Dear Smith Families,

Happy New Year! With the beginning of the calendar year, it's normal for people to set new goals. Rather than setting new goals, our building is going to reconfirm what we already have in place. We will continue to try to focus on "being the difference" every day, because we want to remember that "today is the day"!

Throughout the holiday season, scholars and staff have continued to work extremely hard. Ms. Wasilius put on a successful book fair, Mrs. Gagliardi (chorus and Smith Singers)/Miss Martin (jazz band)/Mrs. Linde (orchestra) did an excellent job with the Holiday Concert, Mrs. Lee got the spelling bee preliminary rounds completed and ready for the competition, and the custodial staff has been continuing to move and shake with the renovations. In December we ran our second intruder drill for the building this year as well. We will continue to have these discussions and drills regularly to help all of our scholars and staff remain prepared to stay safe for any unpredictable situations.

We have started two new recess options this year with our "Game Cafe" beginning in September. Our newest option, which began in November is our "Makerspace", which offers scholars the opportunity to be creative and solve problems. The scholars have done some incredible things with the 3-D printer, the "Raspberry Pi" robotics, and the CAD program in that lab so far. It's going to be fun to watch where that leads in the future. Please ask your scholars if they've had the chance to experience that "Maker Space" yet.

This month will also bring our second round of CDT testing, which serves as our baseline tests to measure how our scholars are developing this year in math, language arts, and science. From these tests, and the 2nd marking period report cards that will come out at the end of the month, please reach out to the teachers, Mr. Moyer, or the administration should you have any academic concerns. Our building does as good of a job as I've seen meeting learning needs for scholars, and we can only stay successful with this through great communication with you as parents and guardians. Look for information about a possible family engagement night in January as well!

If you ever need anything, feel your scholar is having difficulties socially, emotionally, or academically, or feel the need to update us on things that could help serve your scholar, please contact us. We truly enjoy working with you to make your scholars successful, and are extremely proud of what they've already accomplished this year. Thank you for all you do as parents!

-Dave Beard, Assistant Principal
PTO Update:
The next PTO meeting will be Wednesday, January 17th at 7:00.

School Calendar Update
Due to the recent weather-related closings, school will now be in session on March 9th and March 29th. The last day of the 2nd marking period is January 23rd, and therefore the 91st day is locked in, and is January 24th.

Counselor’s Corner
Happy New Year! Are you ready for it? For some, the next couple months can be difficult to navigate as the cold weather sets in. It may be tough to get back into the swing of getting up in the morning and coming to school. But, as we say in Solanco, “Be Present, Make Every Day Count!” Academics are definitely impacted when your student attends school regularly. Students grasp concepts better, are able to seek help when needed, and have better grades if they are regular attendees. When students get good grades, they also feel better about themselves! As a parent, one simple thing you can do to help encourage good attendance is to promote adequate sleep. By encouraging and supporting your child to be in school every day, it can help them in all areas of their development: socially, emotionally, and (of course) academically!

Also, we here at Smith have a great program to help students who may be struggling in any of the areas listed above. S.O.A.R (Supporting & Offering Assistance & Resources) is a program made up of school and community agency staff that helps students and parents gain access to both school and community resources. With parent permission, the student is assigned a SOAR team member (teacher, principal, school counselor) to meet with them on a regular basis and to connect with the parent as well! Parents can also elect to have their students assessed for any further services or resources that may help the student and family succeed! Anyone can refer a student to SOAR: teacher, parent, or student. Any questions, feel free to reach out to me.

To contact Mr. Moyer: shawn_moyer@solancosd.org

6th Grade Team News

Language Arts – Throughout the month of January scholars will continue working with the fictional text “The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle”. Students will analyze the plot of the story and how an author develops plot among many other aspects of the novel.

LEAD – Sixth graders will work on TDA (Text Dependent Analysis) writing skills as well as vocabulary skills meant to increase their ability to analyze words.

Math – In math, scholars will be writing and solving algebraic equations. We will also begin investigating and using the coordinate plane as a tool to solve problems.

Science – Students will be finishing a unit focusing on levers and other simple machines. Then they will begin a unit on Earth cycles including the water cycle and rock cycle.

