

# Welcome to the Sixth Grade Bear Team!

Welcome Bear Team Families! The Bear Team teachers are so happy that you are part of our extended team! We are so excited to be back in person with our students and are looking forward to a great year. Please contact us with challenges and reasons to celebrate!

The Bear Team recognizes the unique experience of transitioning from an elementary setting to a more independent junior high environment. We will help each student navigate his or her way throughout the school year. We then strive to nurture each student's development into becoming a self-directed learner, quality producer, complex thinker, collaborative worker, and community contributor, all components of District 203's mission statement.

We know the importance of communication among students, parents, and teachers, which provides an environment to make each student successful. We also know that this is the time when students begin to advocate for themselves, so we start this process by requiring students to take the initiative with assignments, from understanding expectations through inquiring about missing assignments. This simple communication shift from parents to students empowers students to take ownership of their learning through self advocacy. Please understand that this process takes time, but is an invaluable life skill that will help your child be successful long after middle school."

Finally, we provide a secure, safe environment for all Bear students to grow intellectually, socially, and emotionally. Plus, we always have fun along the way!

Here are outlines of each academic class:

## Science

- The science curriculum focuses on providing students with the opportunity to explore and discover through interactive activities. These interactive activities place an emphasis on trial and error for students to develop an understanding that learning involves making mistakes. Students will also work on writing scientific explanations that encourage students to communicate what they are learning in a scientific manner that involves evidence and reasoning.
- The sixth grade curriculum places a focus on Earth Science with our units including: Weather and Climate, Land, Water and Human Interaction, Geological Processes, Ecology, and Forces and Motion.

- Students will have access to an online textbook through SEPUP and LabAids found on their canvas pages.
- Students will not take many tests in science class. The majority of their summative assignments will be Claim-Evidence-Reasonings (CERs), the scientific explanations mentioned earlier.

## **Math**

- The math curriculum focuses on exploring concepts and skills that allow for students to make sense of patterns and ideas, apply logic and reasoning, and attend to precision. The strategies applied throughout the year will help build their knowledge of fundamental math principles while promoting the ability to communicate their understanding.
- The sixth grade curriculum focuses on key math concepts including Computation, Algebra, Geometry, Ratios, Rational Numbers, and Statistics.
- The Honors curriculum focuses on fundamental concepts of Algebra, integrating Integers, Rational Numbers, Ratios, Geometry, Statistics, and Probability.
- We will use the **Big Ideas Math** series to access activities and practice with real-life examples. Students will also be utilizing a math practice journal that provides additional practice questions and study options. Students are encouraged to use as many of the resources Big Ideas has to help them be successful. Additionally, students will have IXL, an online learning site, available to them throughout the year.

## **Language Arts**

- Reading: Jefferson uses the Perfection Learning series to access great stories that contain rich layers of meaning. We will also be reading novels in both group and individual settings. Students are encouraged to always have a free reading book with them. Students will have access to Sora, our online book program, and they will even be able to check out books from our Learning Commons in the near future! They will be able to check out books online and pick them up in our main office.
- Writing: The Bear students will be writing personal narratives, literary essays, and

research papers. We will also incorporate fiction writing, objective summaries, and book reviews on Atrium, our online catalog program.

- Vocabulary, Spelling, and Grammar: Of course, all year long, these important components of language will be a focus.

### **Dual Language - Language Arts**

- The Dual Language program follows the Biliteracy Model, and as such, practices the 4 language domains in English and Spanish: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- A curriculum standard is introduced in one language and reinforced in the other. In this way, students maximize their learning and bridge between the two languages.
- In Dual Language, the curriculum resources in English are the same as previously stated in the Language Arts section with regards to reading, writing, and vocabulary. Additionally in Spanish, students read short stories, and the work that is done includes writing, vocabulary and grammar that is integrated into assignments.
- Conversation is another big piece of language that is consistently woven into the work done in the classroom, and supports are provided to build students in their speaking and listening skills in both English and Spanish.
- Students will have access to Spanish and English texts both online and in print.

