



WELCOME TO YOUNG FIVES!

Meet your teacher: Miss Sulfaro

Hi Y5 families and students! I can't wait to meet you and am so excited to become your friend and teacher! This is actually my first year teaching and being in the Grand Rapids area. I recently graduated from Eastern Michigan University with a Bachelors in Science degree for Early Childhood Education.

This is my first year at Vista but I have been in the education field for 5 years working jobs such as a paraprofessional, classroom assistant, tutor, substitute, and direct caregiver for individuals with special needs. My mother just retired after 30 years of teaching so I always grew up in this setting and nothing has ever made me happier than working with children. I also completed two semesters of student teaching in Bedford, Michigan. My first semester was in a first grade classroom and my second was in Y5. I immediately fell in love with all my little kiddos, but the hands-on learning, creativity, eagerness to learn, and play that comes along with Y5 was my favorite. I thought since there is usually only one Y5 class in a school that I would have to wait a while to teach my dream grade, but then Vista came up and made that dream a reality. They value positive relationships and giving students a safe place to grow and learn, which is ultimately what I want to give to your child and you.

After graduating this April, my boyfriend and I decided we wanted to move to Grand Rapids. Prior to that, I lived in Monroe, Michigan, but we have family that lives over here so we were always visiting this side of the state. We loved that there was always something to do since we come from such a small town. Even though summer is my favorite season, I am looking forward to winter this year so I can enjoy skiing, ice skating, and sledding.

SUPPLY LIST (Please write your child's name on these items)

NEEDS

- Small pack of crayons
- Child safety scissors
- Glue sticks
- Pencil case
- Headphones
- Old sock, rag, or Expo eraser
- Bookbag
- Water bottle with secure lid
- Fitted toddler sheet and blanket (naptime)

WISHLIST

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

Pencils, markers, colored pencils, tissues, paper towels, hand sanitizer, and other materials may be needed at a later date

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. As we learn about each letter, we also incorporate our play. For example, when we learn about the letter "Ff", kids may choose to go **F**ishing, arrange **F**lowers, explore **F**iretrucks, and sample **F**ig newtons. 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 ninth year teaching and my fourth year teaching at Vista. I have been a Teacher in Residence and I have been teaching kindergarten for three 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. Ashley



My name is Laura Ashley and this is my second year teaching at Vista! I am originally from Spring Lake and went to college at Central Michigan University. I studied early childhood development and reading. I taught kindergarten abroad in Costa Rica, Chile, and China for 4 years before settling down in Grand Rapids. I just got married this summer! Some of you may know me as Ms. Lukkari but now I am Mrs. Ashley.

In my free time I enjoy traveling, baking, cooking, and swimming! I love spending time outside throughout the year but especially in the summer. I also enjoy camping with my husband and two dogs, Lucy and Ned. I can't wait to be your teacher!

Supply list:

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)

DO NOT write your name on these items:

- 1 box of Kleenex
- 2 boxes of 24 count **Crayola** crayons
- 4 **Elmer's** glue sticks
- 1 **empty**, clear plastic pencil box, solid color, no designs
- 12 black **EXPO** whiteboard markers
- 1 box of 24 count **Ticonderoga** pencils
- 2 containers of **Clorox** wipes
- 1 pk of 10 **Crayola** Markers (labeled Art)

****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

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 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 7th year teaching at Vista Charter Academy and my 9th 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 14 years, and we have two children together: Jackson (8) and Jameson (5).

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 will be 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 started at Vista mid last year, filling in for various needs in different classrooms. Although, this will be my first year teaching at Vista Charter Academy! I could not be more excited to do so! I grew up in Alpena, Mi which is located further north and is surrounded by lakes. I also lived in Traverse City, Mi to do my student teaching in kindergarten. I recently moved to the Grand Rapids area with my husband Weston.

My favorite thing about teaching is building relationships with my students and their families while helping students learn their way! I am excited to make my classroom a safe and welcoming environment for all. I can not wait to meet you and make it a great year!

Mrs. Vandenberg



Hi there! My name is Mrs. Vandenberg and I am so excited to teach 1st grade this school year! I was previously a 2nd grade teacher at Vista for the last two years and I am eagerly awaiting my incoming first graders!

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

My husband (Mr. Vandenberg, technology teacher at Vista) 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/ear buds (in a bag labeled with their name)
- Gym Shoes (labeled with name)
- Backpack (labeled with name)
- 1 pack of **black** dry erase markers
- 2 boxes of Kleenex
- 1 roll of paper towel
- 4- pink Papermate erasers
- 24 yellow pencils (Ticonderoga preferred)
- Glue Sticks
- 3 boxes of 24 count crayons (Crayola preferred)

*We kindly request you do not bring in supplies that are not listed.

