

MINERAL POINT MIDDLE SCHOOL

Scoop

November 2014 🐾 Education... That's the Point.

Accelerated Reader News

By Mrs. McCoy

Congrats to the following students who met their Accelerated Reader goals in both comprehension and points! In the words of Richard Steele, "Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body." Keep building those brains! 🐾

Gunnar Gorgan	Mckenna Bowers 3x	Caden Carey
Mason Horn 3x	Nick Dubois 5x	Jackie Carpenter
Mason Hughes	Jaden Kieler	Madisen Faull 2x
Ian Keyes	Payton Lawinger	Zula Flanary
Andrea Kieler	Isaac Lindsey	Zoe Hay 3x
Skylar Martin	Cody Pierce	Kaitlyn Kinch
Haily Murphy 2x	Dalton Schrank	Kyla Lindsey
Mathew Nordstrom 2x	Owen Stephenson	Uriah Ottoway
Keira Schrank 5x	Ben Basting	Abby Shannon
Nolan Springer	Grant Bossert	Samantha Socha 2x
Rita Wilson 2x	Natalie Chitwood 2x	Karsten Bakken 3x
Macy Aschliman	Wyatt Evans	Bailey Bennett
Jacob Carpenter 2x	Ryver Galle	Megan Berg 3x
Brayden Dailey	Tessa Hanson	Curtis Cox
Henry Dailey	Sara Heisner	Riese Federman
Raven Day 2x	Bodhi Logueflower 3x	Morgan James
Natalie Finley 5x	Larry Steffes	Savannah Jones 2x
Grant Lee	Kylie Sullivan	Eden Lawson
Daniel Nordstrom	Flo Torres	Grant Linerberger 3x
Tatum Novak 9x	Blaise Watters	Brady Palzkill
Chloe Oberhauser	Blake Wendhausen	Daniel Pittz
Jacob Perez	Lily Wong 3x	Dana Schmitz
Bode Schmitz	Nicole Johnson	Logan Schmitz
Will Straka	Abigail Springer	Sarah Toay 3x
Megan Toay	Michaela Acherman	Karen Wilbanks 2x
Justin Baehler	Matthew Berg	

(number) X = how many times a student exceeded their goal

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, Nov. 25

M.S. BBB game @ Southwestern, 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 26

Thanksgiving Break

Thursday, Nov. 27

Thanksgiving Day

Friday, Nov. 28

Thanksgiving Break

Tuesday, Dec. 2

M.S. BBB game @ Iowa-Grant, 4:00 p.m.

Thursday, Dec. 4

M.S. BBB game @ Platteville, 4:00 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 5

Early Release – 1:00 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 8

Winter concert, 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 9

M.S. BBB game vs. Southwestern, home, 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday, Dec. 10

M.S. Progress reports to be mailed.

Thursday, Dec. 11

M.S. BBB game vs. Dodgeville, home, 4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 16

M.S. BBB game @ Cuba City, 4:00 p.m.

Ancient Egypt: A Sixth Grade Adventure

Mrs. Soper's sixth grade social studies class began uncovering the mysteries of Ancient Egypt. Students discovered the magnificence of Egypt's past while uncovering the Egyptian's contributions to our world today. Students "excavated" information in order to create 3-D models of various artifacts that were important to the ancient Egyptians. Student projects are currently being displayed in the IMC until the end of the month. If you have the opportunity to check out these projects, "walk like an Egyptian" to the IMC. As the Ancient pharaoh psychiatrists stated to their patients, "Denial isn't just a river running through Egypt." 🐾



eMPathy

What is empathy? Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feeling of others. Without empathy we are looking only at ourselves, only our side of the story, only our feelings. This lack of empathy leads to an inability to resolve our conflicts; to disrespectful treatment of others, and sometimes to bullying and harassment situations. One goal I have for this year is to develop more respect amongst the students. Empathy is a key factor in treating others respectfully.

Our school was pleased to have Quinton Aaron, from *The Blind Side* and the new movie *Halfway*, talk with our students about his foundation whose mission is to provide hope, encouragement, confidence and resources for students who are suffering damage to their self-esteem and confidence because of the words and actions of others. Quinton spoke with our students about the need to treat each other respectfully and to have empathy for each other. He also spoke to students about how to resist the damage others attempt to inflict on our self-esteem and recognize the power within them to strive for their dreams.

