

Weekly Newsletter

5 Orange Newsletter: Friday, November 14, 2025

***Thank you to everyone who donated or worked at the Panther Showdown — we truly appreciate your support!
For those who were able to attend, we hope you had a great time!***

Humanities: Before Thanksgiving break, students will finish their book club books. Our focus will be on character behaviors, character traits, and identifying each story's overall theme. We will finish our read aloud, Home of the Brave and students will take a checkpoint on their knowledge and understanding of the text. Students will also wrap up our Human Migration unit by taking part in a Socratic Seminar. We'll spend several days writing claims and gathering evidence to support them. The unit will conclude with a student-led discussion using open-ended questions and respectful dialogue to deepen their understanding of Human Migration.

Word Study: 1-8 auto- (self), man (hand) Focus words: autobiography, autograph, automate, automatic, autopilot, maneuver, manicure, manipulate, manual, manually

Math 5: This week in Math, students took their first unit 3 checkpoint to show their proficiency at multiplying a fraction by a fraction. We had a response day to practice converting mixed numbers to improper fractions (and vice versa), a skill students learned in 4th grade. It is a useful strategy for multiplying with mixed numbers. Now we are working on dividing a unit fraction by a whole number, and a whole number by a unit fraction. Right before Thanksgiving break students will apply what they learned in the first two sections to solve problems involving multiplying and dividing fractions. When we return from break, we will review and take our unit summative.

Science: This week in Science, our student teacher Ms. Kreupke, kicked off our new unit about Matter. Students began exploring the scale of matter, learning about what atoms and molecules are. We did our first lab, observing the properties of some mystery substances. Next week, students will be doing a chromatography test and using the "pasta model" and the "fan model" to understand and represent their ideas about the properties of molecules. We will potentially be able to squeeze our critical juncture in right before break.

Reminders/Announcements:

World Relief Presentation: We are excited to share that a special guest speaker from World Relief will be visiting our school on Monday, November 24th. World Relief is a humanitarian organization that provides aid and support to refugees and displaced people around the globe. Our speaker will share inspiring stories of hope and resilience, as well as the important work that World Relief does to help those in need. This is a wonderful opportunity for our students to learn about different cultures and perspectives, and to develop a sense of compassion and empathy as a global citizen. *Please inform us if you would like your child to opt out of participating in this presentation.*

No School: November 26th, 27th, & 28th

Have a wonderful weekend!

Mrs. Zellner and Ms. Wilke

zellke@hamilton.k12.wi.us

wilksa@hamilton.k12.wi.us

5 Orange Newsletter: Friday, November 7, 2025

Thank you to everyone who donated items or helped serve at our caramel apple bar. I think the students really enjoyed the House Day treat!

Humanities: Next week in book clubs we'll keep practicing reading strategies! Additionally, on Monday, students will complete a fiction checkpoint on Standard 5.1, *Locate and refer to relevant details and evidence when explaining what a text says explicitly/implicitly and make logical inferences*. Students will read a story, make an inference about the main character, and support it with strong details from the text. Look for this checkpoint to come home by the end of the week. Over the next couple of weeks, we will be wrapping up our Human Migration unit. Students will participate in two big activities. One is a call-to-action, partner activity. Students will be creating a slideshow welcoming refugees to Sussex. *Ask your child what they plan to include in their slideshow*. The second activity is a Socratic Seminar. Students will take part in a guided discussion to deepen their thinking about migration topics. I'll share more details in next week's newsletter. Our *grammar* focus, next week, will be on adding commas to tag questions. *Word Study: 1-7 sub- (under), super- (higher in quality or quantity, over or above)* *Focus words: submarine, submerge, submit, subside, subway, superb, superhuman, superior, supersonic, supervisor*

Math 5: This week in Math, students worked hard on visually representing a fraction times a fraction on diagrams. This is very similar to our work with finding area in our previous unit, only now students are multiplying two fractional side lengths. Next week we will have a checkpoint on this skill. We will then move on to dividing fractions and whole numbers.

Science: This week in Science we took our final critical juncture for our first Science unit. Monday we will start with Modeling Matter. In this unit we will take on the role of food scientists and work to answer the question: What happens when two substances are mixed together? This is a very hands-on unit and as early as Wednesday, students will be investigating the properties of some mystery substances, such as texture and smell. This unit has a fun (and tasty!) conclusion—but I won't spoil it just yet!

