

Meet the Teacher



Welcome to Young 5's! The teacher's name is Mrs. Williams, and she is thrilled to be teaching our Young 5 scholars! Each child is unique and has their own learning style and pace. Mrs. Williams strives to create a classroom where children can explore, learn, and grow at their own speed. "I am so excited to get to know each child and provide them with the best possible start to their educational journey".

Supply List

Needs

- Small pack of crayons
- Child safety scissors
- Glue sticks
- Pencil case (label with your child's name)
- Headphones (label with your child's name)
- Old sock, rag, or Expo eraser
- Bookbag (label with your child's name)
- Water bottle with secure lid (label with your child's name)
- Fitted toddler sheet and blanket (naptime) (label with your child's name)
- Bag of extra clothes (just in case) (label with your child's name)
-

Wish List

- Playdoh
- Envelopes
- White three ring binder
- Clorox wipes
- Ziploc bags (gallon, quart, or sandwich size)
- Stuffed animal or toy for nap time. NONE THAT MAKE NOISE.

Young Fives “Highlights”

Young Fives is the best! We will be exploring many different themes this year using hands-on manipulatives, real life experiences, and learning how to make things all while incorporating rich literature into our everyday lives. For the letter Aa, we will explore all things apples. We will paint with apples, make homemade applesauce in the class (each student will peel and core their apple), taste different apples and graph our favorites, and read many books about apples. Students will master their letters, sounds, numbers to 20, and begin to read. One of the best parts of our day is when we split up into groups and truly differentiate our small group time in order to meet everyone’s needs.

Exciting Opportunities

With school of choice, parents have an opportunity to choose a school for their child. With that in mind, parents have to look at many different aspects of a school and decide which would be the best fit for their child and allow their child to develop academically.

Vista Academy has the best of both of these: a perfect fit for any child, and exceptional academics. Vista teachers greet students at their doors with a warm welcome and handshake making students feel appreciated and cared for as soon as they enter the classroom. With that mindset, students feel more comfortable to express themselves, and try their best in class. Students also participate in activities where they get to know each other, respect differences, and learn from each other’s strengths.

A Standard of Excellence

The Young Fives/Kindergarten team is very focused on making sure your child meets all of their educational objectives. We take pride in giving every student the best educational experience and we do this by teaching the students at their own individual level. We work closely with one another to plan strategies and resources that will best meet the state objectives as well as the needs of our students.

Welcome to Kindergarten!

Meet the Teachers!



Mrs. Sarjeant



My name is Kailani Sarjeant and I love teaching at Vista! I am originally from Hawai'i and grew up on the Windward side of O'ahu. I earned my undergraduate degree from Aquinas College and master's degree in Reading from Western Michigan University. I am a certified Reading Specialist for grades K-12 and have nearly 30 years of teaching experience. I am proud to have been a regional semi-finalist for the MDE 2019-2020 Michigan Teacher of the Year award and a finalist for NHA's 2020 – 2021 Excellence in Teaching award. I am married, and my husband and I have raised two wonderful children.

In my free time I enjoy cooking and baking, reading, volunteering, traveling, and the outdoors. As a family, we enjoy camping, traveling, and supporting great causes – especially local charities! I am afraid of frogs, my favorite color is red, and I don't like pizza! I am looking forward to a great year of learning and growing in Kindergarten and I can't wait to meet you!

Ms. Brown



My name is Gabrielle Brown and I enjoy teaching at Vista! I am originally from Earle, Arkansas but was raised in Detroit, MI. This will be my eleventh year teaching and my seventh year teaching at Vista. I have been a Teacher in Residence and I have been teaching kindergarten for six years. I graduated from Grand Valley State University with my Bachelors in Elementary Education in 2011 and my Master's in Special Education in 2016. I completed my Early Childhood Certificate from Aquinas College in 2020.

When I am not teaching, I enjoy volunteering and giving back to the community. I am an active member of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority Inc. and we have events and fundraisers geared toward educating and helping the community. I also enjoy traveling and seeing new places. My favorite color is teal, my favorite food is tacos (all kinds!), and I love polka dots. I can't wait to learn and grow with you!

Mrs. Schut



My name is Gracyn Schut and I enjoy teaching at Vista! I grew up in Grandville, Michigan. I graduated college from Grand Valley State University with my Bachelors in Elementary Education and a minor in Early Childhood Education in 2024. This will be my second year teaching kindergarten.

When I am not teaching, I enjoy reading, gardening, being outside and spending time with my husband and family. My favorite color is light blue, and I love Iced coffee and flowers! I am looking forward to a great year of learning and growing in kindergarten. I can't wait to meet you!

Supply list:

DO NOT write your name on these items:

- 1 box of Kleenex
- 2 boxes of 24 count **Crayola** crayons
- 4 **Elmer's** glue sticks

- 12 black **EXPO** whiteboard markers
- 1 box of 24 count **Ticonderoga** pencils
- 1 container of **Clorox** wipes

- 1 pk of 10 **Crayola** Markers (labeled Art)

Optional: 1 box quart size **Ziplock** bags

Please **write your name** on these items:

- 1 Complete change of clothes in a gallon size zip-lock bag
- 1 Art shirt
- 1 pair of earbuds or headphones (for daily computer use)
- Backpack (no wheels, please)

****No other supplies are necessary****

Kindergarten “Highlights”

During the school year we take multiple opportunities to enjoy being together, having fun and learning in a different way. In the fall, we have a Harvest Party to celebrate the season. In the winter, we have a Winter Party to celebrate the season. We take a trip to a musical performance, celebrate the 100th day of school, and celebrate March is Reading Month. Students can look forward to many more fun activities throughout the year, as well.

Exciting Opportunities

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A Standard of Excellence

The kindergarten team is very focused on making sure your child meets all of their educational objectives. We take pride in giving every student the best educational experience and we do this by teaching the students at their own individual level. We work closely with one another to plan strategies and resources that will best meet the state objectives as well as the needs of our students.

Welcome to 1st Grade!

Meet the Teachers!



Mrs. Kozlowski



Hello, my name is Mrs. Kozlowski (Mrs. K if that is easier!) and I am one of the 1st grade teachers! I have lived in and around Grand Rapids my entire life. I am a graduate of Grand Valley State University with a major in English Language Arts and a minor in Elementary Education and a Master's Degree in Special Education. This year will be my 9th year teaching at Vista Charter Academy and my 12th year teaching.

