



## Sumner County Schools News

Committed and Focused on Growing Learners  
School Year 2017-18, April Issue



This issue of Sumner County Schools News is the second in a series of articles by students and teachers to share examples of the implementation of proven practices to achieve mastery of various academic standards. The learning, student reactions, and those “a-ha” moments are essential to the achievement of the mission of Sumner County Schools.





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## Howard Elementary Fifth Graders Learn Theme/Tone and Make Connections to Text

Internet memes commonly poke fun at the idea of much of what is learned in school is rarely remembered and then largely tossed aside in life. Despite popular opinion, research suggests students do retain most of what is learned into adulthood, and some lessons are remembered more vividly than others. For **Howard Elementary School (HES)** fifth grade teacher Julie Strickland's ELA students, a recent lesson on theme and tone will likely prove unforgettable.



5.RL.KID.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a poem from details in the text; summarize the text

5.RL.IKI.7

Determine the tone of the text

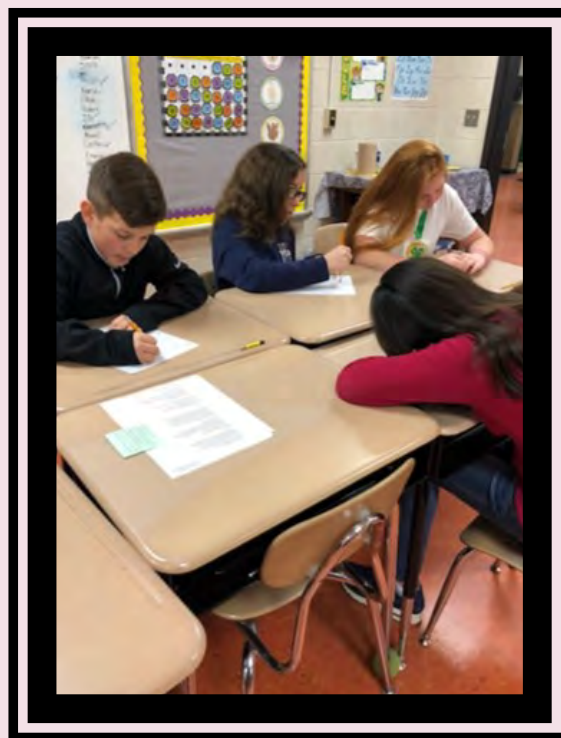
Mrs. Strickland guided students through a close read of a Carrie Underwood's song "Temporary Home." The use of unconventional material (music) and methods (listening *and* reading) provided a unique opportunity for students to deepen their ELA knowledge and make personal connections to the text. Here, several HES students share their responses to the text and lesson.

"Our class listened to a song while studying the theme and tone of the poem. This song was very emotional because of how it is talking about these people who have temporary homes. These stories made me upset because my friend that I used to talk to all the time had to move since she was a foster kid." - Ciara B.

"Our class was studying theme and author's tone. The theme of the passage was about a temporary home. The author's tone was using very emotional words and was a very sad story. This relates to me because the old man in the hospital bed was about to die. My grandmother died in a hospital bed a couple minutes after I left. I also read a story about a girl named Gillie, and she was an orphan who wanted a real home." - Micah H.

"We were studying theme and tone. We were listening to a song called "Temporary Home." The tone of the song was emotional because this kid cannot find a home to stay in forever, but he did find a temporary home to stay in. When we heard this song, it made us feel sad and remember the things that have happened to us. The theme of the song is some people find temporary homes and do not stay there forever . . . this kid keeps finding a temporary home while also trying to find a real home." - Emilyn S.

"In class we were reading this poem. It was supposed to help us learn theme and author's tone, but instead, some of us related to it and cried. I didn't really cry because I didn't think of how I related. It did make me feel sad though. I felt that the author might have had a temporary home, and he could've been the old man that was about to die." - Katelan B.



Willingham, Daniel; "Do Students Remember What They Learn in School?" American Federation of Teachers Ask the Cognitive Scientist; <https://www.aft.org/ae/fall2015/willingham>, Fall 2015





## Trying Leads to Success at North Sumner Elementary

North Sumner Elementary School (NSE) third through fifth graders are busy writing songs. Ms. Oliver, NSE music teacher, is using *Words and Music* as the curriculum to facilitate the writing. *Words and Music* is a program which outlines the song-writing process and is provided by the Country Music Hall of Fame. NSE students are creating lyrics in groups of three or four students, and those are presented to songwriters at the Country Music Hall of Fame. Several lyrics will be selected to become completed songs by adding music composed by a professional Nashville songwriter. The culminating activity will occur when the songwriter comes to NSE and presents the selected lyrics with the addition of the music.



