



## Welcome to 6th Grade!

### Meet your teacher: Ms. Meadows

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly introduce myself. I graduated from Grand Valley State University in 2014. I received my Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education. After graduating, I worked as a substitute teacher in various schools in Kent County. I began my career at Vista as the Teacher in Residence before getting my own classroom. This will be my fourth year at Vista Charter Academy and my third year teaching sixth grade. In my free time, I enjoy being outdoors. I love to take my dog, Bodie, on hikes and to the beach. I also enjoy spending time with my family, friends, and boyfriend, Chad. I love to travel and explore new places and cultures. I love reading and making crafts.

I'm excited to meet my new class and get the 2019-2020 school year started!

### Supply list:

- Pencils (24 for the year) for class, 1 additional pack of pencils labeled "Art"
  - Lined Paper (4 packages for the year)
  - Notebooks (7)
  - Composition Notebooks (2)
  - Folders (8)
  - Markers (1 box)
  - Crayons (optional)
  - Colored Pencils (1 box)
  - Erasers (4...traditional size and shape)
  - Glue sticks (4)
  - Pencil Pouch/Box (1)
  - Backpack
  - Kleenex (2 or 3 boxes)
  - Hand Sanitizer
  - Paper Towel (3 rolls)
  - 1- 1 inch three ring binder
  - Paper Towel (3 rolls)
- \*The teacher will provide an agenda and a Friday/take home folder
- \*\*Please discourage your child from choosing items that may be distracting to them and others in the classroom...such as toy erasers, giant pencils, etc

## 6th Grade “Highlights”

- In **Math**, students will continue to develop their understanding of fractions, the number system, and applications of algebra.
- In **Science**, students will participate in a variety of hands-on activities that involve concepts from Earth Science. They will also be learning the steps to the scientific method, which will set them up for success in future lab classes.
- In **Social Studies**, students will learn about the geography of our planet, and how it helps shape cultures and determine where the world's people live.
- Throughout the years students will read and learn to comprehend and appreciate a wide variety of writings. Students will read and write about biographies, poetry, myths and legends, and a variety of fiction and non-fiction writings.

## 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.
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- 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.
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## 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.

*Vista Academy*

*A Tuition-Free, Public School*

711 32nd ST SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49548

616-246-6920

VistaCharterAcademy.org

# Welcome to 7<sup>th</sup> Grade!

## Meet the Teachers:



**Nathan Piersma – English Language Arts**



I am a graduate of Trinity Christian College and am starting my third year as the 7<sup>th</sup> 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, running with my dog Thor, or travelling the country with my family. My favorite food is anything I haven't tried before, and my favorite adventures are the kind that lead to learning. I'm excited to be here at Vista again and can't wait to dig into more learning adventures!

**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 twelfth year at Vista Charter Academy and my seventh year as the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies Teacher. I have had a blast the past eleven 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 and a daughter Brielle Grace Pendell. We love them both so much.

I love teaching 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. My favorite things about teaching the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> 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!





### **Mr. Hill-Science**

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly introduce myself. I am a 2013 graduate of Ferris State University. I received my Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education. After graduating, I worked as a 7th and 8th grade science teacher for four years in Arizona. Within those four years of teaching I received my Master's Degree in Administration and am working on my Master's in special education. This will be my second year at Vista Charter Academy.

In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my wife, and three kids. I have a five-year old son named Waylon, a two-year old daughter named Kennedy, and a 1-year old daughter named Gabriella. I also have a dog named Sparty. I am a big Detroit Lions fan, and Michigan State Spartan fan! I'm excited to meet my new class and get the 2019-2020 school year started!



### **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 tenth year at Vista and my fifth year teaching 7th grade math.

My wife, Erica, and I have four fabulous children. Chloé (20) attended Grand Rapids Community College and has moved into her own apartment. Oriana (18) recently graduated from East Kentwood high school, and Lennon (12), and Juniper (9) will be entering seventh and fourth grades, respectively. We enjoy going camping, swimming in Lake Michigan, and checking out local parks and splash pads. I enjoy many sports and I rarely miss a Detroit Tigers' game on TV.

My favorite thing about teaching 7th grade is interacting with the students and watching

## Supplies needed:

### ELA:

Pencils (10)

Pens with blue or black ink (5)

Spiral notebook

Loose leaf paper

Folders (2)

Pencil sharpener

Pencil pouch or box

1 Box of tissue

### Science:

1 Spiral notebook

1 Box of colored pencils

1 Pencil sharpener

2 Folders

### Math:

Loose leaf paper

Pencils/Erasers

Pencil Sharpener

1 box of tissue

### Social Studies:

Notebook

Coloring utensils

Pencils

Markers/coloring pencils

1 Box of Tissue

### General Materials:

3 ring 2 inch binder or Trapper Keeper

Plenty of pens and pencils

5 folders: (1 red, 1 orange, 1 yellow, 1 green, 1 blue)

Backpack

1 additional pack of pencils labeled "Art"

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## A Standard of Excellence

The Seventh 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.

## 7<sup>th</sup> 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**, students will participate in classroom debates, and explore our worlds' history through presentations/Power Points/Posters/You be the Teacher, and they will be involved in unsolved mysteries/ weigh the evidence: several topics/reenactments.

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 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.



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## Ms. Ball—Math

I am a graduate of Grand Valley State University with a degree in Elementary Education focusing on Mathematics. This year will be my first-year teaching and I am so grateful to have this opportunity. 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 dog Lexie, travel, and hang out with family and friends. I'm excited to share my love of mathematics and teaching with your children. I can't wait to help your children grow into young mathematicians! I'm looking forward to the coming year!

## 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

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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.

## Supplies Needed:

### ELA:

2 composition notebooks for writing journals  
Loose leaf notebook paper  
Highlighters, markers, colored pencils  
1 box of tissues  
3 Ring Binder (will be left in class)  
Pencils

### Math:

Pencils  
Lined Paper (College Ruled)  
Coloring Utensils (markers and colored pencils)  
Graph Paper  
1 box of tissue

### General Materials:

3 ring 2 inch binder or Trapper Keeper  
Plenty of pens (blue, black, red) and pencils  
6 folders (different colors minimum)  
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

### Social Studies:

Notebook specifically for Social Studies  
Coloring utensils  
Markers/color pencils  
1 Box of Tissue

### Science:

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

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