



CALENDAR

OCT

3

Pizza Lunch
All School Meeting

OCT

10

No School - Professional
Development Day

OCT

13

No School - Indigenous
Peoples'/Columbus Day

OCT

17

Portrait Day
Pizza Lunch
All School Meeting

OCT

23

United Nations Day

OCT

24

Pizza Lunch
All School Meeting
Halloween Fair 3:30-5:00 p.m.

OCT

26

Open House for Prospective
Families 11:00-1:00 p.m.

Middle School Classroom Newsletter: September 26, 2025



The Middle School students had an amazing experience at Chewonki. They participated in "crews" where they had to help prepare breakfast or dinner, make the fire by cutting and chopping wood, and set up the dishwashing station to wash dishes. They enjoyed a hot breakfast and dinner cooked over the fire each day.



Some of the activities involved working together as a team, communication, and cooperation. They learned how to set up and take down a tent, paddle and steer a canoe, tell the difference between a predator and prey's skull, and help carry their heavy packs and group gear to and from the campsite. They learned about the importance of sustainability and taking care of the environment by 'leaving no trace.'

History

This week in History, we continued to work through our curriculum, Civics, Alive!, moving on from our inspection of the Foundations of Government, and beginning Unit 2: The Origins and Purposes of Government. We examined how the rise of agriculture in the Fertile Crescent and the achievements of the Sumerians contributed to the emergence of more complex social organizations. From there, we followed the development of city-states, empires, feudal Europe, and the establishment of absolute monarchies. Building on this historical foundation, we moved forward into the Age of Revolutions, considering how new ideas about government emerged during this period. We are now preparing to compare the different forms of government that exist today, centering our discussions on the essential question: “How should political and economic power be distributed in a society?”



Writer's Workshop



In Grammar and Writer's Workshop this week, students have been strengthening both their vocabulary and writing skills. We've been creating flashcards to help study and internalize new words, and everyone did a fantastic job on the first Vocabulary Quiz of the year—a strong start we're determined to keep up!

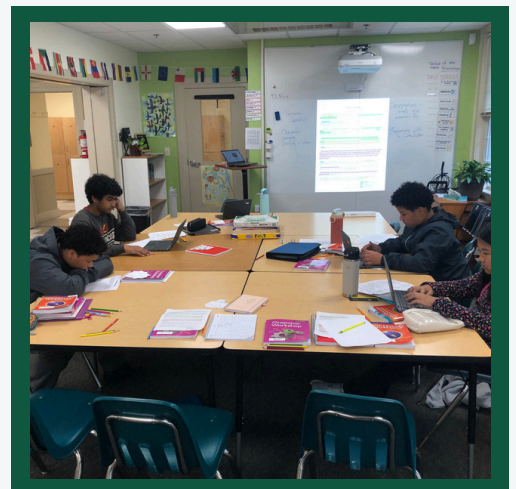
On the grammar side, we are continuing to focus on mastering sentence structure by identifying subjects and predicates, and this week, we added a new challenge: spotting direct objects in sentences.

In Writer's Workshop, students are exploring ways to weave vocabulary into meaningful work—and I even heard plenty of our first vocabulary list being used at Chewonki! We also discussed the form of the personal narrative, paying special attention to the narrative arc, and began outlining (or drafting) our very first major paper of the year: the personal narrative.

Literature Circle

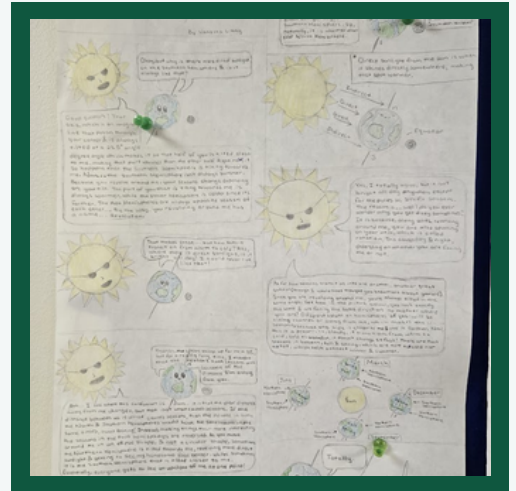
We began this week of Literature Circle by learning how to take Cornell-style notes as we read, a skill that helps students stay organized and retain key information. They are already implementing this strategy across their Humanities classes, building stronger habits as readers and thinkers.

In our reading of *Alexander Hamilton: The Making of America* by Teri Kanefield, students dug deeper into Hamilton's early life and the challenges he faced. The text has opened up conversations about resilience, opportunity, self-consciousness, self-assuredness, and how individual choices can shape history. Students are noticing not only Hamilton's role in the founding of the United States, but also the ways personal stories connect to larger themes of government, leadership, and civic responsibility.