A CD of the songs will be presented to NSE. Last year, students presented 20 completed lyrics, and six became songs through the process by songwriter Anthony Snape. These six songs were performed at NSE's Spring Concert.

Singer/songwriter John Mayer said, "The rule is: Write bad songs, but write 'em. If you start writing bad songs, you'll write better songs, and then you start getting really good." What a great example of *Failure Leads to Success!* This is exactly what NSE students are learning!



The *Words and Music* curriculum engages students, provides opportunities for artistic outlets, and relates strongly to the Quantum Learning Eight Keys of Excellence. As small groups work together, there must be *Flexibility* in listening to others' ideas, *Commitment* to finishing the work, and *Ownership* in the final project. Small groups must also learn to *Speak with Good Purpose*. Trying is the beginning of success, and this is shining brightly at NSE.







## Gene Brown Elementary and Music Standards

On March 20, Rock and Roll found its way back to **Gene Brown Elementary School (GBE)**. Directed by GBE music teacher, Crystal Juechter, the third and fourth grade students presented the program *Rock and Roll Forever: How It All Began*. The students sang songs from the 1950s and 1960s including favorites such as “Surfing USA” by the Beach Boys and “I Want to Hold Your Hand” by the Beatles. Dressed in 1950s and 1960s attire, the students rocked it out with “Tutti Frutti” while the audience clapped and sang along! Performers Elvis and Little Richard even made an appearance along with the star of the *Ed Sullivan Show*! The students received a standing ovation for their enthusiastic and authentic performance of these classic hits!



Standard 1.0 Singing Students will sing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music. Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) The student will: 1.1 Sing melodies in varied styles with accurate pitch and rhythm. 1.2 Demonstrate proper vocal technique. 1.3 Demonstrate skills for singing harmony.





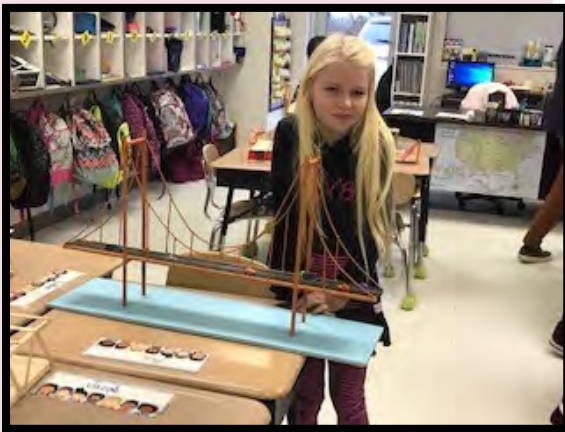
## Oakmont Elementary — Ava Pitt Builds a Bridge for a STEM Project

At Oakmont Elementary School (OES), Mrs. Woodruff's third grade class read a story titled *Pop's Bridge*. Then, the class was asked to build a replica of the Golden Gate Bridge as a STEM assignment. Ava Pitt, third grader, shares her experience on the project in the narrative below.



### The Bridge

In third grade we were assigned to read the story "Pop's Bridge." After reading that story, we had to build the Golden Gate Bridge for a STEM project. My dad thought to build it out of popsicle sticks, but since the real Golden Gate Bridge is made out of steel, I wanted to make it out of steel. First, we went to my granddads house and laid out my design. Then, I measured and cut the steel to length with some large wire cutters. I put on my welding helmet and began. I held the trigger on the welder for 2 seconds for the small welds, and 4 seconds for the big welds. Then I went to my Aunt Susie's to use the table saw to cut the road. She showed me how to use a dremel and bandsaw to make the cars. We painted the bridge, road and the cars. The final step was to test the bridge to see how much weight it could hold. My bridge held everything we tested. It was strong enough because of the materials I chose to use.





## Guild Elementary “Starnes Stars” become Animal Experts



At Guild Elementary School (GES), Mrs. Starnes’ first graders spent a week becoming animal experts! Each student chose an animal they wanted to learn more about and began researching. The GES students were extremely engaged and excited about this opportunity to discover more about their animals of choice. Mrs. Starnes facilitates a 1:1 classroom, meaning each student has a technology device for individual use during the school day, to allow students to move through the Internet to read and find interesting facts. With a classroom of students eager to



read, many also used actual texts as resources. Upon completion of the research project, the GES first graders published their animal projects.

