Counseling Corner  Is your student investigative, realistic, and conventional, or artistic, social, and enterprising--or perhaps investigative, artistic, and enterprising?! In the second semester Fletcher students will get to use the Naviance interest and career profiler found in the modules newly purchased by the district. All grades will be offered advisory lessons exploring careers, while our 7th and 8th graders will also identify their personal strengths. PAUSD has used Naviance for many years at both our high schools, and we counselors look forward to helping students use this helpful tool in middle school.

Library  Books & Burgers Night at Books Inc. and Kirks Steakburgers raised over $700 for the Fletcher Library, and more importantly, it provided an opportunity for families to gather together to eat and socialize. Thanks to the many parents who helped organize and staff the event, and thanks to all who came out. • “Happy trails to you” to our much enjoyed Short Story station as it travels on to other schools as part of the Palo Alto City Library program. It provided 2,002 stories over the nearly 4 months it was on loan to Fletcher, 741 more stories than any other PAUSD middle school during the same period, and 1221 more stories than when it was at City Hall! Our two short story contests generated 88 entries from eager writers. Stop into the library to see our winning Spooky story (Vandana) and Gratitude story (Shai C.), as well as the runner ups. Or is it runners up?

6th Grade Core  Students have completed their study of early humans: Australopithecus afarensis, Homo erectus, Homo habilis, Homo neanderthalensis, and Homo sapiens were the groups of focus (but there are MANY more groups). Of course, the “family tree” of early humans is not very linear—it’s more like a “family bush of tangled branches”. ½ Questions for parents to asks students: Who was Lucy, and what can you tell me about her? What were some of the most important adaptations that helped early humans to survive? How did the Neolithic Revolution (the development of agriculture) affect the way early humans lived? 6th Grade students are also studying Mesopotamia and the world’s first empire, as well as King Hammurabi’s code of 282 laws, dated to about 1754 BC. Can’t remember them? “If [Fill in the blank with something you did wrong] he shall be put to death.” Some things have improved!!

SEL  Maurice Elias, a psychology professor at Rutgers University who is thought to be the originator of Social Emotional Learning, describes SEL as the process through which we learn to recognize and manage emotions, care about others, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, develop positive relationships, and avoid negative behaviors. We are lucky to have parent volunteer Queenie Zee leading this effort. Anti-vaping curriculum, Project Cornerstone lessons for middle school, and selecting SEL books for our library display are her latest projects. Check out the books on Finding Your Spark and Growth Mindset. Thank you to librarian Kristen Lee for creating a space for our SEL books!
Math & Science  Sometimes we get too caught up with finding a “right” answer rather than finding an interesting question. Asking why and discussing your student's theory is time well-spent. Here are some starter questions for you parents!

6th grade: What was the most memorable thing from science camp? How does phosphorus dust from one continent land in another continent so many miles away?

7th grade: Is a seed alive or not? How would you prove it?

8th grade: What examples of waves are all around us? How are waves involved in communication (across great or small distances)? What is longer, a radio wave or a wifi wave? https://electronics.howstuffworks.com/radio1.htm

Put March 25 on your calendar for our Fletcher STEAM fair! Keeping a questions diary or list might help your student identify a good project.

English & Social Studies 7th grade students are wrapping up Medieval Islam where they learned about the beginnings of Islam as well as the accomplishments of the 1st Islamic empire. We often forget the medieval era contained its own scientific revolution and achievements, encompassing a wide range of subject areas, especially astronomy, mathematics, and medicine. Next in their studies will be the empires of Ghana, Mali and Songhai in the Medieval Africa unit. 8th grade students are studying the constitution and are in the middle of early American art presentations from the district. All social studies students have participated in the preliminary round of National Geographic’s Geography Bee and 33 are moving on to the semi-finals which will be held on December 12th. Good luck, and maybe you want to watch Akeelah and the Bee? It isn't geography but it is exciting!

Visual & Performing Arts UCLA cellist, composer, and orchestrator Niall Ferguson attended our Fall Orchestra Concert last week to witness the premiere performance of the piece he wrote for us! Thank you to our PTA who supported this incredible learning experience by financing Mr. Ferguson's commission stipend, flights, and meals. Fabulous artistic exchanges such as this would not be possible without your parent contributions. These types of special opportunities support a greater sense of belonging and pride in our school, and we hope you see the proven benefits not only in music, but also in your students' core classes.