Vista provides the students and staff with everything we need so that we can focus on learning and having fun! I am passionate about building positive relationships with my students and families to help create a safe and fun learning environment for all. When I am not at school I love to be with my family. I have been married to my husband John for 16 years, and we have two children together: Jackson (10) and Jameson (7).

My favorite thing about teaching first grade is being able to watch my students grow and learn. I am so excited to meet you and have a great year. Remember to keep reading all summer - I look forward to hearing about the books that you read and the cool places you read those books!

Mrs. Kleyn



Hello! My name is Mrs. Kleyn and I am one of Vista's first grade teachers! I am a graduate of Central Michigan University with a Bachelor of Science in Education and majored in Early Childhood Development and Learning.

I am excited to begin my third year of teaching 1st grade at Vista Charter Academy! Vista provides a safe and fun learning environment for all students. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to provide that type of environment in my classroom as well. I grew up in Alpena, Mi but moved to the Grand Rapids area a few years ago with my husband Weston.

My favorite thing about teaching first grade is seeing the student's reading skills grow tremendously and their love for reading grow as well! I am excited to start the new school year and cannot wait to meet you! Please keep reading all summer!

Mrs. Vandenberg



Hi there! My name is Mrs. Vandenberg and I am so excited to teach 1st grade this school year! This will be my fifth year of teaching and I am eagerly awaiting a new group of first graders!

I have a Bachelors degree in Social Work from Grand Valley State University and a Masters degree in Urban Education from Davenport University.

My husband and I live in Grand Rapids with our dog Sully and our cat Charlie. We absolutely love Vista Charter Academy because of our diverse community of learners, dedicated staff, and incredible families!

I am all about social emotional learning, building strong relationships with scholars and their families, and making learning fun and engaging. I have no doubt that we are going to have an incredible school year in first grade!

Supply list: Most supplies will be shared class supplies. Please do not label items unless indicated otherwise.

- 1 pair headphones (in a bag labeled with their name)
- Gym Shoes (labeled with name)
- Backpack (labeled with name)
- Reusable water bottle (labeled with name)
- 4 boxes of Kleenex
- 3 rolls of paper towel
- Papermate eraser toppers
- 24 yellow pencils (Ticonderoga, pre-sharpened preferred)
- Glue Sticks (Elmers, purple brand)
- 2 boxes of 24 count crayons (Crayola preferred)
- Disinfectant wipes
- Hand sanitizer

*Please only send supplies on the list. Any other supplies will be sent home (notebooks, folders, etc.)

An extra supply that is so helpful is **class snacks!** (Pretzels, fish crackers, or animal crackers are suggested. **Individual bags, please!**)

1st Grade “Highlights”

First grade is a very exciting year of learning! We begin the year by counting each day and when we get to 100th day of school, we celebrate by participating in an array for fun 100 themed activities! We also love to celebrate reading. On Dr. Seuss's birthday, the teachers travel from room to room sharing their favorite Dr. Seuss book! First grade is a wonderful time filled with learning and fun that will be sure to make our year special. While this year is full of fun, the best part is that first graders will become independent readers by the end of the year! Woohoo!

Exciting Opportunities

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A Standard of Excellence

The first-grade team is very focused on making sure your child meets all of their educational objectives. We take pride in giving every student the best educational experience and we do this by teaching the students at their own individual level. We work closely with one another to plan strategies and resources that will best meet the state objectives as well as the needs of our students.



Welcome to Second Grade!



Miss. Wilbur

Hello fabulous second grader and family! My name is Miss Wilbur; I am pleased to be your second grade teacher. This is going to be my tenth year at Vista Charter Academy and I cannot wait! This is my thirteenth year teaching, as I have had previous experience teaching first, second, and third grades.

I graduated in 2010 from Calvin College with a Bachelor's degree in Business. My love and enjoyment of working with children led me back to Calvin College, and in 2013 I graduated with a degree in Elementary Education. I absolutely love learning myself, and cannot wait to pass my passion for learning on to you!

When I'm not teaching or planning awesome things for us to do at school I enjoy reading, running, being pool side, shopping, dining-out, traveling, and spending time with dear family and friends.

I feel incredibly privileged to be given the opportunity to teach at Vista. Please let me know if you may have any questions or concerns. It is important to keep the communication open between us and I would love to talk to you whenever you feel the need.

Here's to many happy days in 2nd grade!

Elisabeth Wilbur
4.ewilbur@nhashools.com

Mr. Rountree

Hi there!

My name is Rich Rountree. This is my 15th year of teaching. I have been married for almost 28 years to my wife, Jennifer. We have 4 grown kids, Emma, Nicholas, Taylor, and Skyler. We have also added a son-in-law to our family this year when Emma got married to Jacob. In my free time, I like to play golf, go to the beach, travel with my wife, build LEGOs, and do anything outside. I am also a HUGE Star Wars fan!

I look forward to meeting and getting to know you this year!

Mr. Rountree

4.rountree@nhaschool.com





Ms. Vaughn

Hello 2nd Grade Families! My name is Ms. Vaughn, and I am so excited to be a part of your students' 2nd grade journey! This is my second year at Vista and I am looking forward to a great year with this amazing 2nd grade classroom.

I earned my bachelor's from the University of Michigan in History and International Studies in 2019. After graduating, I moved to Lugo, Spain to help teach English. The following school years I worked in various schools doing a variety of jobs. I obtained my initial teacher certification from Grand Valley State University in 2024. I am continuing my educational journey by pursuing a Masters from GVSU. I have a lifelong love of learning and hope to help your student find theirs!

When I'm not at school I like to read, travel, go hiking, and spend time with friends and family. Some of my favorite things to do around Grand Rapids include visiting local coffee shops and exploring new restaurants.

I look forward to meeting and getting to know you all. If you have any questions or concerns for me, please feel free to contact me via SchoolConnect.