To enhance the culmination of the projects, Mrs. Starnes used a green screen application to record the students reporting all they learned about their animals. One student, Brian, became an animal expert on crocodiles and alligators. “I learned alligator babies stay in their mother’s mouth,” said Brian. Another student, Joshua, said he didn’t know anything about chipmunks so he decided to do some research. Joshua said, “I learned they take their nuts with them.” These first graders definitely became animal experts!

### Tennessee Academic Standards

1.RI.RRTC.10- with prompting and support, read informational texts of appropriate complexity for Grade 1.



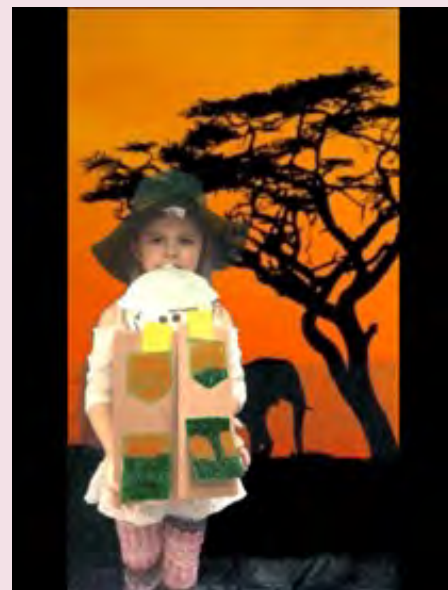
1.WTTP.2 - with prompting and support, write informational text, name a topic and supply facts, provide a sense of closure.

1.W.RBPK.7- participate in shared research and writing projects.

1.W.PDW.6 - with guidance and support, explore digital tools to publish and produce writing.

1.W.PDW.4 - with guidance and support, produce clear and coherent writing.

1.W.RW.10 - engage routinely in writing activities to promote writing fluency and writing stamina.







## Nannie Berry Elementary and Fifth Grade Fun with Learning

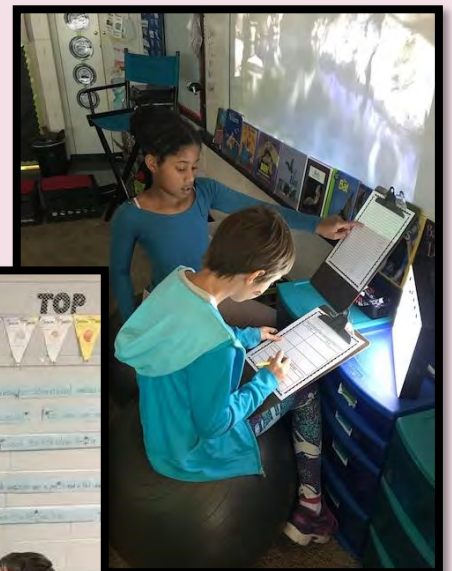
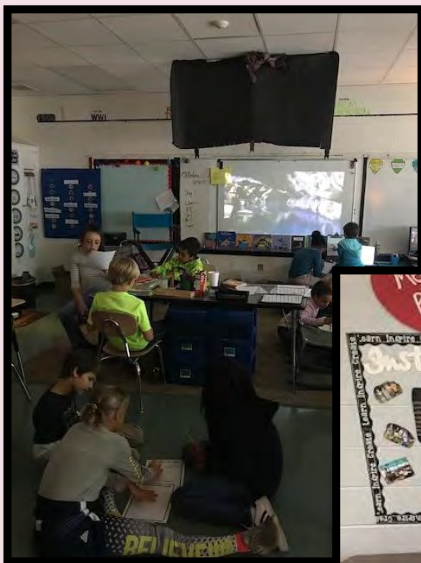
Ariana Rivas and Alyza Flanary, students at **Nannie Berry Elementary School (NBE)**, wrote about two fun learning activities experienced in their fifth grade class taught by Mrs. Barba.

This year in Mrs. Barba's fifth grade class we had several creative, fun, and educational projects for different subjects. For instance, our classroom was transformed into a bat cave for ELA and for math we worked on Math Graffiti. Mrs. Barba has helped us a lot this year, and we love how she gives us the opportunities to have fun learning experiences. Today, we will share what we liked about these projects and what we learned from them.