Reminders/Announcements:

- Please consider having your student register for a FundHub account for the Panther Showdown (even if they don't plan on fundraising). Use this [link](#) and enter code 61aa71e94bcd4 to get registered.
- **Veteran's Day Parade:** Tuesday, November 11th
- **Panther Showdown:** Thursday November 13th:

Have a wonderful weekend!

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zellke@hamilton.k12.wi.us

wilksa@hamilton.k12.wi.us

5 Orange Newsletter: Tuesday, November 4, 2025

Humanities: This week, we will continue with book clubs, focusing on making inferences about the characters and supporting those inferences with details from the story. In writing, students will finish their Human Migration journals and select one entry to revise, edit, and submit for scoring. Additionally, students will begin a call-to-action project, working with a partner to identify important information about Sussex to share with a refugee entering our community. *Word Study: 1-6 kilo-, milli-, mille- (thousand) Focus words: kilobyte, kilogram, kiloliter, kilometer, kilowatt, mile, millennium, millimeter, millipede, millisecond*

Math 5: This week in Math, students took their summative for Unit 2. These were shared at conferences on Thursday/Friday (and the rest will be shared tomorrow). We are charging ahead into unit 3 for more fraction fun. In the first section, students will multiply fractions numerically and represent and describe multiplication of a fraction by a fraction using area concepts.

Science: This week in Science, students finished collecting their evidence for their final critical juncture, which they will take today. We will finish out this unit with students investigating their own star-related questions. Next Monday we will start fresh with Unit 2, Modeling Matter.

Reminders/Announcements:

- **Panther Showdown:** The Panther Showdown Committee is busy preparing for SSI's largest fundraiser of the school year. We are asking for gift cards or monetary donations for the Gift Card Raffle Trees to be raffled off at the [Panther Showdown Event on November 13th](#). Each house is assigned a theme with corresponding retailers gift cards. Please use the link below to find your child's house theme & sign up to donate if you are able. Students can give donations to their teachers or the front office any time on or before Monday, November 10th. Please label the cards with house color and grade and include the activation receipt.
Many thanks in advance for donating to this fun event!
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0D4FA8AA2DABFF2-59573373-ssipanther>
- **Vision Screening:** Tuesday, November 4th
- **Veteran's Day Parade:** Tuesday, November 11th

Have a wonderful week!

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wilksa@hamilton.k12.wi.us

5 Orange Newsletter: Friday, October 24th, 2025

Humanities: This week, we kicked off our new *book clubs*! I will send a follow-up message soon with the book titles that students chose to read. If you have any questions about the books, please feel free to email me. During book clubs, students are practicing how to use clues from the text along with their own background to better understand what authors are trying to share. They are also working on strategies to find key details that help them identify the theme and make thoughtful inferences. Next week, students will complete a fiction checkpoint on Standard 5.1, *Locate and refer to relevant details and evidence when explaining what a text says explicitly/implicitly and make logical inferences*. During our read-aloud of *Home of the Brave*, we will keep

exploring the characters' feelings and challenges, and learn how the author helps us infer emotions that aren't directly stated. We will also spend time noticing the figurative language the author uses to make the story come alive. There will be no word study next week because of the short week.

Math 5: This week in math we did our final learning for the unit, multiplying with mixed numbers. We learned that we need to decompose mixed numbers just like we decompose two digit numbers. For example, if I want to solve $2 \times 6 \frac{3}{4}$, I would first multiply 2×6 , then multiply $2 \times \frac{3}{4}$, and then add my answers together ($12 + \frac{6}{4}$). We also worked on converting mixed numbers to improper fractions and vice versa. Students will continue to practice this skill so that they can grow in their ability to think flexibly about numbers. Next week Monday we will have a review day preparation for our Unit 2 Summative on Tuesday. We will tiptoe into Unit 3: Multiplying and Dividing Fractions. In this unit, we will multiply fractions by fractions, divide fractions by whole numbers, and whole numbers by fractions. Read more about it in the [Family Letter](#).

Science: This week in Science we wrote our second critical juncture, answering the question: Why is the sun visible in the daytime but not at nighttime? You will be able to view those grades and feedback early next week. Please have your child share this with you from Google Classroom. Our Chapter 3 question is: Why do we see different stars at different time of year? We have already started investigating this question, and will work on it all through next week. Students are creating their own evidence cards to use on the next critical juncture.

