

January 2020

Important Dates:

SMS Showcase:

Jan. 16 @ 6pm

Snow Ball: Jan. 30
@ 6pm

Black History Month
Celebration: Feb. 27
@ 6pm

Sign up for Cycle 2
for Empire
after-school program
on the district
website.

In this Issue:

See Me Soar
Highlights
Principal's Plan
Instructional Focus

Dear SMS Families,

Happy New Year!!!

The beginning of a new year is the perfect time to refresh, whether you're jumpstarting personal goals, making meaningful decisions, or finding your inner-center. This is the perfect time so ctup playing thocce old meccages i

FXFD W

IQ RX



and worthy of respect. This can come in the form of praise or acknowledgment of hard work and progress.

3. Serve - We can show that we respect someone by helping them.
4. Be Kind - Kindness is an expression of respect because it shows that the other is deserving of our support and generosity.
5. Be Polite - Being polite can shift people's perspectives and make a tense situation easier to manage; smiles are contagious.
6. Be Thankful - Even for the little things, it is never bad to say a little thank you in response to another's assistance or cooperation.

We know that when we show respect for others, we are more likely to be given respect in return. Having and showing respect for others helps to build relationships and make for a kinder, happier, more productive environment for learning and growth.

If you are picking up your child before the end of the school day, please do so before 1:45pm. After this time, students are finishing the day, moving to their homeroom classes, and staff is preparing for dismissal. This is also the time when busses are arriving and the front parking lot needs to be clear.

If you are picking up your child at or after dismissal, please make prior arrangements with your child so that they are aware, or contact the office so that we can inform the child. Students who are taking the bus will be dismissed at 2:05pm, and mMa ayoMM

As we all work to prepare our scholars for college, the workforce, and being productive members of society, it is important to recognize the changing demands of 21st century literacy. 21st century literacy is more than reading and writing; it is knowing [how to think](#). In other words, we strive to prepare our scholars to seek out answers, evaluate texts of varying styles and opinions, and to form an opinion based on valid reasoning and thinking. Students today need to know how to look at multiple perspectives, evaluate arguments, and seek answers on their own.

One way we help to prepare students to do this is by engaging in debate. There are many benefits to this type of activity, including improved critical thinking skills, increased student retention of information learned, improved listening and note-taking skills, increased self-confidence and self-expression, and improved skills in identifying effective evidence, forming arguments, and structuring thoughts.

Debate doesn't always have to be formal, but it can be a fun way to engage your child in conversation, critical thinking, and expression at home! Choose a topic of the week to discuss, perhaps an ethical dilemma or a political situation, or [something from this list of debate topics](#), and pick a side to argue. You and the family can read about the issue during the week, and have a friendly debate on the weekend, sharing your thoughts and research to try to win the argument. The practice of civil disagreement will help your scholar in this world of information and strong opinion.

It's even great practice to choose a side you don't necessarily agree with; this helps open the mind to different perspectives, build empathy for those we don't always agree with, and even help strengthen your own argument for the side you agree with. Overall, engaging in debate will help your scholar both academically and socially, and is a great way to build self-confidence and develop ownership over ideas.

For more information about why debate is an effective middle school strategy, please explore the [American Debate League's](#) article on the benefits of debate.