To start off with, we are going to share our ELA Bat Cave assignment. In this project, we had to help Mrs. Barba fix her broken bat wings while we also earned our own bat wings. When we got to school that morning, our whole classroom was transformed into a bat cave and all our work that day dealt with bats and bat facts. We had to read different texts, fiction and nonfiction, and respond to the text. We finished by writing an informational piece. We really liked how we got to earn our own bat wings and work together. We worked on tearing up the text, finding important ideas, and including them in our response.

Another fun project we did was Math Graffiti. We partnered up, and moved around the room giving answers "graffiti style." We each had to solve the equation and prove it to the other and to our classmates. After we answered each other's expressions, we then went back and performed error analysis on the problems to confirm our answer or find any errors.

Today, we shared with you two super, fun projects we did in class that were educational and creative. We learned how to use order of operations and to tear up/examine the text to write informational papers. These projects are just some of the many fun projects we do in class.







## **George Whitten Elementary and Talented Fifth Grade Writers**

**George Whitten Elementary School (GWE)** has a wide pool of talented writers, particularly among its fifth grade students, to the credit of ELA teachers Mindy Porter and Katherine Morgan. From this pool of writers, two fifth graders, Katelyn and Cecily, were selected to write about a favorite concept and activity from this school year.



### **Katelyn was most fascinated by the Great Depression's impact on the nation. (SS.5.4.9)**

"One thing I learned this year I really enjoyed was the Great Depression. Many people wonder why history is so important. Well it's because if you don't learn about history, history will just repeat itself over and over. That is why it can help you in the future.

The Great Depression wasn't a fun time in history. It was a time when Americans invested so much money in the stock market that when it crashed, people lost all their life savings. Many also lost their homes and jobs and had nowhere to go.

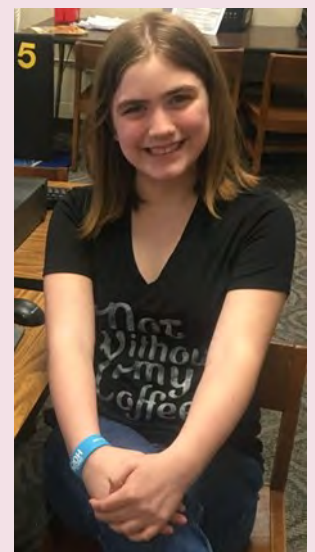
Some people had to live with people they didn't even know to get by. At the time, Herbert Hoover was president. He didn't help improve the economy. In fact, some people slept in tents side by side in places known as Hoovervilles because he did nothing about it. There were also soup kitchens that served food to hungry people. The Great Depression affected so many people's lives.

In class we had different discussions about the Great Depression which helped me and other students in my class have a better understanding of it. We talked about what it would be like if we lived in this time period. What if you had to quit school and get a job to help your family? What if you had nowhere to go or sleep at night? Most people don't take time to think about it. How do you think these people felt? That's why I enjoyed learning about the Great Depression. It was interesting how many people's lives it affected, and you can just imagine what it would be like in that time. It is why we learn about events like this in history. Would you really want this to happen again?"

### **Cecily found exponents for numbers ending in zero were easy to understand. (5.NBT.A.2)**

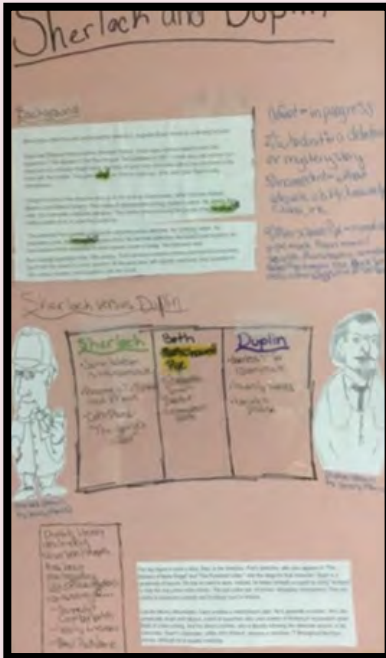
"One skill I learned this year that I really enjoyed was how to do multiplication and division using powers of 10. This really stood out in my mind because of how well I understood it. With exponents, you must multiply a number by itself many times. For example, if you were doing 10 to the power of six, you would have to multiply  $10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10$ . Now, at first glance, it looks complicated. You could multiply each number, but all you need to do is add six zeros after the number one. So, whenever using exponents with ten as your whole number, the exponent tells you how many zeros are supposed to be in the number. A lot of 'a-ha' moments were made when my teacher, Mrs. Michel Morrow, explained how to do this in my homeroom class.