“Test on Friday is a piece that is being played for the first time by our orchestra! We met with the composer online and discussed what we wanted to be in the piece. We decided that we wanted our song to include interesting techniques, scenes that reflect our life as middle schoolers, different emotions, and viola melodies. When he gave us this piece, we were so excited to start playing! Our overall goal for this music is to tell a story about a middle schooler’s test on Friday and convey the different scenes and emotions.” — Anna, 8th grade.

Our visual Art students have worked with Value and Color this quarter, and are currently learning about Design Process with a challenge to create a design for a candy wrapper. Perhaps we need some Tiger Truffles? Sounds like a great assignment for our FCS Foods class!

CTE: Wheel, Computer Apps, & Web Design 6th graders in the Technology Wheel are learning digital graphic design using Photoshop CC. 7th graders have advanced to learning digital animation (including rigging) using Adobe Character Animator. 8th graders in Web Design are developing a multiple page website that will respond to a variety of screen sizes (desktop, tablet, and mobile). Student websites will include a form visitors can submit and a shopping cart for online purchases. How lucky our students are to get this experience in middle school. Hopefully MS credit cards will never catch on. That would be a dangerous combination!
World Languages  This year we are happy to add Raquel Rubalcaba Garrido to our department. Raquel comes to us from Kahn Lab School where she taught MS-HS for one year. Raquel is from Madrid and before teaching was involved in National Space program in Spain. She is a familiar face on campus as her daughter, Lucia, was promoted last year. Maestra Margarita Mendez, world language lead teacher, currently teaches two courses of Spanish 1B and has been at Fletcher since 2002. She is happy to meet with parents regarding the language program here at Fletcher. Currently all 6th graders participate in language exploration wheel taught by our French teacher, Madame Vyjayanthi Raman. She has been part of Fletcher community since 2002 and is multi-lingual, fluent in Tamal, French, German, Hindi, English and has a basic understanding of Spanish.

Extra Supports  Interested in the SpecialEd/Inclusion community? The Futures Social is a friendly monthly gathering in our library for families throughout our district in the Futures community. Don't pass up this opportunity to expand your supportive community! We build network and share knowledge with each other who are on the same journey. Join Momo to collaborate with parents and teachers to make our students thrive at Fletcher! We are also looking for a co-inclusion representative to attend the top quality CAC meetings (Community Advisory Committee). For more information visit https://caccpaloalto.org/pta-special-education-inclusion-representative/. Contact SpecialEd/Inclusion rep Momo at momoyo.yanagihara@gmail.com.

Parent Team  Thank you to the many parent hands at work these past (and last) two months of 2019! Our PTA exec board, our Site Council members, library volunteers, dedicated SEL parents, our inclusion representative, our 8th grade promotion committee, all the parents who (will be ½) donating to the PTA Staff Cookie Exchange, everyone who supports our teachers and their classroom efforts, and all of you dependable parents who may not get recognized here but we count on you and really appreciate any little bit you can do! Thank you Thank you!

What's That?  Fletcher Drama Presents Legally Blonde Jr! Don't miss the biggest set ever! This Fri-Sun only: December 13th (7pm), Dec 14th (2pm and 7pm), and Dec 15th (2pm). Legally Blonde JR follows the transformation of Elle Woods as she tackles stereotypes, snobbery and scandal in pursuit of her dreams. Tickets are $5 for students (8th grade and younger) and $10 for adults - Tickets only sold at the door.

We Appreciate You!  Thank you TACOLICIOUS for your generous donation of $1,095.91 to the Fletcher Middle School PTA through the School Project. In January 2020 Fletcher will again be the beneficiary. Think about dining in or taking out (the MF Chicken is a great deal) from Tacolicious every MONDAY -- 15% of all sales go to Palo Alto PTAs! Tacolicious also does great catering and if you order for Monday it helps us. Please contact schoolproject@tacolicious.com for more info.

District @ Fletcher  There is so much going on down at Churchill! Our Fletcher teachers and principal have been involved in examining and potentially redesigning our middle school math program, attempting to provide challenging and supportive classes for all. Keep in touch by reading over the BOE agendas for the (typically) bimonthly meetings starting at 6:30 pm. Members of the public are allowed to speak for about 2-3 minutes during the open forum to voice their concerns or praise.