Ms. Abby Vaughn

4.avaughn@nhaschools.com

Supply list:

- 2 boxes of Crayola crayons – 24 pack
- 1 box of Crayola markers – 10 pack
- 50 yellow pencils
- Scissors
- Pencil box
- 4 jumbo Elmer's glue sticks
- 1 package pencil top erasers
- 1 box Lysol wipes
- 1 box kleenex
- 1 snack to share with the class
- Headphones
- Art shirt with name on it
- Backpack
- Gym shoes (labeled with name)

Second Grade “Highlights”

Throughout the year, students will build reading, writing, and math skills through mastery of the common core standards. Students will also get to take part in many special days unique to second grade such as Earth Day, 100 Day, Black History month, and Christmas Around the World. Students will learn to discover why, discover how things work, and begin to understand new things about our Earth around us! Second graders will enjoy field trips to the John Ball Zoo and Fredrick Meijer Gardens. It is so fun to see second graders learn and grow, while taking in the exciting learning opportunities!

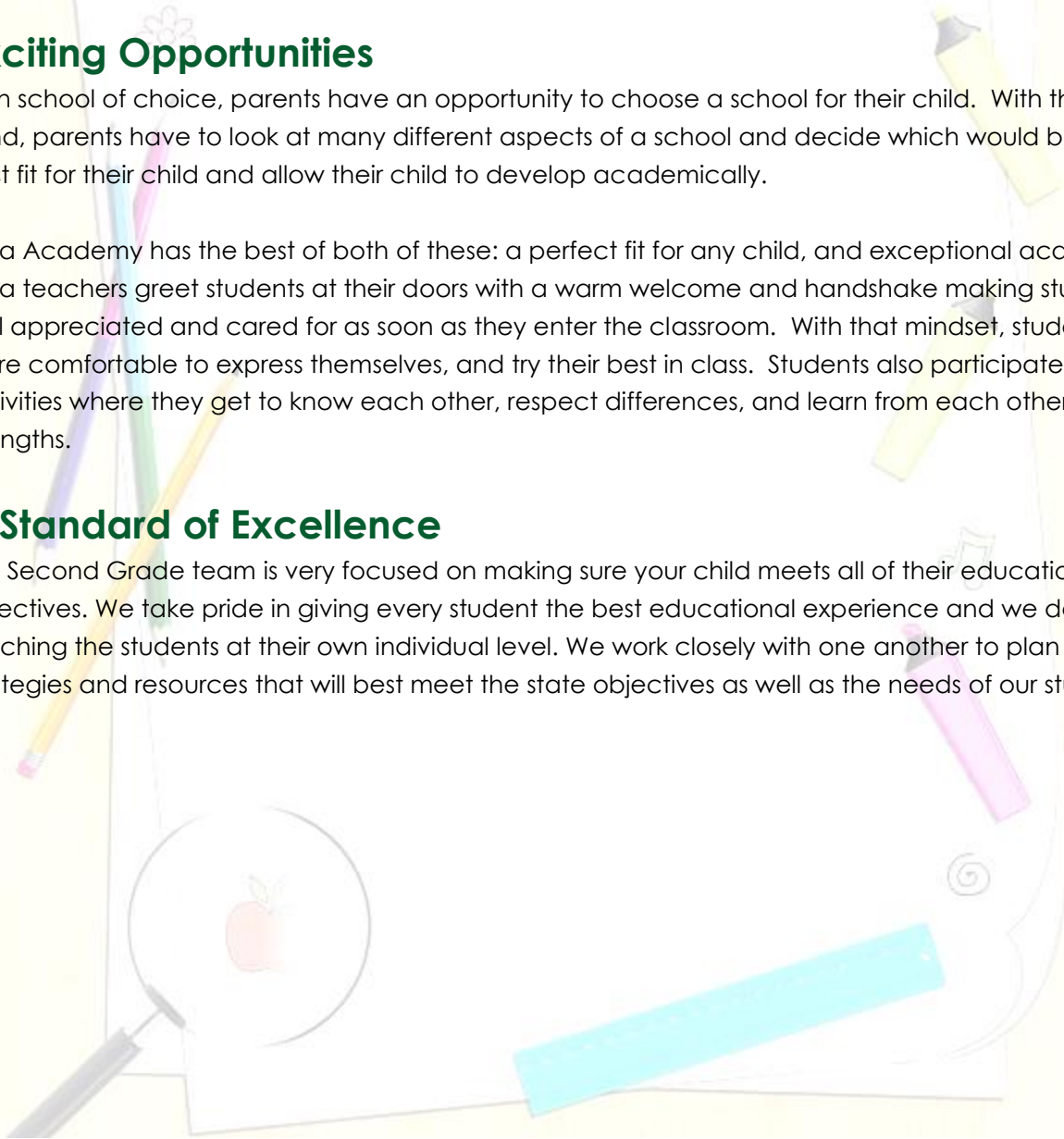
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A Standard of Excellence

The Second Grade team is very focused on making sure your child meets all of their educational objectives. We take pride in giving every student the best educational experience and we do this by teaching the students at their own individual level. We work closely with one another to plan strategies and resources that will best meet the state objectives as well as the needs of our students.



Welcome to 3rd Grade!



Mrs. Radlinski

Hello, my name is Mrs. Radlinski and I am excited to be your Third grade teacher! This will be my eleventh year at Vista, and my seventh year teaching Third grade! Before joining Vista I taught in Chicago and in Paris, France. I absolutely LOVE third grade and I know your child will, too!

In third grade we will be diving deeper into texts to grow our reading skills and in math we will learn multiplication and division, fractions, adding and subtracting 3-digit numbers and a lot more. Math is my absolute favorite subject to teach!

When I am not at school, I enjoy spending time with my family, friends, and two cats named Prince and Lox. I have four younger siblings and three nieces. I absolutely love being an aunt! I also enjoy being active, traveling, and reading.

My favorite thing about teaching is watching my students' excitement as they learn new things and seeing how they light up as they reach their academic goals. It is truly a joy to see how much my students grow academically, socially, and emotionally throughout the year. I look forward to meeting your child soon. We are going to have a great year together! If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out!

4.lradlinski@nhaschools.com

Mrs. Vander Klipp



Hello, my name is Mrs. Vander Klipp and I am excited to be your Third grade teacher this year! I attended Grand Valley State University where I earned my teaching degree with an English Language Arts major. This will be my seventh year at Vista, and my fourth-year teaching Third grade!

