

From the MS Head – March

While Spring Break provides a much needed respite from the routines of the school year, it also signals summer vacation is a mere eight to nine weeks away. When asked by a colleague recently what passion of mine people would find surprising, I responded, “the 4th quarter, and in particular, the month of May.”

A couple of years ago, I led a professional development seminar with a group of middle school teachers. The framing question for the session: “Is it the responsibility of the middle school teacher to entertain?” Almost unanimously, the group of teachers answered “no.” Fair enough. The follow-up question drew the connection to the point of our session... “Is it our responsibility to engage?” Unanimously, the answer was yes. This question takes on particular importance during the 4th quarter of a school year.

During this time, teachers typically observe their students start to focus more on the social aspects of school. Students and teachers alike find their thoughts drifting to summer plans. This phenomena heightens the responsibility of our teachers to engage students (and themselves) in highly interactive, discovery based learning. In our Middle School discussions this year, we’ve referred to Bloom’s Taxonomy as a framework by which to evaluate the sophistication of our learning activities. We aim to design assessments that require students to actively move between all the learning domains of Bloom’s Taxonomy. A well-designed activity engages students from the most basic domain of recalling information to the most sophisticated domain of evaluating ideas and materials.

So, how are we doing? In looking ahead to the months of April and May, I would say we’re doing well. Below are a number of projects that will accomplish the goal of keeping our students engaged in stimulating and challenging activities through the end of the school year.

All MS

Eco Month (April) – Multiple Activities

Music Programs – 4th/5th, 6th-8th Choir, Orchestra, Band

Student Leadership Elections

Guest Motivational Speaker

4th Grade

Zoo Trip

Bird Festival

Rat/Dogfish/Shark Dissections

American Celebration

5th Grade

Engineering Fair

Pig Lung Dissection

OK Blood Institute Field Trip

Book Sandwiched In
Gilcrease Field Trip
Archaeological Dig
Performances of Original Plays

6th Grade
Balloon Launch
Medieval Field Trip
Medieval Fair
Tulsa Opera Field Trip

7th Grade
Poetry Coffee House
Tulsa Opera Field Trip

8th Grade
Spring SOOD – Route 66
Chemist Challenge
French Exchange Students Visit
Tulsa Opera Field Trip
Bicycle Tour of Riverparks

As you can tell, it will be an exciting remaining eight weeks of school. These events serve as a visual reminder of the outstanding education our faculty members are providing. However, we should be reminded that sophisticated learning activities are taking place on a daily basis in every classroom in the Middle School. I look forward to experiencing the 4th Quarter with our students as it's shaping up to be our best yet.