The middle school is also providing eMPathy T-shirts to every student and staff member of the middle school. Of course having a T-shirt does not promote empathy in itself but we do plan on having empathy days where the students and staff will all wear their shirts to promote connectedness with each other. Feeling connected to each other and having a sense of belonging fosters empathy.

In addition, we will be doing some *Mix It Up At Lunch* activities. *Mix It Up At Lunch* is an activity where we break up the groups and cliques that tend to get established in our lunchroom that result in many students not feeling accepted and welcomed. At *Mix It Up* we randomly assign students to tables and give them some type of cooperative activity where they need to interact with everyone in their group to have successful completion of the activity. The purpose is to break down the barriers that exist between students and again foster that connectedness and sense of belonging. Students aren't always excited about *Mix It Up* days! I hear comments like "But I want to sit with my friends!" and "I don't want to sit with strangers!" This is exactly WHY we do mix it up! There shouldn't be any strangers in our school and you never know who might end up being a friend.

Please help us foster empathy in your children. Help them see things from another's perspective and to always consider the feelings of others.

Thank you,

Mrs. Rand
School Counselor 🐾



"There Are No Benefits to Bullying"

Actor Quinton Aaron Addresses Student Body

by Joelle Doye

Mineral Point Middle/High School welcomed actor Quinton Aaron, most famous for his role in the movie *The Blind Side*, for an all-school assembly last Wednesday morning.

Aaron's arrival was a surprise to most as his visit was kept under wraps until the last minute. Mineral Point Middle School principal, Vickie Dahl, introduced the guest and thanked MPHS alumni, Alex Brown-Carey, for arranging the visit. She has been working as a videographer on Aaron's latest movie set, *Halfway*, which is being filmed nearby in Montfort.

Aaron, age 30, didn't stop by to speak about his movie, however. His message to the student body was much deeper than that.

The Quinton Aaron Foundation was established to provide hope, encouragement, confidence and resources to children on the brink of suicide or battling the damaging effects on self-esteem and confidence caused by the bullying actions or words of others.

Aaron stated he established the foundation two years ago on his birthday, which also has a goal to help combat childhood obesity.

"I am the perfect example of being able to overcome obstacles to be what you want to be," said Aaron. "We all have trials and tribulations. It's important for people like me to share our experiences so we can tell others how to get through it. I'm a testament that it can happen."

A student asked Aaron where he went to college, and he replied that he didn't. He went straight into the workforce to help support his mom and siblings.

It's hard to believe when looking at the now 6'8" actor that wears a size 22 shoe that he was once bullied himself as a child growing up in Augusta, Georgia.

"My mom put me in self defense classes, and that's when the physical altercations stopped," he said.

Aaron has high praise for his mother, and calls *The Blind Side* his dream-come-true role because his mother got him the audition. Unfortunately, she passed away before he got the part.

He also credits his mother for helping him learn that bullies' words don't matter in the grand scheme of life.

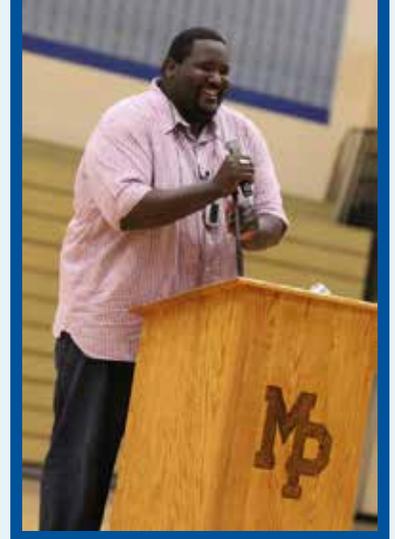
"I know it's easy to say not to worry about what others say about you, but if you think about it, why should their words have relevance on your life? They're not going to stop you, so just keep saying 'So what?'" said Aaron, who told students by pretending not to care, you take away some of the bullies' power.