My husband Josh and I have been married for 12 years and have a five-year old son named Lawson and a one-year-old son named Conrad. We also have a dog and cat. Both of us come from big families and we enjoy spending time with them. We love to host family and friends over for dinners and game nights! I enjoy boating, reading, diamond painting and walking around the neighborhood while Lawson rides his bike!

My favorite thing about teaching is watching my students' faces light up as something clicks for them or they learned something new. I enjoy watching them meet all their academic goals and how much they grow as people too, throughout the year. I cannot wait to meet your child soon and I know they will have such a fun time in third grade! Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions!

4.evanderklip@nhaschools.com

Miss Henkelman



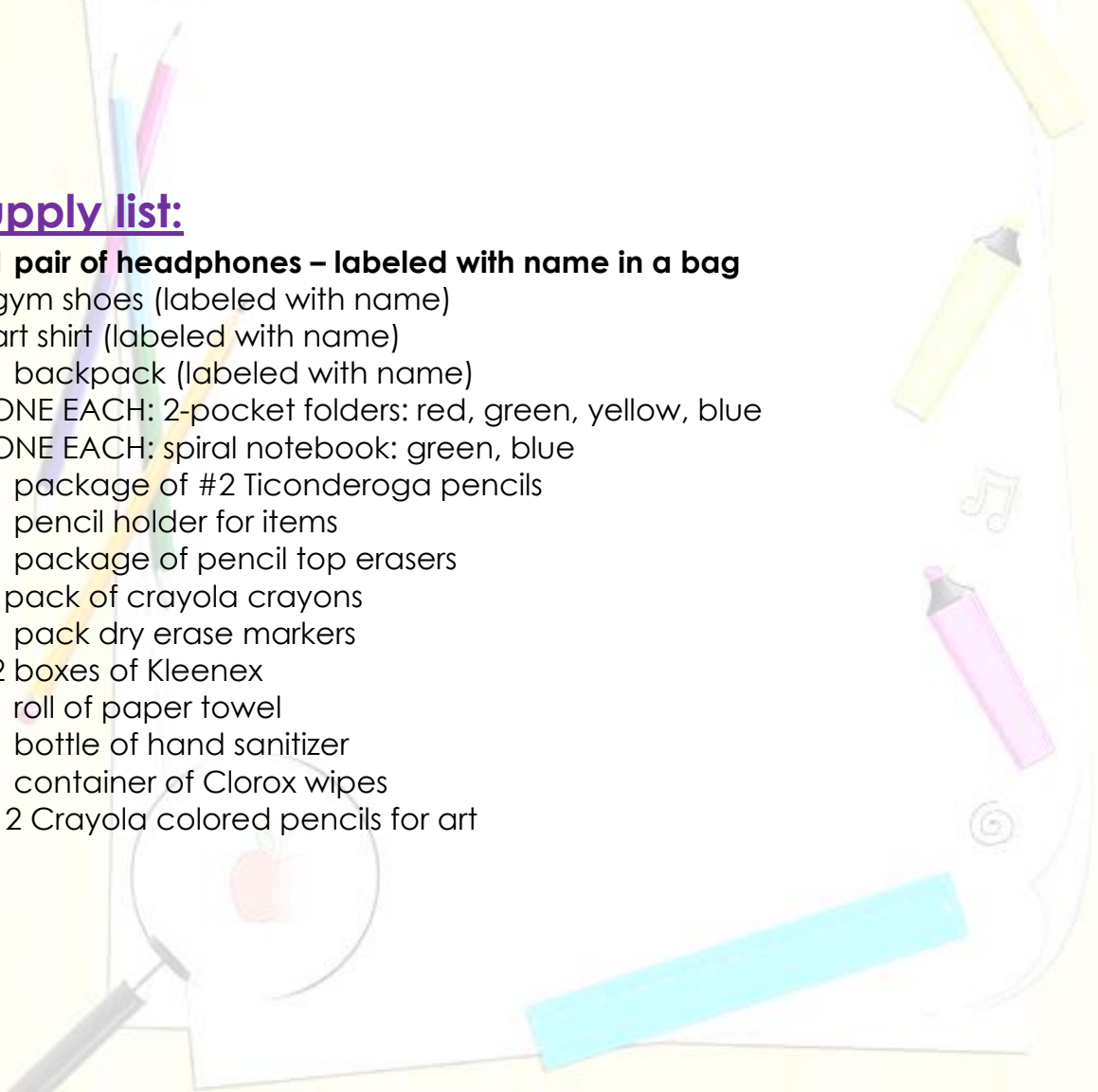
Hello, my name is Miss Henkelman and I am so excited to be your 3rd grade teacher this year! I attended Grand Valley State University where I earned my teaching degree with an emphasis in group social studies. This will be my 5th year teaching and my third year teaching 3rd grade at Vista!

In my free time I enjoy taking my furry companion Teddy on walks, soaking up the sun at the beach, and spending time with friends and family!

One of the most rewarding parts of teaching for me is forming strong connections with my students and seeing the joy on their faces as they grasp new concepts and expand their knowledge! I am so excited to meet everyone and truly can't wait for the school year to start! If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out. My email is 4.rhenkelman@nhaschools.com.

Supply list:

- **1 pair of headphones – labeled with name in a bag**
- gym shoes (labeled with name)
- art shirt (labeled with name)
- 1 backpack (labeled with name)
- ONE EACH: 2-pocket folders: red, green, yellow, blue
- ONE EACH: spiral notebook: green, blue
- 1 package of #2 Ticonderoga pencils
- 1 pencil holder for items
- 1 package of pencil top erasers
- 1 pack of crayola crayons
- 1 pack dry erase markers
- 2 boxes of Kleenex
- 1 roll of paper towel
- 1 bottle of hand sanitizer
- 1 container of Clorox wipes
- 12 Crayola colored pencils for art



3rd Grade “Highlights”

