

Middle Schools at work create a supportive environment to reach all adolescent learners. Students at Titusville Middle School celebrate learning achievements AND nurture their "inner authors" through...

MIDDLE MATTERS



September Recap 2025

Titusville Middle School

Titusville, PA

Welcome Back, Rockets! 🚀

We're excited to kick off a brand new school year with the first issue of *Middle Matters*! There's so much happening at our school right now. Got a spooky story, cool event, or awesome achievement you'd like to see in the October newsletter? Email Ms. Prugh at lpugh@gorockets.org to share your idea. Let's make this year one to remember!

Reminders from the Main Office

📷 **Make-Up Picture Day** – October 24th

💻 **Chromebooks** – Plug them in every day before leaving

📅 **SmartPass** – Be sure to shut off passes when you return to class

👜 **Hall Pass** – Wear it around your neck (please don't swing it around)

September Most Valuable Teacher (MVT)

Congratulations to Mr. Burns, 6th grade social studies teacher, for being named our September MVT! Mr. Burns is known for his humor, dedication, and ability to connect with students. Many students recognize him as their favorite teacher. He brings energy to the hallways each morning, supports his colleagues, and plays a key role in making traditions like Wilderness Quest unforgettable. Thank you, Mr. Burns, for your decades of service and commitment to the TMS community!



Burns said he was "very surprised" to learn he had been selected as Most Valuable Teacher. He also shared some advice he carries with him: "Have fun while teaching your subject." If he weren't teaching, Burns said he might be working as a mechanic with his dad and brother.

Spirit Week

By: Jessie Pyle

Titusville Middle School kicked off Homecoming with a spirited week full of creativity and pride.

Monday started with PJ Day, as students strolled the halls in cozy pajamas and slippers. Sports Day followed on Tuesday, showcasing jerseys from favorite teams like the Rockets and Steelers. Wednesday brought Group Costume Day, with friends teaming up for fun, themed outfits.

Thursday's "Teachers as Students and Students as Teachers" Day sparked plenty of laughs as roles were reversed. The week wrapped up Friday with Brown and Gold Day, filling the school with Rocket pride ahead of Homecoming.

Spirit Week highlighted the creativity, humor, and community spirit of TMS—proof that Rocket pride is stronger than ever!



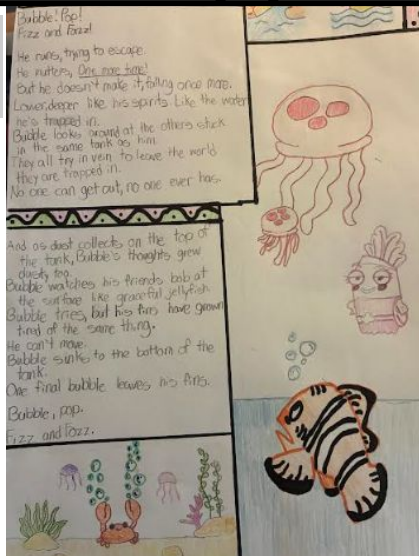
Eighth graders Sidney Edwards and Addyson Rakoczy sat down with Mr. Burns to learn more about his career.

Burns, who was inspired to become a teacher by Charlie Heller, has been in education for 27 years. He has taught 1st grade as well as 6th grade PA and the World. When asked what he enjoys most about teaching middle school, he quickly answered, "The students."

What's Happening?

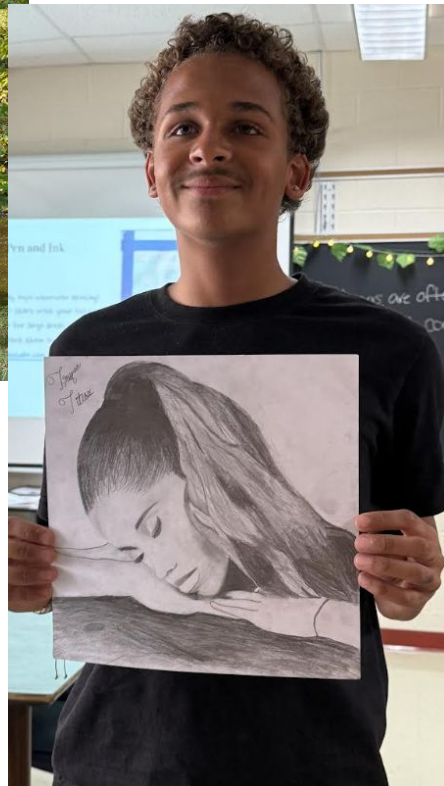
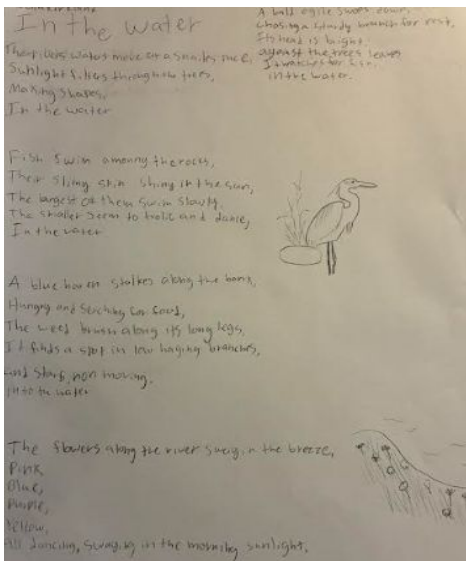
8th Grade ELA