Lots of lessons and practices happened during the explanation of the standard. I loved the Daily Math Reviews (DMRs) with these kinds of questions. There were some hands-on activities as well. My class used whiteboards, and we turned the activity into a game. My teacher would put a problem on the big whiteboard, and we had to put the answer on our boards. She would check it, and for every question the whole class got right, we got a point. Overall, I really liked lessons where we practiced this skill, and all of them helped me better understand how to solve powers of ten. I enjoyed this skill so much, I shared my newfound knowledge at home!"



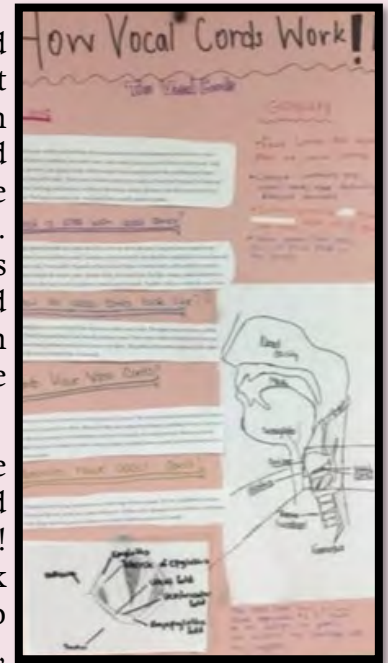


## Portland West Middle Students, Text Structures, and Group Work – Learning at Its Finest!



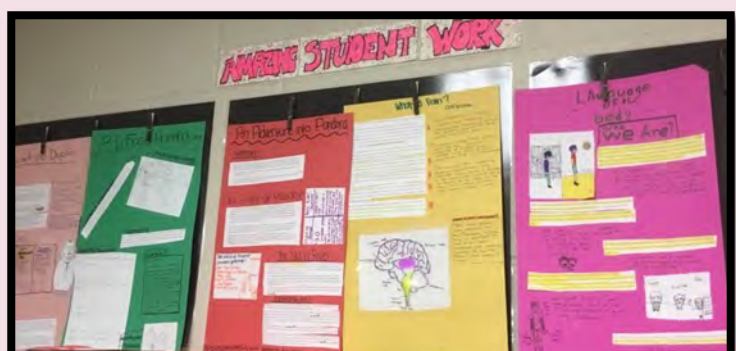
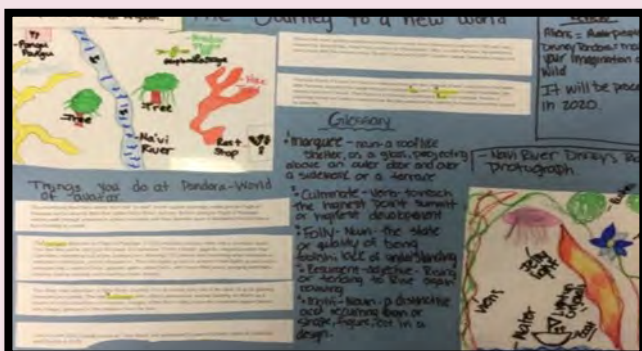
Mrs. Jenny Morris, eighth grade ELA teacher at **Portland West Middle School (PWMS)**, recently surveyed her students by asking three questions: 1) What is something we have done in class that has helped you learn? 2) What is something you think we should do more often? 3) What is something Mrs. Morris could do to make class more interesting?

Throughout the classes, the answers varied but had some common themes. Students felt group and/or partner work had helped them tremendously! They also listed they enjoyed working on projects and other interactive activities, either independently or paired up. Other students stated notes with examples were helpful, and the use of pictures and diagrams helped them retain the information more easily. Many of the answers for the other questions repeated these same ideas.



One activity Mrs. Morris tried with the classes in this school year included each of these student suggestions and involved analysis of text structure—a skill every student must master well! During direct instruction on various types of text structure, students took notes on text structures and their attributes. Next, they were asked to work in table groups to locate examples of each type in magazines, resource books, or textbooks throughout the classroom. Finally, students were given ten article topics and asked to rank the titles in order of interest. This information was used to group students. They then were assigned the articles which contained only paragraphs without charts, tables, graphics, title, headings, subheadings, etc. The students had to work in interest groups to analyze the assigned text, determine what types of text features would best contribute to the meaning and purpose of the text, and to create a poster that transformed the bland passage into a creative and expressive piece. Students were required to use at least 10 different text structures!

The students loved the project and appreciated being allowed to interact AND show mastery through a non-traditional means of assessment. Way to go, Mrs. Morris and students!