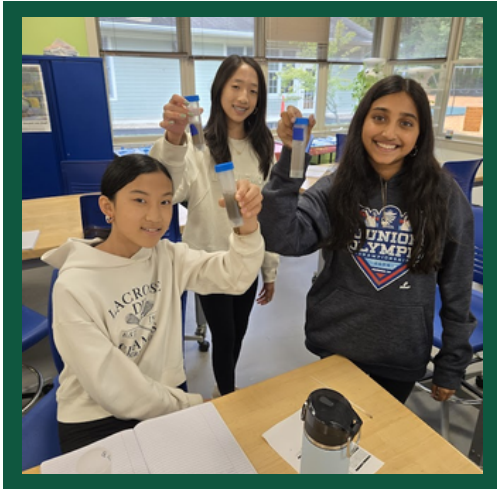


Science

Middle School students turned in their “Reason for the Seasons” comics before heading off for their trip. Science was incorporated into Chewonki by talking about how the moon affects the tides, looking at the stars at night, discussing gravity, and much more. More recently, we zoomed in on the phases of the moon, referring back to their moon observation logs from their summer homework. Students participated in many activities that allowed them to visualize what the phase of the moon would look like on Earth from different positions. They also learned about solar and lunar eclipses by taking notes, watching short videos, and participating in a virtual lab. Students should be spending some time reviewing their vocabulary words from this unit, as they will have an end-of-unit test coming up in a couple of weeks.



STEM / Land Study



Land Study at Chewonki included reading and interpreting charts or maps of the estuary where we paddled in the canoes, exploring the island, noticing how the seaweed plants have air bubbles that help them float when the tide is high, and catching frogs. Students also helped pull diseased tomato plants from the greenhouse at Chewonki, and move some dried corn stalks and pallets into piles.

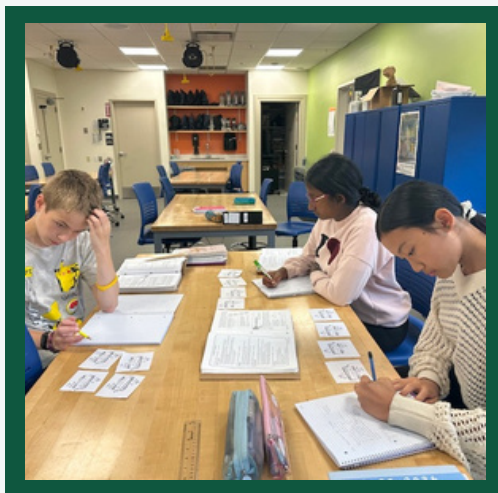
At ASM this week, we continued talking about soil and finished testing the various samples from each of the raised beds. Each student tested for potassium, nitrogen, phosphorous and pH level. They had to interpret their results and write a soil recommendation based on their data. They also continued weeding the raised beds from the summer months, and reflected on their progress in their STEM notebooks.

Montessori Model United Nations

In MMUN this week, students have been strengthening their research skills, with a focus on learning how to filter and identify reputable sources online. They explored resources such as the CIA World Factbook and Encyclopedia Britannica to gather valuable background information about nations of their choosing, including details on climate, population, geography, and demographics. Each student shared their findings in short presentations, giving the class a chance to learn about countries from around the globe.

We also took the next step by seeking out topical news articles from trusted media agencies like the BBC, Reuters, and the Associated Press, as well as sources such as National Geographic and the Smithsonian. Students worked to connect current events to their countries and presented article synopses to their fellow delegates.





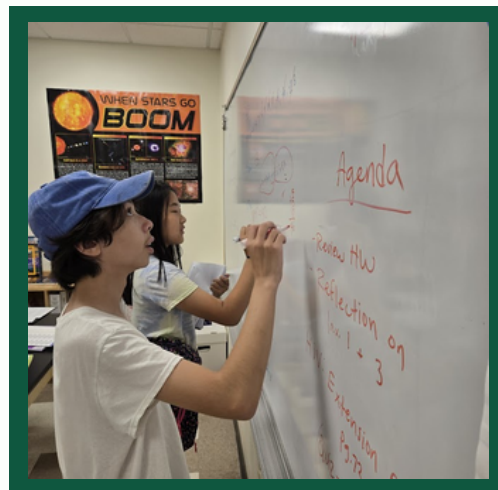
Algebra

In algebra, students are exploring functions - rules that take an input and produce an output. We've used "function machines," tables, and real-world stories to see how changing the input affects the output. Students also discovered that the output of one function can become the input to another, giving them a first look at linking functions to model multi-step situations. A big focus has been on modeling: representing the same situation with a table, a graph, or an equation and explaining how each representation tells the same story.

