



FIRST QUARTER

# Curriculum Spotlight

FALL 2023

## The MONSTERS



are due on  
*Maple Street*

**EDUCATION IS OFTEN LIKE WORKING OUT.** Sometimes when you wake up in the morning, the first thing that crosses your mind is how tired you are and how you don't really feel like exercising. But once you push yourself to do it, you feel amazing afterward. Education works in the same way. It's like exercising the muscle right behind your eyeballs. When students put in the effort and achieve something, they experience that satisfying "aha" moment. They feel good about it and they want to share their success with others, just like you would with a physical or sports achievement.

During the first quarter in English class, the students explored a variety of literary devices, studying works from Edgar Allen Poe, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Rod Sterling, and even Guatemalan folk literature, developing the ability to compare and contrast the juxtapositions of ideas. Throughout the quarter, the students engaged in practicing a lot of analysis and synthesis, which are college-level skills, to the best of their abilities.

*Continued on next page*

*Pictured: Students created their own comic strips to highlight key points in 'Monsters of Main Street' by Rod Sterling.*



Now in our second quarter in Civics, as students have been learning the intricacies of the U.S. government, they have been asked to synthesize their knowledge and craft their very own nations, complete with stringent guidelines. This process necessitates the careful consideration and digestion of copious amounts of information. What are the delineations between state and federal powers, and what factors contributed to their division? Furthermore, what are the underlying ideologies of their respective political parties, and how do these ideologies seamlessly intertwine with one another?

Recently, a student reflected on the work they had accomplished on this project over the past five days and exclaimed, "I don't think I've ever written this much consecutively in my entire life." However, I reassured them that they were only required to write a single paragraph, nothing more. Yet, as they explored and built upon their thoughts, they found it necessary for me to grasp the depth of their message, and it inevitably extended beyond a mere paragraph. Their inspiration fueled their creativity, and they transformed their existing understanding into something entirely new. Their desire for comprehension became paramount.

As an educator, witnessing this process unfold is immensely gratifying.

We recently discussed a Supreme Court ruling that set a nationwide precedent on students' freedom of expression through their attire at school. This ruling allows students in public schools to express themselves through their clothing choices. One of my students referenced this court case to question the dress code policy at Hanna Academy.

We invited our principal, Mr. Jackson, to join the conversation, and together, they discussed the students' perception of their constitutional rights being violated. However, our intention was to encourage the student to thoroughly consider their request and proposal and provide substantiated evidence to support their argument. Mr. Jackson allowed the student to express his thoughts and then asked other questions to make sure that the student was using reasoning and critical thinking; fully exploring every nook and cranny in that argument.

Even though we had to eventually explain to the student that we are a nonpublic school, and therefore, the ruling doesn't apply to us, he'll always remember how empowered he felt because he grew in his knowledge. And then he employed that knowledge and felt confident enough to debate with the principal. That's going forward next time when he wants something and he thinks he knows the path to get there. Maybe next time he will.



*Mr. Tobhiyah Holmes*  
ENGLISH AND CIVICS



**In Community Partnership With:  
HANNA ACADEMY**

*Believing in the Future* Our Community partner educates, prepares, and empowers students with learning and emotional challenges to succeed in school and in life.