Our 8th grade students recently explored the poem "Describe Somebody" as inspiration for their own writing. After reading and analyzing the piece, they took the challenge of creating original poems that describe the world around them. Using imagery and descriptive language, many students chose to focus on Oil Creek and its natural surroundings—capturing the sights, sounds, and feelings of a place familiar to them.



Grid Drawings

In art, 8th grade students practiced with value to make their black and grey graphite drawings. Students all chose an image that was important to them, learned how to "grid" a reference, and drew from observation. They then used drawing pencils and shading material to add value and make their drawings come to life.



Trey Titus' Ariana Grande grid drawing (Above)

8th Grade Western Civilization

In our 8th-grade Western Civilizations class, we have been studying the Dark Ages and the significant influence of the clergy during this period. The clergy were the keepers of knowledge, as they were among the few people who could read and write, preserving history, religion, and learning for future generations. To better understand this role, students created authentic quill pens and ink, just as monks and scribes would have centuries ago. Using these tools, they then practiced illuminated letters, experiencing firsthand the artistry and patience required to preserve and beautify written works during the medieval era.



7th Grade Writer of the Week:

MEET BOG

By: Greyson.N.Ricke

Meet Bog.

Bog the dog.

Bog the dog loves clogs.

Bog and clogs have such a strong bond.

Bog the dog loves to go on jogs to go find clogs.

Bog the dog was on a jog when he saw Wog the hog doing a vlog.

Bog asked Wog for some clogs.

Wog said, “Get away, Bog the dog, I’m doing a pog vlog”.

“What is a pog vlog, Wog the hog?”

"It's a vlog where all my hogs dance in the fog!"

“OK, ok,” Bog finally said, “ Do you have any clogs, answer me, Hey!”

“Yes, I do,” Wog finally said, “They’re under the log, next to the Hay.”

"That'll do," Bog said, whilst he was jogging away.

“Where’s that log?” Bog begged.

“Over there next to the hay!”

“Who was that!?” Bog asked.

"It's me over here," said Rog the frog.

“Oh, hey, Rog the Frog, what are you doing in all this fog?”

"I'm out here, in this bog, trying to look for some coqs!"

“Why do you need cogs?”

“I need cogs to fix the song.”

“What song?” Bog asked.

The song “Fly away before you get clapped.”

“Do you wanna hear it?”

“No.”

“Oh...sorry bro.”

"Now where's that hay?"

"It's right over there, right before the broad of day."

"Thanks, Rog."

"No problem, Bog."

“Finally there, here’s the hay; I gotta grab the clogs before the broad of day.”

