

It was good to meet so many of you during parent conferences. Even though there are no more conference days set aside this year, please let me know if you have questions or concerns.

Good news about Aspen:

I met with a parent last month. She had tried to match up the Properties of Matter tasks I described in my emailed report card with what she saw on Aspen, but was having trouble. I saw what the problem was (“Parent view” in Aspen is different from my “teacher view”). For parents, all science assignments were listed in chronological order, and there was no way to sort them by standard. **That is now fixed!**

Here’s what to do. As always, go to **Science**, and then click on “**assignments**” (the first science screen doesn’t give you useful information). Near the upper right are two drop down menus. One is for **trimester**. Trimesters are meaningless in science. I suggest keeping it on “all”. [I added student scores for the first two Cells & Genetics goals during first trimester, and the second two during second trimester. If you don’t put the drop down on **all** trimesters, you won’t see all four goals at once.]

The other drop down is for **standard**. POP is the work habits (non-academic) standard. The academic standards, in the order we are working on them, are Science Process Skills, Properties of Matter, Cells & Genetics, Properties of Energy, and Forces and Motion.

Here is a description of the tasks you will see in Aspen for **Cells & Genetics**.

POP:

C&G POP Week 1, 2, 3...: These weekly scores describe how well students did their jobs in class (followed directions, handled equipment properly, brought materials to class, remained on task) during our unit. There will be such POP scores each week all year long.

C & G Socrative Quiz on time and directions followed: Each unit the Socrative Quiz serves as one summative assessment for the unit. Quizzes are activated near the end of the unit, and students are expected to complete the 10-question quiz within a two-week period. This POP score indicates whether or not your child completed it on time and whether or not they logged on properly. Since it is very time-consuming for me to hunt for more than 100 students on Socrative, ***I expect the following format:*** Period Last Name First Name/Initial. [If Mrs. McKeen was in H period science she would sign in as H McKeen D].

Academic Standards:

Here were the four product goals for Cells & Genetics:

1. Name a **single-celled** organism and describe how they make more of themselves.
2. Name a **multi-celled** organism and describe how they make more of themselves.
3. Draw or make a model of a cell. (Include the following parts: **nucleus, genes, chromosomes.**)
4. Explain the following:
 - a. which part of your cell is basically your traits
 - b. where ***your*** traits come from

For each goal, there is a score in Aspen for the ***product*** your child made and for the ***interview*** that was associated with the product. Why do I require both? Students can create products (written narratives, Google Slides, labeled diagrams, videos) that are very accurate without truly understanding the material. How? They make use of resources (notes, outlines, Google, friends, parents...) to help them. It is during interviews that I can probe, evaluate, and guide

students. Although interviews are summative assessments, there is still teaching and learning taking place!

Cells & Genetics Socratic Quiz: [See Socratic Quiz info above under POP.] This is the final academic task in Aspen for Cells & Genetics.

Even though we have moved on to Properties of Energy, we have two guest speakers coming in the last week in December who will share information with us that is related to Cells & Genetics. First, will be a geneticist--the mother of one of my seventh grade assistants. She will help students carry out a series of activities, including removing DNA from strawberries.

Second, Mr. Sutherland will help students understand how his daughter developed a genetic condition that neither he nor his wife have. Both presentations will be very meaningful to students; they will see applications of the content we learned during our unit.

Properties of Energy:

This unit has three content goals. The **first** and **third** will only be performed orally (**no product**). Students will make an energy transfer flow chart for the **second goal**. Here are the three goals:

1. *Define* energy and demonstrate *what energy is* with a variety of objects.
2. *Create* and *explain* an energy transfer flow chart.
3. *State* the Law of Conservation of Energy and explain what happens to a device's energy as the device stops moving.

Family Science:

I was impressed by the varied designs on our first Family Science Project--Groovy Racers.

We held races for all participants during storm time this week.

Many close races. Don't believe me? See for yourself!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9_NE8ZZpKk

The next Family Science project will be assigned in January.

Engineering Assignment:

We are long overdue for an engineering assignment. The last one, The Think Tube, was due way back in mid-September. I will assign a second one on Wednesday, December 5. I'm not sure which one, though...

Visits:

Parents may be interested in visiting the last week of December to hear our two science speakers. Let me know if you want more information (or if you would like to visit any other time).

Happy holidays to you and your family.