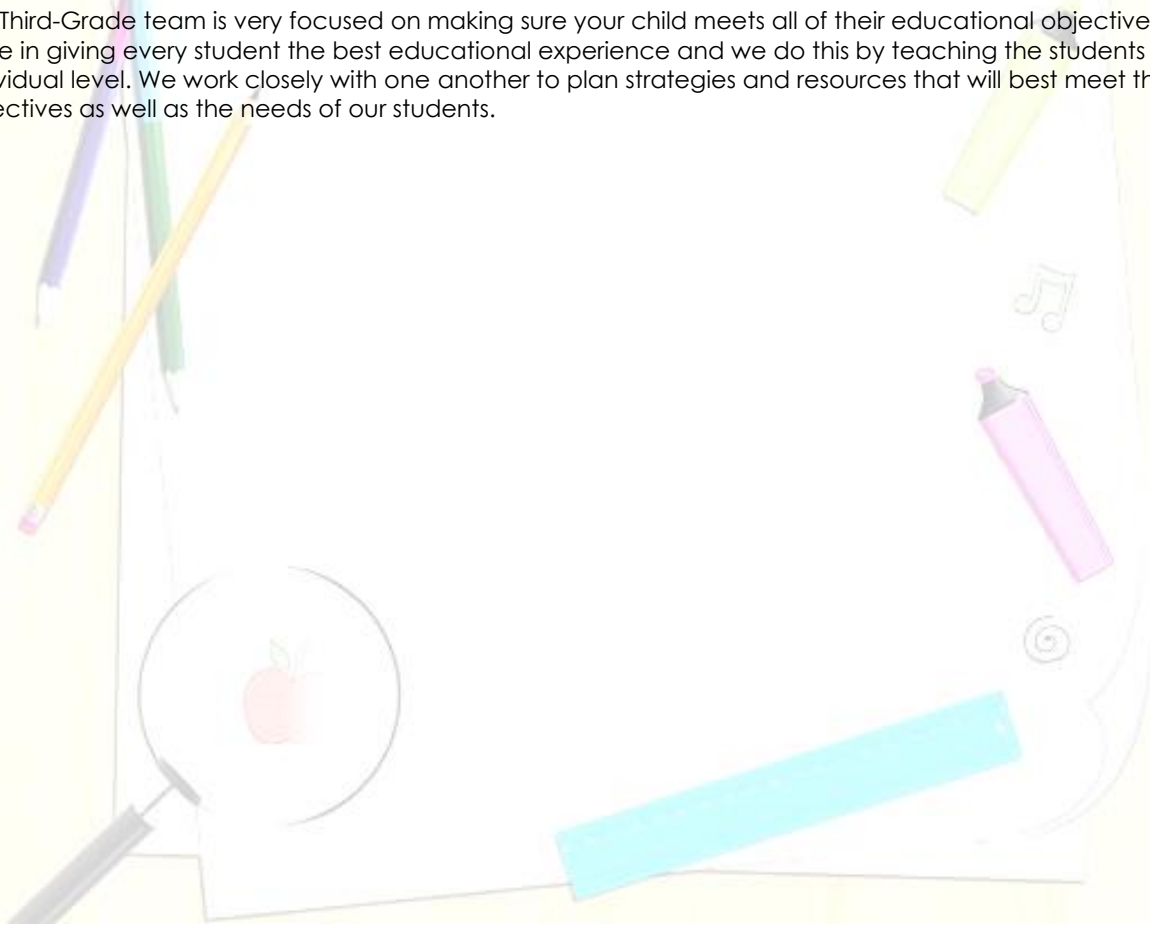
Third grade is a great year for learning! In math, we discover concepts like multiplication and division, as well as fractions! Get ready for our year-long multiplication challenge as you work toward mastering your facts! In science, we get to learn about forces and motion, rocks, and animals! Social studies in third grade is all about our state of Michigan – I can't wait to explore it with you. In reading, we will spend a lot of time reading great fiction and non-fiction stories. We have many fun activities planned for us as we travel through third grade together.

Exciting Opportunities

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A Standard of Excellence

The Third-Grade team is very focused on making sure your child meets all of their educational objectives. We take pride in giving every student the best educational experience and we do this by teaching the students at their own individual level. We work closely with one another to plan strategies and resources that will best meet the state objectives as well as the needs of our students.



Welcome to 4th Grade!

Meet the Teachers!

Mrs. Vanden Berge

Hello 4th Grade Families,

My name is Mrs. Vanden Berge, and I am so excited to work with you and get to know your family this year! Fourth grade is such a fun and important year, and I look forward to learning and growing alongside your child.

I graduated from Cornerstone University this past December and spent the remainder of the school year working in intervention and the resource room. These experiences have deepened my passion for supporting students both academically and personally. I'm thrilled to be joining the Vista team and am committed to supporting your child in every way I can.

Outside of school, I enjoy coaching gymnastics, hiking, and spending time with my family, friends, and pets. I currently have one cat—and I'm hoping to add a dog to the family soon!

I believe that strong communication and collaboration with families are key to a successful school year. I'm looking forward to partnering with you to help your child thrive.

4.evandenberge@nhaschools.com

Ms. Mahon

Welcome to 4th Grade!

My name is Ms. Mahon and I am excited to be your teacher this year! I graduated from Grand Valley State University with my Bachelors in Elementary Education in 2024. This past year I was a long-term substitute in both 4th and 5th grade classrooms, and I am excited to move into my first official classroom here at Vista Charter Academy.

When I'm not in school I love to read, dance, craft, and hang out with friends and family! I have two young nieces who I love to spend time with (being an aunt is my favorite!) and two cats, Kayla and Max. Don't worry, you will see plenty of pictures on the first day! I can't wait to begin our 4th grade journey together!

Ms. Scales

My name is Madison Scales, and I am thrilled to introduce myself as your child's 4th grade teacher this year! I recently graduated from Michigan State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education, and I am so excited to begin this journey alongside your students.

I am deeply committed to supporting and encouraging young learners to reach their full potential—both in and out of the classroom. My passion for education, along with my experience working with children in various settings, has taught me the importance of building strong, meaningful relationships with students. I believe that creating a safe and welcoming environment is the foundation for both academic and personal growth. Outside of the classroom, I enjoy spending time with family and friends, painting, shopping, and discovering new nature spots.

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns. I'm more than excited for this school year and can't wait to meet you all and work together to make it a great one!