"You come to school to be selfish," he added. "This is your education, this is the time you learn the tools for your life to become what you want to become. Don't let anyone else take that away from you."

Aaron is also proud of a new cell phone app that will hopefully cut down on cyber bullying. It deletes offensive words and messages, or if the child desires, it can also send the bully's message to the email of a parent.

"We need help from everyone to combat this problem," he added. "If you see bullying, tell someone."

"There are no benefits to bullying. You only make someone feel bad," he concluded. 🐾



Dancing with Disguises

Pictures from the Middle School Halloween dance



It's No "Myth" ... The Sixth Graders Had a Great Time at the Corn Maze

On October 22, the sixth grade traveled to Lodi, Wisconsin, to experience a 15 acre corn maze at Treinen Farm. It was a challenge for most and quite fun! This year's maze was cut into Athena's Owl from Greek mythology. The average time for our sixth grade groups to finish was approximately 40 minutes. Map reading skills and team work were definite needs for each group in order to complete the maze.

After completing the maze, a sack lunch was eaten on the farm. Students then challenged themselves to climb Jacob's Ladder and test their skills at the Pumpkin Launch to see if they could hit the target.

We ended our trip by traveling up the road to Merrimac to ride the ferry across the Wisconsin River.

We would like to thank our parent volunteers for chaperoning us on the trip!



From the Desk of Ms. Dahl, Middle School Principal

Giving Thanks

November is a month to remember all the men and women who served our country. It is also a time to give thanks for family and friends that are so much a part of our lives. I would like to thank our wonderful students, teachers, and support staff who make-up our amazing Middle School.

The school year is flying by. The first quarter ended October 31. It has been a pleasure working with our students. Being in classrooms observing teachers promoting meaningful conversations, higher-level thinking, engagement of all learners in ideas, and connecting to real world situations is rewarding. I am so lucky to work with great families, friends and supportive community members, which make Mineral Point Middle School a special place!

One of the highlights of the November newsletter is an article from the October issue of *Extraordinary Educators* about the reading culture in our Middle School. (See the following two pages.) It focuses on the success of the Accelerated Reader program. Congratulations to Mrs. McCoy, Mrs. Klaas, Mrs. Flannery, Mrs. Soper, Mr. McGraw, Mr. Rhode, Mrs. Brown and the MPMS students for being recognized.

Just for fun:

Q: What kind of coat goes on wet and doesn't have buttons?

A: A coat of paint.

Favorite Thanksgiving Traditions

Shared by Middle School Staff Members

My family gets together at my brother and sister in-law's house in MP. Many Thanksgivings have been celebrated here since this was also our grandparent's house. We spend quality time together as a family enjoying a wonderful meal, conversation, laughs, memories and of course FOOTBALL!! – *Ms. Dahl*

We host my parents, siblings and their families for Thanksgiving. I enjoy the tradition of playing card games as a family after a long day of eating great food! This is a tradition that goes back to my childhood. – *Mrs. Bakken*

Spending time/getting together with family. The turkey, mashed potatoes, pumpkin pie trifecta is pretty great! – *Mr. McGraw*

Being with my family on Thanksgiving is my favorite tradition. However, following closely behind is the fun we have when we order and enjoy Chinese food the night before. – *Mrs. McCoy*

Mashed Potatoes and gravy – but then again, that goes with everything! – *Mrs. Flannery*

After spending time with family eating a traditional turkey lunch, we all nap so we can wake up early and go shopping. We carefully plan where and when the best deals are happening. Then we divide, conquer and shop! – *Mr. Rhode*

Taking down all the Thanksgiving/Fall decorations and putting up the Christmas/Winter decorations. – *Ms. Needham*

On my Mom's side of the family we have always combined Thanksgiving and Christmas and called it "Thanksmas." It becomes a huge event at the beginning of December. Everyone is able to come home and we have a blast. – *Mrs. Macaulay*

My mother's family makes Lefsa (a Norwegian dessert) the week before thanksgiving for the holidays. – *Mrs. Nelson*

AVOID shopping on Black Friday!!!! – *Mrs. Soper*

Getting together with family, eating lots of food, and laying around! It's always a great day! – *Mrs. Brown* 🐾