Social Studies – Hey, yo-gal! Smith scholars have journeyed into the Indus Valley to meditate on Ancient India. We'll look up at the Himalayas and down on the untouchables as we explore Buddhism, Hinduism, reincarnation and other aspects of the Indian culture.

Left to right: Mr. Himmelberger, Mr. Pontius, Mrs. Long, Miss Yeich, Miss Pruskowski, Mr. McDowell, and Mrs. Lee
7th Grade Team News

**Math/Math Extensions:** Students will be evaluating multiple step equations involving all operations, distributive property, and real-world problems.

**LEAD:** Students will explore before, during, and after reading strategies. We will also look at Earthquakes using the Close Read strategy to preface Earthquakes for Mr. Koenig.

**Social Studies:** Students will create their own graphic organizer which tells the story of the conquering of the regions of North America. Europeans will begin to realize that settling in America is a viable option. Students will also prepare for, and take the midterm.

**Language Arts:** Students will be completing a fiction unit by analyzing several short stories including “The Tell-Tale Heart” and “The Necklace.” They will also be reading The Island of the Blue Dolphins simultaneously while analyzing the historical perspective of the story.

8th Grade Team News

**Language Arts:** In January, students will finish up their short story unit in which they are studying literary devices as well as historical and cultural significance in literature. Students will then begin studying poetry.

**LEAD III:** This month students will continue to explore reading strategies to use before reading a text, and we will move on to during reading strategies.

**Algebra:** Algebra I students will be finishing their chapter on finding slopes of lines in Algebra. Students will start a challenging unit on solving patterns, sequences and variations. Intro to Algebra students will finish their chapter on probability and geometry then begin finding the slopes of lines in Algebra!

**Integrated Geography:** Students will focus on looking at current demographic and economic data for the state of Pennsylvania.

**Science:** In January in Science the students will begin to learn about different types of energy, and how energy is converted and transferred to other types. They will also begin the unit on ‘The Atmosphere’.

**Science:** Students will be finishing their Earth Systems Unit, and then will begin a unit on Life Structure and Functions.
Unified Arts Team News

MUSIC – Students in 8th grade will begin learning about the music of the 1960’s. Students in 7th grade will begin composing melodies. Students in grade 6 will be working on and completing their Star Spangled Banner Projects.

HEALTH – Seventh grade students have begun their unit on Substance Abuse. We will begin with lessons related to tobacco usage, including both cigarettes and smokeless tobacco, and the effects tobacco has on a user.

FITNESS – Students in all grades will begin the basketball unit. We will start with the foundations of dribbling, passing, and shooting a basketball and then begin to transition into small sided games within their classes.

COMPUTER TECH – The 8th grade students will begin learning to use Excel spreadsheets. The 7th graders will completing their Word unit with a final project and the 6th graders will be creating invitations and focusing on graphics.

ART – 6th grade will be starting their graphic design unit, learning the ins and outs of bubble lettering as it applies to the elements of art. 7th grade will be finishing a unit in contour line drawing and observation, and starting experimental watercolor pieces. 8th grade will be adding glaze to their ceramic pots and completing their printmaking projects.

FACS – On hiatus until the 4th marking period when Mrs. Almoney returns from Swift!

STEM – 6th grade scholars will finish building their newspaper chair, and will then test and analyze its structural stability. 7th grade scholars will complete a research project on inexhaustible energy sources. 8th grade scholars will explore genetic engineering, and will look at how medicines affect the body.

TECH ED – 6th Grade will be finishing up their Mousetrap Cars and racing them for distance. 7th Grade will continue learning about programming robots, culminating the unit with a Sumo Wrestling activity. 8th Grade will wrap up their middle school Technology Education experience while finishing up their Independent Study projects.

MEDIA CENTER – All grades will continue book exchanges through their language arts or LEAD classes. As a reminder, all students are able to check out two books at a time, as long as they do not have any books overdue. Students are always allowed to renew books. We will spend the next few months researching various topics while reinforcing the research process. Students will be encouraged to use different software and technologies to produce an end product for their research.

7th Grade Santas!

Our 7th Grade Scholars collected items to help local families in need of Christmas gifts.

Upcoming Dates:
January 15th-Inservice Day-no school
January 23rd end of 2nd marking period
January 19th Talent Show
January 24th 91st-no school
January 30-report cards go home
January 29th Principal’s Breakfast