Supply List

- 1 Pair of Headphones (with name)
- Backpack (with name)
- Pencil Case (with name)
- 50 pack of pencils
- 1 package erasers
- Small Package of Glue Sticks
- 4 Pocket Folders (with name)
- 3 Spiral Notebooks (with name)
- 3 Boxes of Kleenex
- 1 Roll of Paper Towels
- 1 Package of White Board Markers
- 1 Box of Markers and/or Colored Pencils
- 1 Pair of Scissors (with name)
- 1 Bottle of Hand Sanitizer
- 1 Container of Lysol/Clorox wipes
- Art Shirt
- 1 bottle of Elmer's Glue for Art

4th Grade “Highlights”

Fourth grade is another exciting year packed with learning! In the classroom, students look forward to a Michigan History project, Animal Adaptations projects, Novel studies and exploring fractions. These projects, along with several other learning experiences allow students to collaborate with their fourth-grade peers. Our goal is to build a strong desire to learn in each student and to equip students with the academic tools needed to pursue that desire. Last year students were able to experience Greenfield Village and the Henry Ford Museum for a hands-on learning experience. We look forward to offering this experience to our fourth graders again for the 2021-2022 school year!

Exciting Opportunities

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A Standard of Excellence

The fourth-grade team is very focused on making sure your child meets all of their educational objectives. We take pride in giving every student the best educational experience and we do this by teaching the students at their own individual level. We work closely with one another to plan strategies and resources that will best meet the state objectives as well as the needs of our students.

Welcome to 5th Grade!

Meet the Teachers!

Mrs. Kendzior



Welcome to the 5th grade! My name is Mrs. Kendzior. I have been a teacher for 13 years. This will be my 2nd year at Vista. I have been an infant teacher, a preschool teacher and now I am a 5th grade science and social studies teacher. I have a wonderful family. My fiancé, Esteban, and I have been together for 3 ½ years. He is in the army and travels a lot. We have two adorable cats, Pumpkin and Coco. We have three kids, a 24-year-old daughter named Kaitlyn, and 23-year-old twin boys, Benjamin and Jonathan.

I grew up in Rockford, Michigan and that is where much of my family still lives. I come from a very large family having more than 40 aunts and uncles, and 100's of cousins. I graduated from Rockford High School and then went on to GRCC for my associate's degree in business administration, Ashford University for my bachelor's degree in early childhood education, and to the University of Arizona for my master's degree in education. I am currently attending Capella University for my Doctoral degree in Education specializing in Curriculum and Instruction.

In my free time I enjoy gardening, making jewelry, and doing DIY projects. I am very excited to be teaching at Vista Charter Academy again this year. I know that we will have a wonderful journey learning together and I am very excited to be your teacher!

Mrs. Farage



Hello and welcome to the new school year! My name is Mrs. Farage, and I am the English Language Arts teacher here at Vista. This is my second year at Vista, and I am so excited to continue working with our amazing students and families. Before teaching at Vista, I spent nine years teaching preschool, including six years working with at-risk students.

I grew up in South Dakota as part of a big family of 11. I am also an Army veteran – I proudly served for three years, and that experience helped shape my love for structure and discipline. I have been married to my husband, Mark, for three years, and together we have a beautiful, blended family with nine children and one adorable grandson, Gregory.

In my free time, I love to go for walks with our three dogs - Melky, Myyah, and Benji – swimming in our pool, and spending time with family. We are huge Michigan State fans and of course love the Detroit Lions. I am looking forward to a wonderful year of learning and growth with your child.

Mr. De Leon



Hello! My name is Mr. De Leon, and I'm excited to be starting my fourth year as a teacher and my second year here at Vista.

I was born in Tijuana, Mexico, and raised in Long Beach, California. I began my college journey at Compton College, where I played soccer, and later transferred to Hope College, where I continued both my studies and played soccer. I've been married to my wife, Leela, for two years. We have a dog named Niko and a six-month-old daughter named Zaniyah.

Outside the classroom, I enjoy spending time with my family and working on house projects. I'm also a big sports fan—my favorite teams are Chivas, the Detroit Lions, and the Los Angeles Lakers. I'm looking forward to another great year at Vista!

Supply list for 5th Grade: (please note that teachers may send out individual lists.)

Backpack – clear preferably
4 glue sticks
1 box pencils #2 (Ticonderoga pencils preferred)
1 8-count box of markers (classic colors)
4 dry erase (Expo) markers
1 pair of scissors
1 box of colored pencils
5 - 2-pocket folders
2 3-ring binders
3 spiral notebooks
Headphones – labeled (we have limited available to borrow)
1 packs of lined paper
1 pencil box
4 Yellow highlighters
1 box of 24 count crayons
1 boxes of Kleenex
2 rolls of paper towels
1 bottles of hand sanitizer
1 containers of sanitizing wipe

5th Grade “Highlights”

In fifth grade, students get to do a variety of things. Some of those things are competing in our school-wide spelling bee, taking some exciting field trips, and performing many fun science experiments! We learn about multiplication with large numbers, long division, geometry, units of measurement, decimals, and fractions in Math. Our science topics include learning about ecosystems, interactions in matter & energy, space, earth systems, and reducing our footprint on earth. In Social Studies, we learn about how the United States of America became a country. We will also read some really great books, write in a variety of styles, and learn about poetry. Get ready for an awesome year of learning!

Exciting Opportunities

With school of choice, parents have an opportunity to choose a school for their child. With that in mind, parents must look at many different aspects of a school and decide which would be the best fit for their child and allow their child to develop academically. Vista Academy has the best of both: a perfect fit for any child, and exceptional academics. Vista teachers greet students at their doors with a warm welcome, making students feel appreciated and cared for as soon as they enter the classroom. With that mindset, students feel more comfortable to express themselves, and try their best in class. Students also participate in activities where they get to know each other, respect differences, and learn from each other's strengths.

A Standard of Excellence

The fifth-grade team is very focused on making sure your child meets all their educational objectives. We take pride in giving every student the best educational experience and we do this by teaching the students at their own individual level. We work closely with one another to plan strategies and resources that will best meet the state objectives as well as the needs of our students.

Welcome to 6th Grade!