Worth quoting:

"Integrity means telling yourself the truth and honesty is telling the truth to other people." – *Spencer Johnson*



Reading culture ignites at Wisconsin middle school

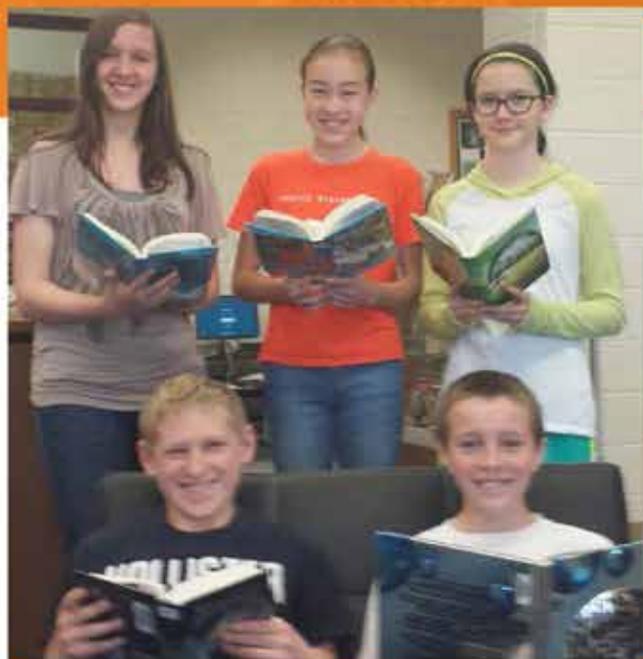
At the year-end awards day last spring, Mineral Point Middle School students who reached their Accelerated Reader goals formed an impressive line of nearly 100 that stretched the length of the gym. Students from all achievement levels came together—from reading intervention to gifted and talented levels.

"It was the neatest thing to see this huge line of kids across the reading spectrum being celebrated for their personal accomplishments," said Mineral Point Unified School District's library media specialist and Accelerated Reader coordinator Kris McCoy. "Recognition is so powerful in motivating kids to keep reading. Plus, we know that they can't help but become stronger readers with all of this reading practice tied to comprehension expectations."

About two years ago, when this district in Southwestern Wisconsin switched to the latest hosted versions of Accelerated Reader and added STAR Reading, it also switched the emphasis from striving for AR points to reaching individualized goals and comprehension. McCoy said this new approach to using AR as a guided reading tool versus an add-on, combined with the use of differentiated goal-setting based on STAR scores, is creating an improved culture of reading at Mineral Point Middle School.

As reading quantity jumps, quality is the focus

Results comparing the 2012–2013 school year to the 2013–2014 school year "are dramatic," noted McCoy.



"It was the neatest thing to see this huge line of kids across the reading spectrum being celebrated for their personal accomplishments."

Kris McCoy
Library Media Specialist
Mineral Point Unified School District

The average percentage correct has grown by 3.5 percent, and points earned over the same time period have more than doubled—from 4,352 to 9,404.

"That's a growth of over 5,050 points, and while we don't focus on points anymore, it goes to show that our students are definitely reading a lot more now," McCoy said. "AR has become a pivotal player in our students' growth because they know that successful, independent reading is now the expectation in our middle school."

All students must read independently for a minimum of 20 minutes per day and demonstrate comprehension through at least an 85 percent score on quizzes, with an opportunity to earn extra credit for reading five points of nonfiction. Teachers run weekly reports through STAR and AR and meet with students to set individualized goals and monitor progress, which counts as a percentage of their grades.