## Ellis Middle and Social Studies Simulations

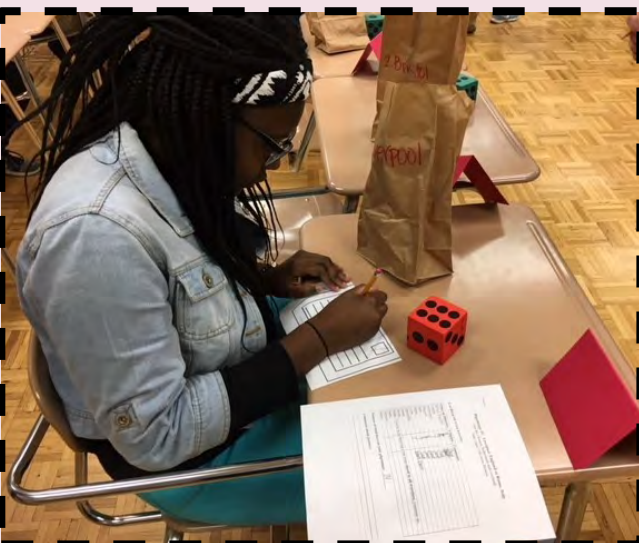
**Ellis Middle School (EMS)** students in social studies classes of Mrs. Katlyn Jennings and Mrs. Vicki Swinger conducted a simulation activity on the spread of the bubonic plague (Black Death).

**Standard:** 7.40-Describe the economic and social effects of the spread of the bubonic plague (Black Death) from Central Asia to China, the Middle East, and Europe and its impact on the global population.



**Activity:** A Tennessee academic standard requires EMS students to understand how the spread of the bubonic plague affected the lives of those living in Medieval Europe. The students used their background knowledge about the Black Death and its origins, as well as how it spread (fleas on rats, contact with others, people moving to new areas, and poor hygiene), to replicate the event. EMS students then played a plague simulation game to simulate the rapid spread of the Black Death through Europe. They were traders and had to follow specific trade routes while attempting to avoid contracting the Black Death or cholera. For the simulation, students who contracted the disease then went to their next two locations and spread the plague farther to demonstrate one way the disease was spread.

Once students had either completed their journeys or contracted the disease, they wrote a postcard to their families describing their journeys. They had to define a plague and its cause in the 14th century, summarize the effects of the Black Death, and make a connection between the plague and the subsequent social and economic changes which took place. Seventh grader Haley Wenzel stated,



“I really liked this project because we got to see and experience how quickly people died and how fast the plague spread. It was suspenseful and fun because you didn’t know when you might catch it. This was an awesome project.” Another student Katie Moll said, “This activity was very interesting because it showed me how rapidly the plague had spread throughout Europe. Even though I had a tiny glance in the bag (of life consequences), it showed me you can’t cheat life.”





## Station Camp Middle and Students' Ownership of Learning

Self-Assessment is a regular part of the assessment process at **Station Camp Middle School (SCMS)**. It is a way for students to take ownership of their learning. Part of the process is after every test, students fill out a reflection sheet. This sheet has three purposes:

1. For the students to reflect on and explain why an answer was incorrect. This enables them to see when they made careless errors or when they really need help with tasks.
2. For the students to decide on a course of action to correct the task next time. It may be as simple as being sure to read the question correctly or as involved as seeking out before or after school tutoring.
3. For the students to set personal goals. This gives opportunities for students to challenge themselves to reach for mastery of tasks.

Some SCMS students were asked to share their thoughts on the process of self-assessment. Responses were:

### **Sixth Grader Tyler Shortridge**

"When I reflect on my work, I look for any fixes I can make to my answers, and I will look over the test two and maybe even three times before I turn it in to my teacher. Setting goals helped my grades go up significantly and has motivated me by showing me a number and making me push harder to get that grade."

### **Sixth Grader Parker Voss**

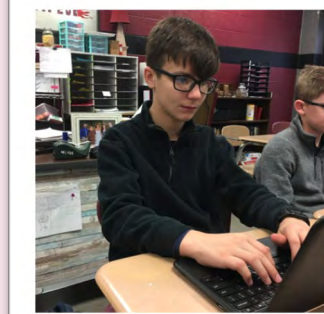
"I have been able to correct answers I would have gotten wrong if I had not reflected. Goal setting motivates me by setting a goal for me to strive for, and if I'm striving for a specific goal, I work harder and get better grades."