### **Social Studies (Dual and English)**

- Social Studies focuses on the Inquiry Model which teaches students to craft questions, promote literacy, cultivate civic spaces, integrate content and skills, and take informed action. We also teach foundation skills such as map reading, geography, timeline analysis, compare and contrast, and summarizing.
- The sixth grade curriculum focuses on the Ancient World with units covering the cradles of civilization. Our first trimester units discuss geography, Paleolithic and Neolithic eras, the agricultural revolution, and the Egyptian belief system.
- The second trimester discusses the ideas of how civilizations navigate the balance of individual rights and the common good with a focus on the Chinese philosophies of Taoism, Confucianism and Legalism. The other unit focuses on the legacies of India with an emphasis on Hinduism, Buddhism, the Indus Valley Civilization, Mauryan, and Gupta Dynasties.
- The third and last trimester enters the foundations of western history with its study of

Greece and Rome. The Greece unit discusses what unites and divides people. The Rome unit asks the question, “how did the people influence the rise and fall of Rome?”

## **English Learner (EL) and Communication**

- Jefferson Junior High School (JJHS) has the privilege of facilitating learning with a diverse student population. The EL program is one program that makes JJHS unique. When students, who speak another language, arrive at Jefferson, they are placed in an EL Language Arts class. Depending on each student’s English proficiency in Reading, Listening, Writing, and Speaking, they are placed in our Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced EL Language Arts class. Students move up to the next level as soon as they are ready which is determined by classroom formative and summative assessments. Because of this specialized approach, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students can be in the same Language Arts class together. For all other classes, EL students participate fully in all general education classes. Because of our diverse student population, there are several Science and Math classes that are co-taught. Every February, ELs take a language test called ACCESS wherein their growth in listening, reading, speaking, and writing are assessed. When they earn a composite score of 4.8, they exit the EL program into a general education Language Arts class.
- Moving from elementary school to middle school is a big change for students and their families. We know the importance of communication among students, parents, and teachers, which provides an environment to make each student successful. We also know that this is the time when students begin to advocate for themselves, so we start this process by requiring students to take the initiative with assignments, from understanding expectations through inquiring about missing assignments. This simple communication shift from parents to students empowers students to take ownership of their learning through self advocacy. Please understand that this process takes time, but is an invaluable life skill that will help your child be successful long after middle school.

## **Special Education and Co-teaching**

- At Jefferson, the BEAR team is so lucky to have many co-taught classes throughout the school day. This means that two teachers are in the class to support ALL students. The general education teacher is in the class, as well as Mrs. Bratland, Mrs. Halblander, Mrs. Pennings, Ms. Rancilio, or Mrs. Rains. Teachers are able to facilitate many different methods of instruction by having two teachers in the classroom daily. Below are a few structures teachers may be using with your students.

<p><b>Parallel Teaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Class divided into two groups</li> <li>● Both teachers teaching the same lesson, or parts of the lesson, and then students switch groups</li> </ul>	<p><b>Station Teaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students are divided into groups</li> <li>● Some groups led by teacher, some groups are independently working</li> </ul>	<p><b>Team Teaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Both teachers are teaching the content together to the entire class</li> </ul>	<p><b>Alternative Teaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One teacher is teaching a larger group</li> <li>● One teacher is instructing a guided group with a smaller group of students</li> </ul>
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## Supervised Study

- During 5th period, every day, the Bears have Supervised Study. Each Bear student is expected to be present on Zoom during this time. Many options are available to students during supervised study:
  - Work on homework assignments.
  - Free-read.
  - Get organized.
  - Performance music: Band, choir, and orchestra meet twice a week during this time.
  - Meet with another academic teacher. All Bear teachers have supervised study during 5th period. If a student has a question from any particular teacher, he or she can log onto that teacher's zoom link. All supervised study zoom links are on the Supervised Study Canvas page.
  - Small group interventions. Teachers will often meet with a group of students for re-teaching and completing make-up work.