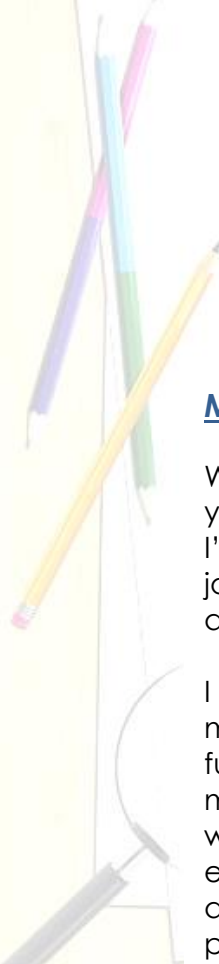


Mr. Walch

Hunter Walch was born in Big Rapids, Michigan and stayed there throughout his educational journey. Mr. Walch enjoyed football and baseball during his high school years and graduated from college in 2020 with a degree in secondary education. Since his graduation he has spent the last four years teaching early elementary education in both Big Rapids and Grand Rapids.

Mr. Walch currently lives in Grand Rapids with his wife Jori, a kindergarten/first grade teacher for Grand Rapids Christian. He enjoys competitive esports, playing guitar, and weightlifting.

Mr. Walch is excited to begin a new year getting to know the students at Vista and hopes to learn from as much from them as they learn from him.



Mrs. Carta

Welcome to 6th grade math! I'm Mrs. Nichole Carta, and I'm thrilled to be your math teacher this year. With a passion for numbers and problem-solving, I'm excited to guide you through an engaging and challenging math journey. I earned my Bachelor's degree in Education from Aquinas College and have begun a Master's Program at Calvin University.

I have been in education for 6 years and this is my third year teaching in middle school. My teaching philosophy centers around making math both fun and relevant. I believe that every student has the potential to excel in math, and it's my goal to provide a supportive and stimulating environment where curiosity and critical thinking can flourish. In our classroom, we'll explore a variety of topics, from fractions and decimals to geometry and data analysis. I love incorporating interactive activities and real-world problems to show how math applies to everyday life.

When I'm not teaching, you can find me reading, going camping, or spending time with my family - (my husband), Liam (5), and Noah (2). I live in Hopkins (about 40 minutes south) and we have 12 chickens, a horse, a pony, a dog, and a cat that also keep me busy outside of school. I'm looking forward to a fantastic year of learning and growth with each of you. Let's make this a memorable and successful year in math!

Supply list:

- 3 boxes of pencils
- 1 Box of Crayons
- 1 Box of Colored Pencils/Markers
- 1 Set of Highlighters
- 4 Folders (1 per subject)
- Hand Pencil Sharpener
- 2 Erasers
- 4 Glue Sticks
- 2 Composition Notebooks
- 1 1-inch Binder

6th Grade “Highlights”

- In English Language Arts, we will be reading a collection of novels throughout the school year and exploring their themes and structure.
- In Social Studies, we will study the cultures, history, and geography of each continent!
- In Science, students will focus on Earth and Space science to make more sense of the world around them.
- Students will have the opportunity to participate in multiple sports teams. These include basketball, soccer, volleyball, and cross country.

Exciting Opportunities

- With school of choice, parents have an opportunity to choose a school for their child. With that in mind, parents have to look at many different aspects of a school and decide which would be the best fit for their child and allow their child to develop academically.
- Vista Academy has the best of both of these: a perfect fit for any child, and exceptional academics. Vista teachers greet students at their doors with a warm welcome and handshake making students feel appreciated and cared for as soon as they enter the classroom. With that mindset, students feel more comfortable to express themselves, and try their best in class. Students also participate in activities where they get to know each other, respect differences, and learn from each other's strengths.

A Standard of Excellence

- The sixth-grade team is very focused on making sure your child meets all of their educational objectives. We take pride in giving every student the best educational experience and we do this by teaching the students at their own individual level. We work closely with one another to plan strategies and resources that will best meet the state objectives as well as the needs of our students.

Welcome to 7th Grade!

Meet the Teachers:



Nathan Piersma – English Language Arts

I am a graduate of Trinity Christian College and am starting my 9th year as the 7th grade ELA teacher here at Vista. In my class, students explore reading and writing and find ways to apply their skills in their daily lives and beyond. In my spare time, I enjoy adventuring of all sorts: reading science fiction and fantasy, playing games like Dungeons and Dragons, or travelling the country with Mrs. Piersma! My favorite food is anything I have not tried before, and my favorite adventures are the kind that lead to learning. I am excited to be here at Vista again and can't wait to dig into more learning adventures!



Mr. Rodgers—Mathematics

After graduating from Central Michigan University in 2001 with a math major and language arts minor, I taught four years of 6th grade in Northern Michigan. While there, I earned my master's degree in education from Marygrove College in Detroit. This will be my fifteenth year at Vista and my tenth year teaching 7th grade math.

My wife, Erica, and I have four children, ages 26, 24, 18, and 15, as well as one grandson who is 2. I enjoy many sports and I rarely miss a Detroit Tigers' game on TV. I have a vast video game collection and have been playing and collecting for almost 40 years. My favorite thing about teaching 7th grade is interacting with the students and watching them grow. I love to engage students in intellectual conversation and listen to their ideas and opinions about a variety of topics. I truly enjoy being able to help students grow into mature, responsible young adults. I am excited to see how each of you will grow this year!

Mr. Sparling —Social Studies

Hello Vista Charter community! I am so excited to be teaching Social Studies this year at Vista and meeting all the great families here!

I recently just finished up my bachelor's degree and teaching certification through Calvin University, so as always, go Knights. I look forward to meeting you all and seeing the difference that I can make on your children during these very important years. I hope that I can not only deliver the best content to your children but also build the best characters within them to bring out the best versions of themselves.

When you don't find me in the classroom teaching or reading some historical literature, you can find me with my friends hanging out, in the gym, or on a hike in our gorgeous West Michigan.

I am excited to get going and have the best first year teaching! If you need anything, please reach out, I'd be happy to get to know you all. I hope to see you soon! Go Huskies!