Reminders/Announcements:

- Tuesday, October 28th: JA BizTown field trip for Health & Wellness students. Please remember to bring a cold lunch.
- Thursday, October 30th: Fall Conferences
- Friday, October 31st: No School, Fall Conferences
- Spirit Days next week:
 - **Monday is Pajama Day**
 - **Tuesday is Rhyme without a Reason**
 - **Wednesday is House Color**
 - **Thursday is Favorite Book Character**

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zellke@hamilton.k12.wi.us

wilksa@hamilton.k12.wi.us

5 Orange Newsletter: Friday, October 17th, 2025

Humanities: Next week, students will take their first non-fiction assessment focused on standard *RI.5.1 Locate and refer to relevant details and evidence when explaining what a text says explicitly/implicitly and make logical inferences*. We will continue to focus on that standard through fiction texts, specifically practicing how to infer character traits. This skill will be reinforced in social studies through visual inquiry, where students will make both literal and inferential observations using pictures. Additionally, we will begin reading our read-aloud book, *Home of the Brave*. Students will learn how to take sketch notes and will also have the option to take traditional notes.

During the reading, I will teach figurative language, vocabulary, and author's craft. For Word Study next week, we will focus on: *-cent (hundred), -deca-deci (ten)* The focus words will be: *centennial, centimeter, centipede, century, decade, decahedron, decathlon, decimal, decimeter, percent*

Math 5: This week in math we took our second unit checkpoint, which focused on understanding how expressions relate to diagrams. We also worked on finding the area of rectangles with fractional side lengths. Looking ahead, next week, we will extend our understanding by finding the area of rectangles who have side lengths greater than 1, and multiply mixed numbers. We will end the week with a final checkpoint for the unit as we prepare for the unit summative.

Science: The rotation of the Earth really makes our day...and our night! This week we gathered evidence about what we see in the sky at different times, and discussed how it is possible for two people to see different things in the sky at the same time. Next week, we will use all the evidence we have gathered to write our second critical juncture that answers the question: Why is the sun visible in the daytime but not the nighttime?

*Have your student pull up their critical juncture from chapter 1 in Google classroom and share their scores and feedback.

Reminders/Announcements:

- **Veteran's Day:** Please fill out this [Google Form](#) for you or a family member who is a Veteran and would like to be part of the Veterans Day parade at Silver Spring Intermediate School and Templeton Middle School. This event will take place on **Tuesday, November 11 from 1:00-1:30PM**--we will provide you with additional information via email shortly. Can't wait to celebrate our Vets!

Have a wonderful weekend!

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wilksa@hamilton.k12.wi.us

5 Orange Newsletter: Friday, October 10, 2025

Humanities: Next week, our focus will be on *nonfiction reading strategies*. Students will practice turning headings into questions and then reading carefully to find answers. They will also learn to notice and jot down when authors use numbers and statistics to support their ideas. In *writing*, students will engage in peer editing and revising *argument essays* before their final drafts to turn in. We have launched Unit 2: *Human Migration*, guided by the question, "*What makes people leave their home country for another country?*" Students have begun exploring reasons such as safety, opportunity, and family, and will continue investigating real-world examples next week. A big thank you to everyone who submitted their own short video stories about human migration! *Next week, please ask your child about what they are learning from the videos they are watching.*

Word Study: Due to the short week, there will be no word study assignment.

Math 5: This week in Math we assessed our understanding of fractions as division and made a connection between division and multiplication. Checkpoints will come home next week Monday. Next week we will practice multiplying unit fractions and whole numbers and connecting them to real world contexts. We will use our previous knowledge of whole numbers as fractions (a cool secret identity) and practice writing different expressions for a given story context.

Science: This week in science we collected evidence to prove our ideas about why the sun is up during the daytime but not the nighttime—because good scientists support their ideas with evidence! We learned about the Earth’s rotation and became part of a model about the pattern of day time and night time. Next week we will establish the role gravity plays in helping us understand what’s up and what’s down as it relates to what we see in the sky from our position on Earth.