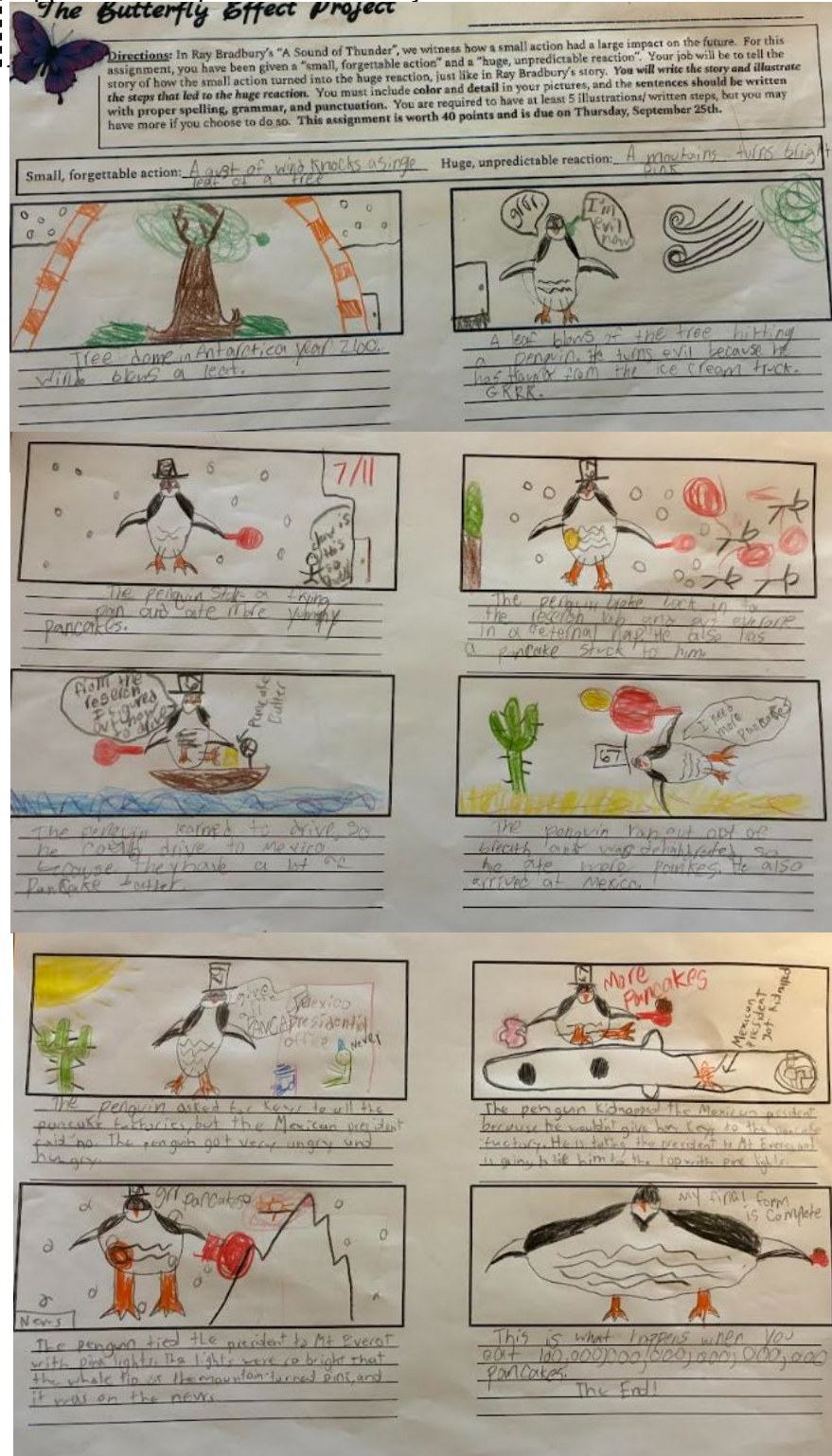
Bog finally grabbed them and went back home.

Without ever even seeing the bay.

7th Grade: Butterfly Effect

In a recent English Language Arts assignment, seventh grade students stepped into the imaginative world of Ray Bradbury's classic short story *A Sound of Thunder*. The story highlights how one small action can create a massive impact on the future.

Building on this idea, students were challenged to transform a “small, forgettable action” into a “huge, unpredictable reaction.” Through both writing and illustrations, they traced how one simple event spiraled into major consequences—mirroring the ripple effect explored in Bradbury’s tale.



Butterfly Effect - Original Narratives

Bob's Revenge

Queenie Lin



Bob, how can I even start to describe him? His personality is so horrible and so wrong. Ever since Bob was a little boy, he has had a hatred, a WICKED hatred for ducks. His sister ,Angie, though, loved ducks. Perhaps the hatred he felt for the duck was actually for his sister. He hated his sister 'Perfect little Angie' they would say. Whereas, when they would scrutinize him. Nail after nail in the coffin.

One day,Bob was planning revenge on his sister, like always. When all of a sudden his phone went 'BUZZ." Bob stopped as he went to check who or what it was. As he looked, a wave of rage overcame him. 'A DUCK EMOJI !?!' he barked from his clenched teeth. He wanted to shatter the phone to pieces.

