroline Coster, SMMUSD Sustainability Coordinator present about what's happening in SMMUSD and is available at SMASH. 3) Come hear Jessica's presentation of SMASH state testing (CASSPP) data from 17-18.

Enthusiastically yours,
Jessica

SMASH Site Council Agenda 9/5/18 3:15pm in Anne's Room

Adopt Agenda

Approve minutes of last meeting

Community participation

Reports and Announcements (regular agenda items)

Principal's Report

Student Reports

Community Organization Reports (to include but not limited to the following):

PTSA

Student Council

Old Business

New Business:

Welcome new Site Council student and parent reps, review of by-laws

Review of ideas for new play structures on the little yard

3:45 Caroline Coster, SMMUSD Sustainability Coordinator presentation

Review SMASH state testing (CASSPP) data for 17-18

Community participation (if applicable)

Adjourn

Next meeting dates for 2018-19: 10/3/18, 11/14/18, 12/19/18, 1/23/19, 2/27/19, 3/27/19, 5/8/19

Terracycle

Via Terracycle, we can divert waste from the landfill. We collect packaging from energy/granola bars, chip bags, toothpaste/brushes, cosmetics, and more. Please email Mimi Lichterman for a complete list. mimilichterman@yahoo.com The green collection bin will be located in the Core 2 breezeway.

Please follow these collection guidelines: empty crumbs and food from packaging, flatten bags and wrappers, stick to the list of accepted items, and make sure to deposit Terracycle INSIDE the bin and latch securely.

THANK YOU!

DATES TO REMEMBER!

Monday, Sept 3	Labor Day	SCHOOL CLOSED
Tuesday, Sept 4	School Times 1st - 8th grades: 8:30-3:00pm Kinders 8:30-1:30pm	SMASH does NOT have early Dismissal Other schools do for their back to school night 3:15-4:15pm - Anne's room #415
Wednesday, Sept 5	Site Council Mtg	
	CORE FORUMS This is the night when teachers meet with parents to explain the curriculum for the year.	
Wednesday, Sept 5	Core 3 Forum 6:00-7:30pm	Childcare is NOT available for Core 3 & 4 Forums
Thursday, Sept 6	Core 4 Forum 6:00-7:30pm	
Wednesday, Sept 12	Core 1 Forum 6-7:30pm	Childcare available for Cores 1 & 2 Forums Suggested donation \$5 per child (funds go to student trip scholarships).
Thursday, Sept 13	Core 2 Forum 6-7:30pm	
Monday, Sept 10	Local Holiday	SCHOOL CLOSED
Wednesday, Sept 12	PTSA Meeting 8:30-10:00 General Meeting 8:00 Executive Meeting	Meet in the Music Room (next to the Cafeteria)
Wednesday, Sept 19	Local Holiday	SCHOOL CLOSED

As a Final Reminder

- School starts at 8:30 daily
- Monday-Thursday K: 8:30—1:30pm
- 1st through 8th grades: 8:30-3:00pm
- Every Friday of the school year is a 1:30 dismissal K-8 so that the staff may participate in professional development.

CORE 1 NEWS

WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL!

Partners

The Partners have made a smooth transition into Core 1. They are enjoying getting to know their peers and their teachers. They are practicing new routines like saying good-bye to parents, putting their backpack away in their cubby, carrying a chair to meeting, taking talking and listening turns using a talking piece, going to Circle Group, snack, lunch and recess routines, dismissal routines, and so many more. Please ask your child to show and tell how these routines work.

Bigs

The Bigs are getting into the swing of things, with their new routines and longer day. They have welcomed our new student, Gelila, with open arms. We are all getting into the rhythm of the day. We are unrolling guidelines around materials and slowly moving into academics. Some work coming home may not match with what your child can do, but please know that we are mindfully choosing low risk/high engagement activities for this time of the school year.

Mentors

The Mentors are excited about the new school year! We have been getting to know each other and our classroom and schedule routines. We have been practicing listening to each other and communicating with love and care. We have visited with our circle groups which started this past Monday. We welcomed Zachary to our family and we are very excited he is here and for our year together.

Upcoming Events:

September 12: Core 1 Forum 6-8pm Childcare for school age children will be available on-site. We hope to see all parents, if possible.