Reminders/Announcements:

- **No School:** October 16th and 17th
- **Home & School Fundraiser for SSI:** Our next SSI Fundraiser is happening on **Thursday, October 16th** from **3:45 PM to 8:45 PM** at 🏠 Battle House! 🔗 [Click here to sign up](#)
💙 SSI Home & School will receive **50% of all sales from this event**—an incredibly generous contribution that directly benefits our students and school community.
🚫 With no school that day, it’s a perfect chance for your child to enjoy a fun activity while supporting SSI. We hope to see many of our families there! [Click here to view the informational flyer.](#)
- **Veteran’s Day:** Please fill out this [Google Form](#) for you or a family member who is a Veteran and would like to be part of the Veterans Day parade at Silver Spring Intermediate School and Templeton Middle School. This event will take place on **Tuesday, November 11 from 1:00-1:30PM**—we will provide you with additional information via email shortly. Can't wait to celebrate our Vets!

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wilksa@hamilton.k12.wi.us

5 Orange Newsletter: Friday, October 3, 2025

Humanities: Next week in **Humanities**, we will begin our new unit on **Human Migration**. Our focus will be on standard **R5.1: *Locate and refer to relevant details and evidence when explaining what a text says explicitly/implicitly and make logical inferences.*** Students will practice multiple strategies using both nonfiction and fiction texts. The essential question guiding this unit is: ***What makes people leave their home country for another country?*** Our vocabulary focus will be on understanding and defining these key terms: *migrant, immigrant, asylum seeker, and refugee*. To deepen their understanding, students will watch “Stories of Leaving Home,” a collection of family-shared experiences about why people leave their homes. *A separate email was sent requesting your help with this meaningful project.*

In our **argumentative writing unit**, students will complete organizing their thoughts, drafting, editing, and revising their argumentative essays on the topic of a four-day school week.

Word Study next week: *-medi, -semi (in the middle, half, between)* Focus words: *immediate, median, mediator, mediocre, medium, semiannual, semicircle, semicolon, semifinal, semisweet*

Math 5: This week in Math, students showed their smarts on the Unit 1 Summative about finding volume. We also started our second unit, *Fractions as Quotients and Fraction Multiplication*. We used the context of sharing sandwiches and water among different amounts of people. Ask your student how fractions and division are related—and maybe what their favorite sandwich is! Next week we will be ready for our first checkpoint. You can also expect to see the Unit 1 summatives coming home in take home folders on Monday. To support your child in math, help them think about how fractions like $\frac{1}{2}$ can represent different amounts, but still equal one-half. For example, *If there are 12 pieces of candy in a bowl and you eat half, how much candy have you eaten?*

Science: This week in Science we gathered the rest of our evidence needed to answer the question about why we don't see a lot of stars in the daytime, and wrote our critical juncture about it. Next week we will start the second chapter of our unit and investigate the question, why is the sun visible in the daytime but not at nighttime?

Reminders/Announcements:

- **No School:** October 16th and 17th

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wilksa@hamilton.k12.wi.us

5 Orange Newsletter: Friday, September 26, 2025

Humanities: This week in **Humanities**, we started picture book clubs. Our focus during these clubs is on writing about reading and exploring how themes develop in stories. Next week, students will have another opportunity to demonstrate their learning through a **summative assessment** on standard **RL5.2: Summarize texts, from a variety of genres, to determine a theme or central idea and explain how it is supported by key details**. This assessment will help us identify students who could benefit from small-group Tier 2 reteaching. Please look for this assessment to come home by the end of next week. *When you have a chance, ask your child the lesson or theme of their book and to share details from the story that support it.*

In our **argumentative writing unit**, students have been gathering information from experts through various resources. Now, they will begin organizing and writing their own essays on the topic of a 4-day school week. *When you ask your child about their opinion, be sure to also ask them to explain their reasoning.*

In **Global Studies**, we are wrapping up our unit by defining culture and learning about families around the world. *Ask your child how they would define the word culture and why it's important to learn about different cultures globally.*

Word Study next week: *-able, -ible (can be done)* Focus words: *affordable, compatible, feasible, justifiable, perishable, plausible, susceptible, sensible, tangible, vulnerable*

Math 5: This week in Math we took what we knew about finding volume and used that knowledge to find the volume of composite rectangular prisms. On Monday we will take our final checkpoint and continue reviewing our skills in preparation for the Unit Summative on Tuesday. We will begin our new unit on Wednesday, entitled: *Fractions as Quotients and Fraction Multiplication*. You can read more about the unit in the [Unit 2 Family Letter](#). To support your child in math, you can have conversations about how things can be split (think pizzas, cakes, etc) and how you can represent those ideas with fractions (e.g., If you eat 2 pieces of the pizza that was cut into 8 slices, what fraction of the pizza did you eat? What fraction is left? Is there another way to say how much you've eaten?)