But then, Bob with his rage came out with the 'PERFECT' plan so WICKED it would cause the meanest person, after Bob of course, to start balling in tears. He would steal the newly made 'Largest rubber duck in the world.' He would burn it into pieces, while the whole world watches, of course. Then he would shred the ashes into pieces. So, Bob spent the whole summer planning his grand theft.

Bob broke in and slid through the traps. As kicked the duck into his forklifter, his mind jumped at his last perfect step, TO BURN IT OF COURSE! He got the ugly duck to the center of the town, lit a match and dropped it on the duck. Flames engulfed the duck, as it started belting into plastic ashes. People started screaming and shouting, horrified that the duck they were so proud of was now disappearing in front of them. In the end Bob got what he wanted, and that's where our story ends.

THE END

-{ THE DECAF TREND }-

By: Mackenzie Crusan

In the beginning, someone, this girl, let's name her Rose. She was taking a calm, quiet walk. The streets were buzzing with noises, bikes, conversations, and animals. Rose saw a small, dim coffee shop, and she decided to take a detour to it. When she entered the coffee shop, she saw the orange, dim lighting, the sound of coffee machines, and people engaging in conversations no one else seemed to hear. She usually got regular coffee, but she decided to order decaf coffee instead of her normal coffee.

She also orders a side of fries with the decaf coffee. She sits at an empty booth in the right corner of the calming coffee shop. It was a small, green and white striped booth with a light wood table in front of it. She takes a small sip of the decaf coffee, just thinking about how the day is going to play out. But that is when she gets a clever idea. Without a second thought, she takes off the top of her coffee cup. She thinks for a moment, but then puts the fries into the decaf coffee.

When she tried it, she was overwhelmed with the taste of fries and decaf, but it was surprisingly pleasant. She just sat there trying it, ignoring the weird looks from other customers. She then had a thought that crept up on her. "What if I made a video about this meal combo?" And so, without a second thought, she takes out her phone and takes a photo of the fries and decaf. She decides to post it on the internet. About 13 minutes later, she leaves the Coquette Coffee Shop. She decides to check her phone. When she opened social media, she was caught off guard by the number of people who followed the trend. She was proud to say she made a trend that took over the social media industry.



Reflections from Wilderness Quest

A TMS 6th Grade Experience



"We did an animal study! I learned a lot! When we got there, we went into groups of two. There was one glove, googles, and one toothpick per person. Each group got one piece of paper about small animal bones, and this might sound disgusting but, we got handed an owl pellet wrapped in tin foil. What is a pellet? It was vomit from an owl!"

- Lillian Locke

"Have you ever shot a gun on a field trip? Well, I have, and it was a lot of fun! Shooting twenty-twos was my favorite. The reason is that I love hunting and shooting guns, which means I get better, and I just like it. I was doing things in the sun all day and I got to shoot five rounds. I got three bullseyes each time, but one was just barely touching so I wouldn't really count it. Finally, I got to be there with Mr. Burns, so it made it ten times better!"

- Bennet Knapp

"What I did not like was that I puked. I ate too many tater tots. I think it was because I did not drink enough water. I learned to not eat so many tater tots and drink more water. I will use this in the future."

- Brian Kinney

"The lesson I learned from Wilderness Quest is to make fun out of what you have. For example, when we made our keychains, it was a blast! You can have fun with anyone; it just depends if you want to work or not. At first I was hesitant but eventually I got used to it. It worked out perfectly in the end and I had the best time ever!"

-Ariella Shontz

"Starting off, I'm going to tell you what I liked about Wilderness Quest. I really like team building because we did so many cool activities that were thrilling and challenging. My favorite thing had to be lunch. I thought it wouldn't be that good; but I was wrong. Their lunch was easily some of the best food I had ever eaten. It was shockingly good."

-Christian Sauerland

"Sadly, I did not like everything. One of the worst things that happened was when I fell into the stream. I was walking on some rocks and put my foot on them to check if they were wobbly. One felt safe so I stepped on it. Then it wobbled and I fell. The water was extremely cold, and this was the first activity we did that day! It was around 9:00am, which just made it colder."

- Simon Ross

"I enjoyed Wilderness Quest. People shared laughs and smiles and bonded with one another. We all were lucky to share this experience with each other. Titusville School District's Wilderness Quest is an experience that nobody will ever forget - or could forget! Spending time with friends around a campfire and doing exciting activities is a chapter in our book that we will always remember." -Taylor Loney

Cool Things Happening in FCS

8th grade FACS - Mrs. Mosher's 8th grade FACS classes have been learning about knife skills. The classes have learned about the anatomy of the knives, different knives and uses, and professional cuts. They put their skills to the test and created Apple Swans.