Achievable, personalized goals drive student motivation

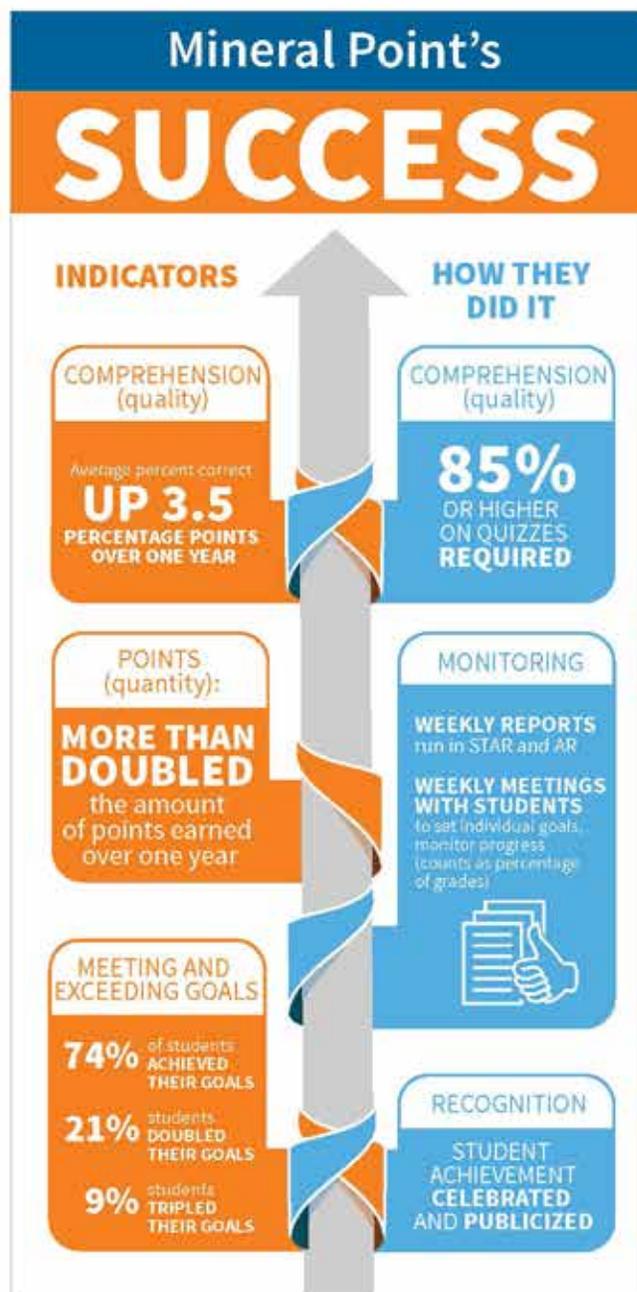
Students who achieve their goals are further rewarded with recognition in the school newsletter and a small prize, with a chance to earn a free book for tripling their goals. Reading notoriety also comes in the form of a prominently located "Words Read Wall," which recognizes individuals at every 250,000-words-read increment and tracks total words read. This triggers some friendly competition—not to mention attentiveness to regular updates.

"Students stop me in the hall to say, 'I'm higher than that on word count, and my mom is coming into the building, so you need to update it,'" McCoy said. "That's definitely a positive change in culture here." She added that the students had already read 91,187,972 words by mid-May. "Many of these kids have never experienced successful goal completion, let alone surpass it," said McCoy, who loves that students compete only with themselves, not others, through Accelerated Reader. "There's so much excitement and confidence that accompanies this, and they also become stronger, better readers by working at their levels."

Teachers see results in assessment data

McCoy said the addition of STAR has been critical to the buy-in of using Accelerated Reader as a guided reading tool. STAR assessments taken three or four times per year show concretely the amazing things that happen with the best practices of data-driven, individual goal-setting, teacher guidance, and progress monitoring.

Seventh- and eighth-grade reading teacher Amy Harrison closely watches students' quiz scores and progress toward their goals with the Student Record Report in AR, and she finds the Instructional Planning Report in STAR especially valuable in identifying and targeting specific student needs.



"I like to break up students into literature groups to work on needed skills, and the Instructional Planning Report shows me groups of students that need help and the exact skills they're struggling with," Harrison said.

As AR Coordinator, McCoy counts on the Diagnostic Reading Report to keep an eye on students' comprehension scores, reading time per day, and average book level. Last marking period, 93 out of 126 students achieved their goals, with 27 of those doubling and 11 at least tripling their goals.

"As our students are reading more, their engagement with reading is growing," said McCoy. "It's amazing to see busy middle-school kids excited to talk about what they're reading and sharing lists of books they want available." ■