Core 1 Team

Graciela, Nadja, Chrysta, Alex, Alejandra, Juana, Marcus, Coach Angel

Graciela: gbarba-castro@smmusd.org Chrysta: cpowell@smmusd.org Alejandra: asantini@smmusd.org

CORE 1 NEWS

Core 2 is off to a great start. We have been hard at work creating classroom structures that foster a strong sense of continuity and cohesion. We're really enjoying spending our days with your amazing children!

Following the Responsive Classroom model, we're spending the first six weeks building community. The students have been engaged in a variety of activities, projects, and games designed to build new friendships, learn more about each other, and create a safe space where all are able to grow, develop, and feel comfortable taking risks. One way we're supporting this work is through their Individual Identity Maps project. This project integrates writing, community building, and observational drawing. We hope that students are starting to think about what elements of their identities they want to honor, improve upon, and/or reinvent during this school year. We're teaching them about the intersectionality of their identities, touching upon both surface and deep cultural elements. Some of the books we've read in order to support this work are : I Am Mixed, Chester's Way, Thank You Mr. Falkner, We're All Wonders, Frederick, Whoever You Are, and The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes.

In addition, as we're rolling out each subject area, we are developing agreed upon expectations and routines. In Reading Workshop, for example, we're coming up with ways to take care of the library, find books that sustain us, and goals for ourselves as readers. In Math Workshop, we're working on counting collections, math games, and sharing our mathematical thinking.

Important Info.:

- No school on 9/3, 9/10, and 9/19.
- Please be on the lookout for Friday Folders (clear plastic envelopes with important papers).
- Thank you for Clean Up Day. Another way to support us is through book orders. More info to come soon.
- 4th graders need to have instruments by Tuesday, 9/11.

All our best! Christian, Malaika, and Sarah

Christian: ccarter@smmusd.org

Sarah: sdaunis@smmusd.org

CORE 3 NEWS

Hi Core 3 Parents,

We are looking forward to seeing you at the Core 3 Forum next Wednesday. We know that families are busy and have many other week night commitments. In order to make the best use of your time, we would love to know in advance what information, if anything specific, you would like to know more about. We plan to talk a little bit about curriculum, the Catalina trip, homework, and our weekly schedule. Is there anything else that you hope that we touch upon? If so, please email us. The best way to contact us is at: ehaendel@smmusd.org and jwoldflorian@smmusd.org.

Upcoming Dates

Wednesday, Sept. 5th - Core 3 Forum - 6:00 pm

Social Studies

This week we continued to get to know each other better and began working on our geography skills. On Tuesday and Wednesday students worked alone or in groups to create a map of the United States from their minds (without any resources). Using construction paper, glue sticks, and scissors, students cut out and identified states that they knew. On Thursday and Friday we began coloring our giant US wall map. Students are using atlases to help guide them in their coloring.

Sixth Grade Math

This week students reviewed factors and multiples and learned how to find the greatest common factor and the least common multiple of pairs or sets of numbers. Next week we will learn to create factor strings and use prime factorization.

5th Grade Math

We've just launched our first math unit focusing on multiplication and division. This week we worked to identify and practice factors, multiples, square numbers, and prime numbers. Now is a great time to have your child practice their multiplication facts from 0-12 so that they feel more confident when we begin to work with larger numbers.

Work packets have been handed out and students were given "soft" due dates for work. The purpose of this due date is to help your child organize themselves and give them a sense of time management. If students need additional time, they can and should take in so that they fully understand the math concepts. All work is handed out in class and students are given several days to complete assignments. If your child needs additional time at home, they can bring their folder and packets home with them. There is no additional homework assigned for math.

Literacy

Having a good book to read really matters! Please make sure your child has a Just Right Book that they can read during class and at home. Try to aim for them to read at home for 20-30 minutes each day. Next week, we will launch our class read aloud that will have some online reading response component attached. Students will also be asked to write responses to their Just Right Book, so please make sure they have one.

We've started brainstorming ideas for stories using stickers, magazine collaging, and other tools on the cover of our Writers Notebooks. If your child has other items to be glued to their notebook, they may do so this week and next week. Remember that they will NOT come off at the end of the year, so if you're planning to add photos, it's best to use copies rather than originals.

Community Building

Students are reflecting on last year's successes and challenges to write new goals for themselves. They are not only writing a goal, but they are also deciding on their own actions and responsibility for meeting their goal, as well as identifying how teachers and adults can support them. Ask your child what they hope to work on this year at school to get a preview of their goal.