Science: This week in Science, students gathered evidence to explain where the stars are in space. They learned that stars are all at different distances from Earth even if they look close together (think Orion's belt or the scoop of the little dipper!) They also learned that the sun is the only star in our solar system, at a distance of just 0.000016 lightyears away. Next week we will gather evidence to explain why we don't see a lot of stars in the daytime. A critical juncture on this very question will be given on Thursday. To support your child in Science, have them show you the Sim we have been using and do some exploring together to see how far different stars are from Earth.

From the SSI Office:

*Please click on the link to learn more about [Reporting Early Dismissals and Student Absences](#)

Have a wonderful weekend!

Mrs. Zellner and Ms. Wilke

zellke@hamilton.k12.wi.us

wilksa@hamilton.k12.wi.us

5 Orange Newsletter: Friday, September 19, 2025

Humanities:

This week in **Humanities**, we continued to focused on building a strong classroom community and diving into standard RL5.2. Students reviewed what a theme is and practiced distinguishing between a theme topic and universal theme statement. Next week, students will demonstrate their learning by taking their second **formative assessment** on standard **RL5.2: Summarize texts, from a variety of genres, to determine a theme or central idea and explain how it is supported by key details**. Look for this assessment to come home by the end of next week. *To support your child's reading growth please encourage them to read 20-25 minutes each night. You might ask them to share the lesson or message the author is trying to convey in their current book.*

In our **argumentative writing unit**, students have been exploring different perspectives on the idea of a four-day school week. They've heard from experts on the pros and cons, such as budget savings, child care concerns, test scores, access to extracurricular activities. *Ask your child what their opinion is so far.*

In **Global Studies**, we are expanding vocabulary related to identity, values, misunderstandings, and bias. *You can support this learning by asking your child to explain how they define "identity" and "values" in their own words.*

Word Study next week: *-ence, -ance, -ship (the act, state, or condition of)* Focus words: *abundance, acquaintance, assistance, companionship, convenience, correspondence, internship, leadership, persistence, sportsmanship*

Math 5: This week in math we continued to work towards our end of unit goal: I can find the volume of a right rectangular prism. Please have your child share their Checkpoint with you over the weekend. As a reminder, students receive a grade to help them (and you) understand where they are, but this grade will not be calculated in their final grade for the unit. Next week, we will take our second Checkpoint and then venture into calculating the volume of composite figures (think staircase-type shapes). To support your child in Math, you could help them review their multiplication facts. One way I like to recommend is playing the card game War with a twist—choose a multiplier, and every time they lay down a card, they have to multiply their number by the multiplier and say it out loud.

Science: This week in Science we took on the role of astronomers and laid the foundation for our unit: Patterns of Earth and Sky. Next week we will be gathering evidence that will help us answer the question: Why don't we see a lot of stars in the daytime? We will read a book called *How Big is Big? How Far is Far?* to help us understand that size and distance are relative, and we will have a chance to explore our digital simulation and see how it could be useful in helping us conduct investigations that will provide us with evidence. To support your child in Science, ask them to explain things using evidence, not just their own opinion. For example, "The dog is happy." *How do you know?* "He is wagging his tail and barking excitedly."

Reminders/Announcements:

- **A friendly suggestion:** your student may benefit from a second fabric pencil case to store their mouse and headphones in. We encourage students to attach that pencil case right to their Chromebook (zip ties work well!) so that they always have what they need with them.

Have a wonderful weekend!

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zellke@hamilton.k12.wi.us

wilksa@hamilton.k12.wi.us

5 Orange Newsletter: Friday, September 12, 2025

Humanities: This week, students took their first **formative assessment**. This assessment focuses on the 5th grade priority standard **RL5.2:** *Summarize texts, from a variety of genres, to determine a theme or central idea and explain how it is supported by key details.* Results will guide instruction moving forward. Look for this assessment to come home by the end of next week.

