

# Welcome to 8<sup>th</sup> Grade!

## Meet the Teachers:



### Ms. Bak—English

I graduated from Aquinas College with a degree in Elementary Education. I have been teaching middle school Language Arts for one year and have had experience with Special Education at the middle school level. 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 am currently working on my Master's Degree and ESL Endorsement from Aquinas College which I began this year.

My family is very important to me and I love spending time with them. 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 and Puerto Rico. I believe that these experiences will allow me to provide your children with connections that will allow them to be successful 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 portray 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.

### TBD—Science

We are currently searching for the best candidate to fill this position and will send information on when we have more to share!





## Mr. Pendell—Social Studies

I am a graduate of Grand Valley State University with a Bachelor's Degree in Social Studies for Secondary Education. I am currently working on my Master's degree with an emphasis in an Educational Leadership at Grand Valley State University. This will be my eleventh year at Vista Charter Academy and my sixth year as the 7th and 8th Grade Social Studies Teacher. I have had a blast the past ten years and expect this year to be even better!

I am married to Jenny Pendell and we have a four-year-old son named Connor James Pendell. We are extremely excited to add a daughter to our family this fall. It is exciting to see all the new things happening each day with our family.

I love teaching 7th and 8th graders. My favorite things about teaching the 7th and 8th grade are:

1. Those moments when a student succeeds at something that they may not have been able to do before.
2. The relationships I build with the students that go beyond Vista when my former students tell me how they are making a difference.
3. The opportunities to make a positive difference on the lives of young adults every day.

It is an honor to teach at Vista Charter Academy and work with your children. I look forward to the coming year!



## Miss Sterr—Math

I am a graduate of Hope College with a degree in Elementary Education focusing on Mathematics and English for Middle School. I enjoy working with middle school students because of the strong relationships I am able to build with them and with their families. I also love teaching middle school and mathematics specifically because both are so full of discovery and interesting connections.

Outside of the classroom, I love to travel, read, be outdoors, and spend time with good friends. I am so looking forward to my fourth year at Vista and for the chance to get to know a new group of students!



## 8th Grade “Highlights”

In **English**, students will be continuing their work with Holt Literature as their guide. I am excited to see what this new textbook has in store for us. Students will also be working on several writing projects such as memoirs, argumentative essays, research papers, narratives and poetry. Vista's 8th graders are the leaders of our school, and we are looking forward to a fabulous 2015-2016 school year.

In **Social Studies**, the students will

- Take part in classroom debates about Loyalists/Patriots, North/South, Abolitionists/Anti-abolitionists
- Participate in a Constitution Reenactment where students will dress and act as one of the founding fathers
- Give oral presentations/Power Points/Posters/You be the Teacher
- Study history's unsolved mysteries/ Weigh the Evidence: several topics/reenactments

In **Science**, students will be focusing mainly on Astronomy, Body Systems and 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 frogs to take an in

## 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 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.

## Supplies Needed:

### ELA:

2 composition notebooks for writing journals  
Loose leaf notebook paper  
Highlighters, markers, colored pencils  
1 box of tissues

### Math:

3 ring Binder  
Lined Paper (College Ruled)  
Coloring Utensils (markers and colored pencils)  
4 Binder Dividers

### General Materials:

3 ring 2 inch binder or Trapper Keeper  
Plenty of pens (blue, black, red) and pencils  
6 folders (different colors)  
1 pack of 2 black Sharpie Markers labeled "Art"

1 Box Kleenex  
Coloring utensils (markers and colored pencils)  
3 ring binder, loose paper, and dividers (4 minimum)

### Social Studies:

Notebook specifically for Social Studies  
Coloring utensils  
1 Box of Tissue

### Science:

Loose leaf paper  
1 Box of colored pencils  
Highlighters  
1 Spiral notebook  
2 pocket folders

\*\*We highly encourage students to leave distracting items (large pencils, etc) at home

*Vista Academy*  
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