### **Sixth Grader Jiya Patel**

"The reflections I make are I look at my answer carefully and check if I didn't get it wrong or didn't make any careless mistakes. Goal setting helps my grade because it makes me try my best on the test. It motivates me because it makes me want to reach that goal I made."

This is a sample of one student's reflection sheet. It offers the student a chance to honestly rank how he feels his understanding of the task is and to freely admit when he needs help. In addition, it provides him an opportunity to plan a strategy for improving and setting effective goals.

Skill and Rate it	Look at these problems	I can do this well already	I can do this sometimes	I need to learn to do this	Notes and Goals
I can compare fractions of fractions divided by fractions 6.NS.1A	3	✓			
I can compare fractions of fractions 6.NS.2	4		✓		
I can figure out how to solve division problems with fractions in a real-world situation 6.NS.1	1	✓			I didn't finish the question
I can solve word problems involving division of fractions by fractions, e.g., by using visual models and equations to represent the problem 6.NS.1	2, 3	✓			
I can divide multi-digit numbers using the standard algorithm with speed and accuracy without any math tools (i.e., calculator, multiplication chart) 6.NS.2	6-10		✓		Wrote 4/5 guess partially
I can add, subtract, multiply, and divide multi-digit decimals using the standard algorithm for each operation with speed and accuracy, without math tools (i.e., calculator) 6.NS.3	11-15	✓			
I can identify the factors of two whole numbers less than or equal to 100 and determine the greatest common factor 6.NS.4	16, 18			✓	I need to learn more of this
I can identify the multiples of two whole numbers less than or equal to 12 and determine the least common multiple 6.NS.4	19, 20		✓		I took a guess
I can apply the distributive property to rewrite addition problems by factoring out the greatest common factor 6.NS.4	17			✓	I don't know the distributive property







## **T. W. Hunter Middle Students Share Learning to Live By**

At the middle school level and at **T. W. Hunter Middle School (TWH)**, students have various teachers throughout the day and learn so many new things. TWH students were asked to write about a standard they felt was important to learn this year and how they have or will use the new learning.



### **Topic: Percentages (Math)**

"I enjoyed this standard because we got to do real-life problems and learn how to solve those problems. In the future, we could use this knowledge to find how much of a discount there is or know how much to tip a server in a restaurant." - Allison Lowe, 7th grade

"We can use this knowledge to apply taxes. Applying taxes can help you make sure you have enough money and to check ahead of time to see what expensive items will cost. Examples: TV, phone, computer, etc. It is easy to understand and is helpful in life." - Katherine Edwards, 7th grade

### **Topic: Area and Surface Area (Math)**

"I enjoyed this topic because we worked with shapes, and it was pretty fun. I will definitely use this in the future with my house and layout. If I become a real estate agent, I can use it to find measurements needed in the square footage of houses." - Bronco Hanks, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

### **Topic: Scale (Math)**

"We learned about scale drawings. They are fun and useful. We would practice until it became easy, then we could play games to practice more. In real life, if you were getting a new house, a blueprint would have a scale drawing. Then you could figure out where to put your furniture." - Morgan Page, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

### **Topic: Scientific Revolution (Social Studies)**

"Learning how modern science came into existence was very beneficial. We learned how the focus of human study turned from religion to the individual. I learned how many of the inventions we



## T. W. Hunter Middle (continued)

informed about everyday things that would be nonexistent if not for the Scientific Revolution.” - Katie Mullins, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

### **Topic: Settlement of the Colonies and Key Figures (Social Studies)**

“This standard helped me understand the basis of the colonization of the United States (U.S.) and made American history even more fun. It teaches students how the U. S. became the way it is in present time. I enjoyed learning about the Salem witch trials because of how people acted and that the event led to the founding of other colonies. The information will be useful in the future, so I can delight my children with history of the foundation of the 13 colonies and educate them at the same time.” - Tracy Guo, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

### **Topic: Lunar and Solar Eclipses (Science)**

“After I learned about how eclipses work, I actually understood why the recent eclipse was so rare. There had to be a perfect alignment for a partial eclipse. When there was a total eclipse, that was even more rare. My science teacher, Mrs. Bess, taught us songs to help us remember eclipses. That was fun.” - Austin Gatlin, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

### **Topic: Genes, Chromosomes, and Inherited Traits (Science)**

“When I grow up, I want to be a NICU nurse. That means I will be working with newborn babies. I feel this information was important for me to learn because if a sickness or disease runs in a family, this knowledge will help me establish the problem and use precautions with the newborn.” - Mackenzie Moore, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