Next week, students will begin their first **argumentative writing unit** on the topic of a four-day school week; exploring the essential question: "*Should we adopt a 4-day school week?*" The focus will be on writing and revising claims. Students will hear from experts and have their own voice heard through writing and discussions.

In **global studies**, students will continue building vocabulary related to *identity, values, misunderstandings, and bias*. Ask your child to explain what a “single story” is.

Word Study next week: *-an, -ian, (relating to, belonging to, a person who has a certain skill)* Focus words: *artisan, electrician, equestrian, human, metropolitan, pedestrian, physician, suburban, technician, veteran*
Students will complete daily practice activities and will be assessed on their understanding of word meanings, based on word parts, not on spelling.

Math 5: This week, we completed three lessons in our first unit about finding volume. By the end of the unit, students are expected to be able to find the volume of a regular rectangular prism, and they are well on their way! We will have our first formative assessment (called a checkpoint) early next week. This will be an opportunity for students to receive written feedback using our rubric. Although students will see a rating to help them understand where they are in their proficiency progression, this rating will not count towards their final grade. This rating is purely for informational purposes. This checkpoint will come home at the end of the week. We will deepen our understanding of volume by exploring different expressions to represent the volume of a figure and move to determining volume of an unlined figure, given side lengths.

Science: Students are ready to start our first Science unit next week. In the first chapter of this unit, we will be investigating the question: Why don't we see a lot of stars during the day time? We will be introduced to our role as astronomers and given a mission: use the evidence we collect to make conjectures about what a missing piece of an artifact might look like. We will gather evidence from books such as *The Handbook of Stars and Constellations*, as well as our digital simulation that will help us think about where the stars are in space, and where Earth is relative to those stars.

Reminders/Announcements:

- The Fall Kindness Retreat is coming up quickly. We love having parent volunteers for this event. Please check out the [sign up](#) and see where you can help out.
- [Here](#) is a list of clubs currently offered at SSI. Students should listen to the morning announcements for information about how and when to sign up.

Have a wonderful weekend!

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5 Orange Newsletter: Friday, September 5, 2025

Humanities: Next week in Humanities, students will be answering the questions, “What is Humanities?” and “Who am I as a reader?” We will also begin creating a culture of inquiry and argument, and answering the question, “What makes a good discussion?” I will introduce students to our Global Studies unit and the essential questions: What does it mean to be a global citizen? What are global studies? How can literature help to build global awareness? Our focus next week will be on our identity and values.

Math 5: Next week Tuesday in Math, we will be completing our fall Fastbridge testing. Students will need a good night's sleep, a full belly, headphones/earbuds, and a fully charged device. We appreciate your support with this! Starting Wednesday, we will dig into our first unit on finding volume. By the end of the unit, students are expected to be able to find the volume of a regular rectangular prism. You can find more information in the [Family Letter](#).

Science: Next week during our Science time, we will be continuing to build our classroom community through activities and challenges meant to practice our collaborations skills and allow students to get to know each other better. We will officially begin our first unit, Patterns of Earth and Sky, on Monday 9/15.

Reminders/Announcements:

- Here is the link to our [5 Orange House Website](#). Students have bookmarked this page and will use it throughout the year to access important sites and information.
- Homework: Remember that most days, the only homework your child will have is reading 20-25 minutes. Students have Advisement time daily, so they will likely be able to complete most assigned tasks during this time. If you are curious about the homework assigned each week, please click on the [online agenda](#). The online agenda is also a great tool to use if your child misses school and you would like to see what they need to catch up on.
- If your child plays a sport and would enjoy having a teacher attend one of their events, feel free to email their schedules to Ms. Wilke. We are hoping to see students in other settings where they feel successful and confident.
- [Here](#) is a list of clubs currently offered at SSI. Students should listen to the morning announcements for information about how and when to sign up.
- The Fall Kindness Retreat is coming up quickly. We love having parent volunteers for this event. Please check out the [sign up](#) and see where you can help out.

Important Dates:

- **FASTBRIDGE** Testing: Math - Tuesday 9/9; Reading - Wednesday 9/10 **Please make sure your child has a pair of headphones or earbuds to use during testing.

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TEMPLATE

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Science:

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