Jayne and Erin

jwoldflorian@smmusd.org

ehaendel@smmusd.org

The 6-7-8 grade SMASH Jazz Club is conducted by Russ Mullen. He encourages players of typical jazz instruments (sax, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, keyboard, bass, drums...) to join this group Fridays 1:45-2:45pm in the Music Room (next door to the Cafeteria) starting Friday, September 7, 2018. If you want to ask him any questions in advance, he can be reached at russmullenmusic@aol.com

Welcome to a year of learning adventures, thoughtful emphasis upon the development of effective habits of work/mind/heart, and the culmination of your child's education here at SMASH. We are deeply aware of our responsibility to your delightful and cherished children. We shall strive constantly to improve our practice, to find engaging learning activities, and to be models of thoughtful, fair, and generous humanity. Thank you for the gift of working alongside your children.

The middle school years are often hard for loving parents as most find that they must fundamentally change how they demonstrate support for their children and let go of previous patterns of parenting behavior. Communication becomes challenging, simple issues bloom into complex dramas with little warning, risk taking on the part of the kids becomes much more common than when they were younger. In a sense, parents and teachers of this age group are confronted with a brand new child daily, weekly, and monthly. Brain research tells us that this is indeed true and that these fascinating young adolescents are navigating a period of change equaled only by their time in their mother's womb. We will do our best to help navigate these years as we create a safe environment for our kids to become resilient, caring, and thoughtful. Let us help you find ways to support them as they fledge and fly away from the comfortable nest you have provided to this point.

I think you would agree that middle school students (ages 11-14) are exuberant, emotionally volatile, and full of joy as they explore the world. This is a time of life when children push away from parents and teachers; instead prioritizing friendships and peer values above all else. As challenging as this sounds it is a rare opportunity to deeply influence who these fabulous kids will become. Generally, this critical developmental stage is characterized by four developmental needs.

Relationships: *I want to connect with others.*

To reduce fear and a sense of being alone in the world, young adolescents need to build and maintain relationships that provide safe ground upon which to make mistakes on their journey. These relationships focus on peers in a way that they never have before, but they also include powerful and reliable adult support. Young adolescents can't make it alone!

Autonomy: *I want to be independent.*

The adolescent drive to function separate from adults is a powerful motivator. It works for school success when it drives middle level students to show that they can be given big responsibilities and freedom, but against success when it turns into rebellion. They need maps from caring adults to help them find their own way.

Competence: *I want to experience success in what I do and feel like a worthwhile, significant person.*

Young adolescence feels like a make-or-break time for young people, a time when you have to demonstrate that you've got the right stuff or be seen as a loser. Adult scaffolding can make a crucial difference.

Fun: *I want to have a good time.*

The need to enjoy moments of pleasure drives much adolescent behavior. Students will find their own fun during school hours (and sometimes pay a big price for it) if adults don't channel the need constructively.

Continued.....

Core 4 News Continued..

We meet these needs using six research-based principles that have been proven here at SMASH over the years and throughout the U.S. by many high achieving middle schools. These include:

1. Social learning is as important to success as academic learning.
2. Students learn best by constructing their own understanding through exploration, discovery, application of academic concepts to real world situations, reflection, self-evaluation, and especially the development of effective habits.
3. The greatest cognitive growth occurs through carefully focused social interactions within a supportive community.
4. A set of personal/social skills that students need to learn and practice in order to be successful socially and academically is: Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, and Self-control. Just like core three!
5. Knowing the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual needs of the students we teach is as important as knowing the content we teach. We strive to teach one child at a time.

Trust amongst community adults is a fundamental necessity for academic and social success in a learning community. We must constantly communicate.

In closing, let us reiterate our joy at finding ourselves in the midst of such a wonderful and caring community. Together we shall seek that very finest learning, habits, and life adventures.

Announcements

Core 4 Forum: Thursday, September 6, 2018 at 6pm in the core 4 classrooms (Parents only)

Darwin Mendinueto - dmendinueto@smmusd.org Genie Hwang - ghwang@smmusd.org

The 6-7-8 grade SMASH Jazz Club is conducted by Russ Mullen. He encourages players of typical jazz instruments (sax, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, keyboard, bass, drums...) to join this group Fridays 1:45-2:45pm in the Music Room (next door to the Cafeteria) starting Friday, September 7, 2018. If you want to ask him any questions in advance, he can be reached at russmullenmusic@aol.com