We began with linear functions, highlighting constant rate of change and interpreting slope and intercept in context. Students practiced matching graphs to tables, writing equations to fit data, and checking that their models make sense. These skills are building a strong foundation for analyzing more complex functions later this year.

Pre-Algebra

In Pre-Algebra, we reviewed the rules for adding and subtracting rational numbers and students took notes on the rules for multiplying and dividing rational numbers. They spent a lot of class time practicing and applying these rules by playing whiteboard review games. They also had homework each night to help solidify their understanding of these rules. Students also continue to work on a POW, thinking through the problem solving process and writing out how they solved the problem. Lastly, Pre-Algebra students learned the expectations for writing a math reflection and spent some time reflecting over the topics they learned in Investigation 1 and 3. They also had a quiz to check for understanding on the rules of operations with integers.



Looking Ahead...

Now that we are well underway with the curriculum, students are encouraged to spend time at home reviewing their class notes, studying flashcards, and completing their assigned homework. Consistent review outside of class not only reinforces what they are learning each day but also helps them strengthen long-term understanding of key concepts. Developing these study habits now will ensure that students feel confident and well-prepared for upcoming assessments.



[Click here for more classroom photos!](#)

[Click here for Chewonki photos!](#)

Integrated Arts Update

Art

In connection with their study of early American government in Humanities, Middle School students experienced what it was like to write in the 18th century by creating their own quill pens. After carefully preparing and cutting the quills, they practiced writing and drawing by dipping them into India ink. This hands-on activity gave students a deeper appreciation for the tools used by early Americans and helped them connect more meaningfully to the historical time period they are studying.



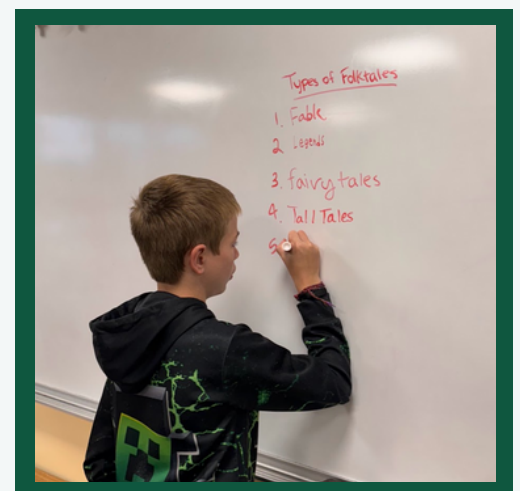
Music



Middle School music is off to an exciting start as students prepare for a productive and inspiring year. In our first class, students set goals and participated in icebreakers, including creating personal playlists of their current favorite songs, which then contributed to a cumulative class playlist. In the second class, students tried out the new Tone Chimes, learning proper technique for holding, ringing, and muting, as well as how to care for the instrument. They played their first group song, practicing labeling their parts and building part independence.

Theater

Middle School began September by exploring different types of folktales and their defining characteristics. Students studied the five main categories of folktales and brainstormed examples for each, discussing common themes and elements they noticed across cultures. From this list, they voted to narrow their choices to three favorites and then considered how the characters from these stories might interact if brought together. This foundational work is preparing students to create their own original plays, using folktales as inspiration to craft unique stories that blend creativity, collaboration, and performance.



Integrated Arts Update

Spanish

This year, Middle School students began Spanish with a new methodology using the digital platform Voces. Throughout the year, they will use this resource to explore different Spanish-speaking countries while also strengthening their grammar skills. To start, students reviewed the Spanish alphabet and practiced spelling, along with everyday introductions in a variety of contexts. They also revisited essential vocabulary from previous years and created a summary of what they have learned so far, giving them a strong foundation to build upon as they continue their studies.



Physical Education



We opened the year with a focus on strength and conditioning to build a solid fitness base for students. Each class has included a mix of activities such as games, mini relay races, and running the field, giving students both variety and challenge. These exercises have provided plenty of cardio while also targeting important fitness skills like balance, coordination, and core strength.

In addition to building stamina and endurance, students are learning the value of perseverance, teamwork, and pushing themselves to reach new goals. The energy has been high, and it's been exciting to see students encouraging one another and having fun while working hard. This strong start sets the tone for a year of healthy habits and continued growth in physical education.

Looking Ahead...

We are thrilled to announce several exciting opportunities to witness the culmination of the hard work put in by our Integrated Arts faculty as they support students in preparing for key events at ASM. Below are the important dates for these events. Additional logistics will be provided as we approach each date.

- December 12.....Middle School Winter Concert
- May 6.....Art Show Opening
- May 20.....Middle School Theater Performance
- June 1.....Field Day