### **Topic: Using Evidence in Writing (ELA)**

“I learned pulling and using evidence from a text helps me to understand more of what I am writing about. I will use this when I go to college and have to write papers for my classes.” - Bradley Lockman, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade







## Gallatin High and Hands-On Learning Experiences

Brandy Benham and Angel Martinez, students in Mrs. Wendy Vincent's AP Anatomy & Physiology class at **Gallatin High School (GHS)**, share recent learning experiences:

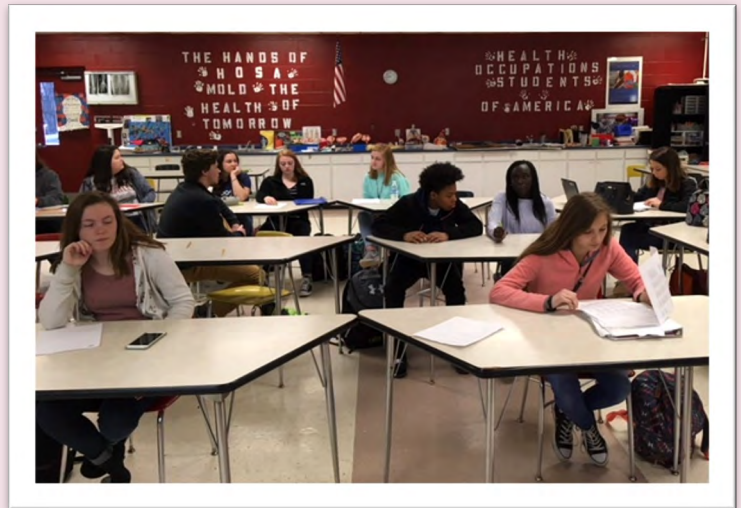
"Making a model of the layers of skin was a more fun and memorable way to learn about the skin rather than just taking notes. It was easier to learn and remember the amount of information by doing a hands-on lesson. It was a great experience.

We made the model using a square tissue box, and each side showed a specific thing. After we finished with the project, we went to faculty members of our choice and presented it to them and/or their classes. This way, they learned about the skin and gained a box of tissues for their classrooms!

From this project, I learned plenty of information about the skin. I learned about the different layers of the epidermis and their purposes, the diseases of the skin, each skin part's role, and many other interesting facts. I really enjoyed this project, and I am glad I had the opportunity to do it. Not only did it teach me a lot, but it also let me express my creativity." - **Brandy Benham, sophomore**

"In anatomy, we have been studying the many functions of the body. One required standard is knowing how many bones there are and how they function. For example, there are 126 bones that make up the appendicular skeleton. The axial skeleton consists of 80 bones.

Along with that, we've also studied different bone fractures. I have learned a great deal about anatomy this year!" - **Angel Martinez, junior**





## Sumner County Middle College High and Commitment to the Community

During school year 2017-18, the students at **Sumner County Middle College High School (SCMCHS)** at Volunteer State Community College (VSCC) resurrected an inactive club. It is the Service Learning Club and focuses on volunteer work and betterment of the surrounding community. The club is comprised of students from SCMCHS as well as traditional VSCC students.

The president of the Service Learning Club is Kailyn Fournier, a SCMCHS senior. Sponsors of the club include principals Betsy Hunter and Brad Schreiner as well as faculty representatives David Fuqua and Betty Mandeville.



Service Learning Club members may work on individual community service projects which meet the guidelines for Tennessee Promise service hours, and all students participate in two large events—one held each semester. The fall term project was a meal provided by SCMCHS students for those with hunger insecurities. In conjunction with *The Feed*, VSCC food pantry, the club invited all VSCC students to the event which provided healthy dinner options at no cost.

The club's spring project, held on Friday, February 23, 2018, was a lake shoreline clean up at the Lock Four access in Gallatin. Over 40 volunteers pulled trash, plastic bottles, old tires, and even a partially submerged mini-refrigerator from Old Hickory Lake. Gallatin Parks Department hauled off 32 bags of debris collected by the club.



SCMCHS students plan to continue the Service Learning Club next school year. The club will remain committed to its goals and to the improvement of the community. The students believe in the words of Marian Wright Edelman, an American activist for the rights of children, who said, "Service is the rent we pay for being. It is the very purpose of life and not something you do in your spare time."







### **Sumner County Schools Mission**

Sumner County Schools commits to growing learners who are college and career ready through quality instruction, effective use of resources, building a collaborative culture, and strong leadership.