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Blackout Poetry: Inspired by Fleetwood Mac

Name: Sidney Edwards

Sidney Edwards and Addyson Rakoczy, recently showcased their creativity through the art of blackout poetry. Using the lyrics of “Dreams” by Fleetwood Mac, the students constructed entirely new poems.

Blackout poetry challenges students to look closely at existing texts and reimagine them by removing words rather than adding new ones. Sidney and Addyson’s pieces demonstrated both imagination and insight, transforming a well-known song into original poetry. Well done, ladies!

Name: Addyson Rakoczy

Now you
say your
down?
But
your
heartbeat
remembering
you
had
lost
love
women, come they go
I
see visions
of
stillness
And
Thunder
love
will
come
You'll
know

You want freedom
to
only
Play
carefully
of
a mad
stillness remembering
what
you
lost
Oh, when
Players love they're
women, will go
the
crystal
visions
only wrap your
dreams
of
mad
stillness remembering
what
you
lost
Thunder happens when
they come
and go
You'll
know

“Now you say you[re] down? But your heartbeat remembering you had lost love. Women come. They go. I see vision of stillness and thunder. Love will come, you’ll know.” – Addy Rakoczy

“You want freedom to only play carefully, of a mad stillness, remembering what you lost. Oh, when players love, they’re women will go. The crystal vision only wrap your dreams of mad stillness. Remembering what you lost. Thunder happens when they come and go. You’ll know.” –Sidney Edwards

About Your Principals

My name is Miles O'Shea. I've lived in Northwestern Pennsylvania my whole life. I like it because all of my family is around me, and I don't because I hate being cold. My favorite thing to do is spend time with my family, which is what I do most of the time when I'm not at school. I have a son who's 10, a daughter who's 8, and another daughter who's 6. I've been married for 12 years to a wonderful woman who's a teacher in a middle school. I like to do creative things. I enjoy cooking, building things, and anything that lets me be creative and get outside of the box. I also enjoy exercising and trying to be healthy. My future plans include traveling the world and opening a sandwich shop.

Never thought I would be writing a blurb about being an administrator, I was not a huge fan of school and could not wait to complete it and get out into the world. I grew up and graduated from Titusville High School in 2000. I was not an honor student and did not stand out in any athletics, I had a great upbringing and loved being a part of athletics with my friends, and growing up in this community. I went to Thiel College and in my own words to play baseball, I did not have an academic plan until I was a Junior and shifted from psychology to elementary education. I graduated from Thiel without being drafted to the major leagues, j/k and was hired at Tidioute Community Charter School as a Home Economics and Foreign Language substitute. I turned into an athletic director and 6th grade teacher where I taught for 15 years, before a conversation with a colleague pointed me in the direction of administration. I left Tidioute with a heavy heart to return home in the fall of 2022. I had no intentions of applying until my son convinced me on the last day that applications were due. I currently live in Pleasantville with my wife, Jess and 2 kids, Jaxon and Cecelia and our two dogs, Emma and Gigi. This was the best decision I have ever made, TMS is truly home working in the community where I grew up and getting to be a part of the way education looks in Titusville Middle School.

Meet New TMS Staff



Mr. Steffy

Hi I am Mr. Steffy the new Health and Physical Education Teacher at TMS. I graduated from Titusville Area School District in 2018. After graduating I joined the United States Coast Guard for 4 years finishing up my time aboard the Coast Guard Cutter Seneca. After serving my 4 years I attended Edinboro PennWest University and obtained my degree in Health and Physical Education. Along with Teaching I also coach THS Cross Country and Girl's Swimming. I am super excited to be here and to offer whatever I can to help TASD students reach their highest potential.



Mr. McGinnis

I am Mr. McGinnis, seventh grade's new ELA teacher. As a proud Titusville alumnus, it is both surreal and highly motivating to be teaching in a classroom I loved as a student, now alongside many of my favorite humans (colleagues). While some may assume I chose this profession as a glutton for punishment, my core mission is instead to safeguard critical thinking and strong observation and communication skills in young minds. I am here to ensure every student finds their voice and learns the importance of a well-placed semicolon or em dash. I anticipate a challenging and professionally productive academic year listening to great songs and reading some excellent YA literature.