Supplies needed:

ELA:

Pencils/Pens
1 Spiral notebook
Loose leaf paper
Folders (2)
1 Box of tissue
Hand Sanitizer

Science:

1 Spiral notebook
1 Box of colored pencils
1 Pencil Sharpener
2 Folders

Math:

Calculator (TI-30x)
Loose leaf paper
Pencils/Erasers
Pencil Sharpener
2 Boxes of tissue

Social Studies:

Notebook for notes
Coloring utensils
Pencils
Markers/coloring pencils
1 Box of tissue

General Materials:

3 ring 2 inch binder or Trapper Keeper
Plenty of pencils and pens
Colored Pencils & Markers for Art

Exciting Opportunities

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A Standard of Excellence

The Seventh-Grade team is very focused on making sure your child meets all their educational objectives. We take pride in giving every student the best educational experience and we do this by teaching the students at their own individual level. We work closely with one another to make sure that we are sharing our strengths and weaknesses as a team. We meet weekly to plan strategies and resources that will best meet the state objectives as well as the needs of our students

7th Grade Highlights

In Math, we will be making calculations with positive and negative integers, converting between fractions, decimals, and percent's, finding the surface area and volume of three-dimensional shapes, solving simple algebraic equations, and finding the probability of an event.

In Science, students will be participating in many labs that are hands on experiences for students to explore concepts. These labs will allow students to use materials such as food and chemicals to demonstrate a concept. Students will also work on a weather project in which they will create a forecast for the United States and report to the class.

In Social Studies, the students will learn about the early humans and the creation of structured societies, move into the empires, religions, and governments that ruled the world, and finally end with the discovery of the Americas (4 million BC – 1500 AD). We will be collaborating a lot in class through discussion and projects because history is best learned through experience. My goal is to help students make connections between the past and present to shape the future.

In ELA, you will explore many genres, including historical fiction, realistic fiction, biographies, autobiographies, and more. In class, you will read, write, and get creative as you delve into the many exciting topics that will be covered. You will learn how to conduct research and present your information to others.

Welcome to 8th Grade!

Meet the Teachers:

Ms. Bak- English Language Arts



I graduated from Aquinas College with a degree in Elementary and Middle School Education. I have been teaching English Language Arts for the past seven years at Vista. I love working with middle school students because this is a great age where we can let students use their voice while teaching content. I graduated from Aquinas in 2020 with a Master's Degree and ESL Endorsement.

My family is very important to me, and I love spending time with them. I have identical twin nieces that turned five in April and a one year old nephew, and I love watching them grow up. I grew up right here in the Grand Rapids area and am involved in many athletic activities. I love to spend my free time watching Michigan Football and exploring new things. I have traveled all over the United States, Haiti, Puerto Rico, and Mexico. I believe that these experiences will allow me to provide your children with connections that will lead to success in ELA. I am eager to get to know each individual student and I am excited to engage them in novel studies, writing, and personal character-building activities. I hope that throughout this school year I can convey to your children my love of literature and writing and help them find qualities within themselves to find an interest in these areas as well. My goal this school year is to impact them in a positive way and get their minds to think more critically and creatively.

Mrs. Lesniak- Mathematics



I am a graduate of Grand Valley State University with a degree in Elementary Education focusing on Mathematics. This will be my sixth-year teaching middle school math at Vista. I am looking forward to building relationships with both my students and their families. I love mathematics because it gives students the chance to make discoveries, learn from their mistakes, and use critical thinking skills!

Outside of the classroom, I love to go to the beach, play with my dogs Lexie and Penny, travel, and hang out with family and friends. I also enjoy golfing, playing volleyball, and staying active! I am excited to share my love of mathematics and teaching with your children. I cannot wait to help your children grow into young mathematicians! I am looking forward to the coming year!



Mr. Sparling —Social Studies

Hello Vista Charter community! I am so excited to be teaching Social Studies this year at Vista and meeting all the great families here!

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When you don't find me in the classroom teaching or reading some historical literature, you can find me with my friends hanging out, in the gym, or on a hike in our gorgeous West Michigan.

I am excited to get going and have the best first year teaching! If you need anything, please reach out, I'd be happy to get to know you all. I hope to see you soon! Go Huskies!

Supplies Needed:

ELA:

2 composition notebooks for writing journals
Loose leaf notebook paper
Highlighters, markers, colored pencils, pencils
Sticky Notes

General Materials:

Pencils and Erasers
Plenty of pens (blue, black, red) and pencils
6 folders (different colors)
1 pack of 2 black Sharpie Markers labeled "Art"
Case to carry Chromebook (not mandatory but good idea to have) dimensions: 17.5x10x3 inches

Social Studies:

1 Spiral Notebook specifically for Social Studies
1 pocket folder for notes
Coloring utensils
1 Box of Tissue
Pencils (10)
disinfectant wipes, Hand sanitizer

Math:

Pencils
Lined Paper
Coloring Utensils (markers and colored pencils)
Expo markers

Kleenex
Coloring utensils (markers and colored pencils)
3 ring binder, loose paper, and dividers (4 minimum)
Clorox Wipes/Hand Sanitizer

Science:

Pencils, Colored Pencils, Markers
Folder/Binder
Ruler
Highlighters
1 Spiral notebook
Calculator

8th Grade “Highlights”

In **English Language Arts**, students will be using Novel Studies and Mentor Texts to facilitate their learning in reading and writing. I am excited to use current topics and student experiences to help facilitate peer discussion, comprehension, and application of skills. Students will be working on a variety of writing projects such as argumentative essays, research papers, narratives, and poetry. Vista's 8th graders are the leaders of our school and we are looking forward to this 2023-2024 school year.

In **Social Studies**, the students will learn about the discovery, the building, and the expansion of the United States of America all the way until after the Civil War (1492-1875). We will be collaborating a lot in class through discussion and projects because history is best learned through experience. My goal is to help students make connections between the past and present to shape the future.

In **Math**, the students will explore content through trying new things, playing games, and working together. A lot of what we do in math is sharing our answers aloud, collaborating to solve problems, and communicating to find the mistakes we have made in our work. I am so excited to grow as mathematicians with your students!

In **Science**, students will be focusing mainly on Astronomy, Body Systems, Electricity and Magnetism. They will be completing research projects on the Solar System, including each of the planets. When studying Body Systems, students will be dissecting a rat and identifying the parts and systems they learned in class.

Exciting Opportunities

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A Standard of Excellence

The Eighth-Grade team is very focused on making sure your child meets all of their educational objectives. We take pride in giving every student the best educational experience and we do this by teaching the students at their own individual level.

We work closely with one another to make sure that we are sharing our strengths and weaknesses as a team. We meet weekly to plan strategies and resources that will best meet the state objectives as well as the needs of our students.