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

1st Grade “Highlights”

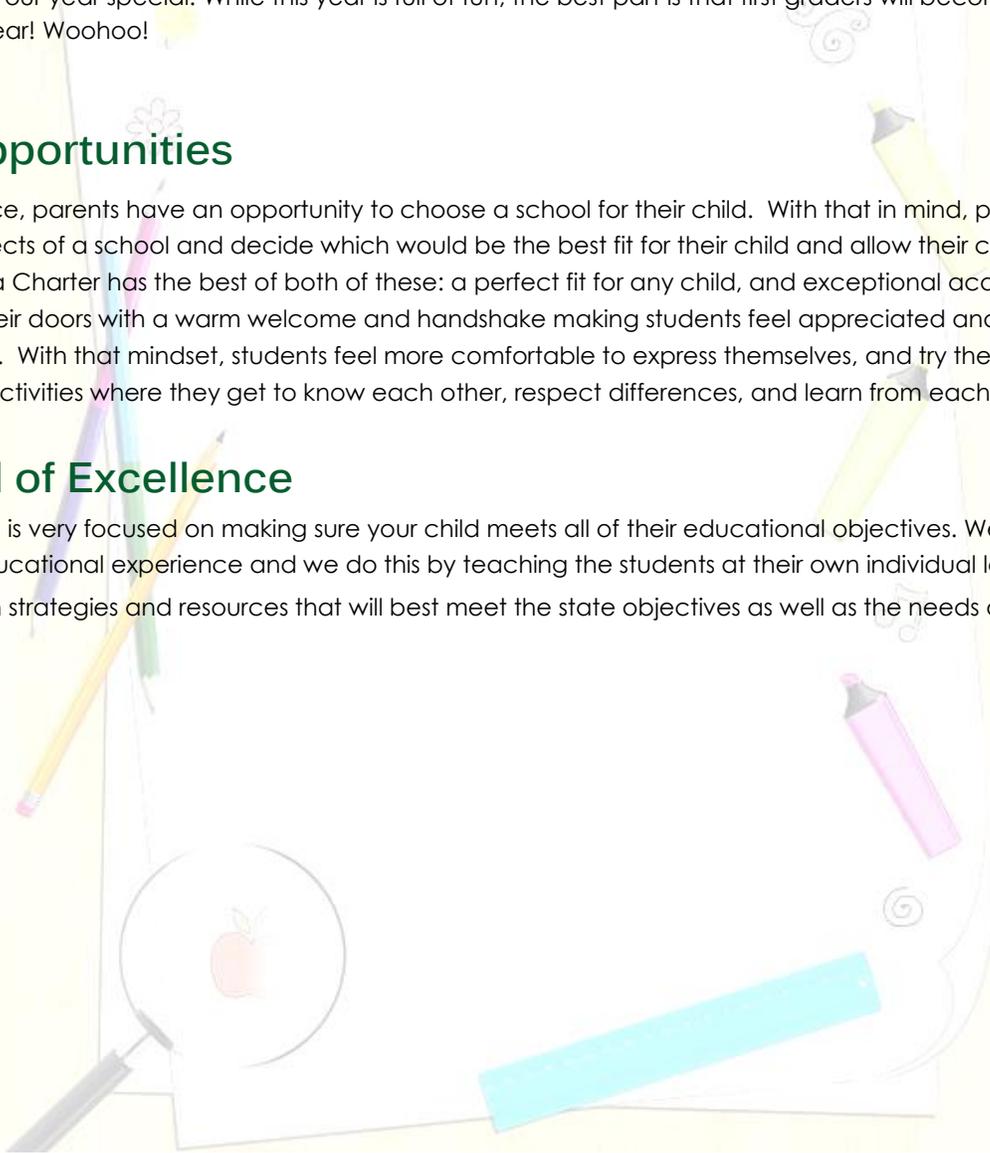
First grade is a very exciting year of learning! We begin the year by counting each day and when we get to 100th day of school, we celebrate by participating in an array of fun 100 themed activities! We also love to celebrate reading. On Dr. Seuss's birthday, the teachers travel from room to room sharing 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

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 Charter 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 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 eighth year at Vista Charter Academy and I cannot wait! This is my eleventh 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

Miss Meilian



Hello future 2nd graders! I can't wait to meet you all very soon. My name is Ms. Meilian and I just moved up to Grand Rapids, MI from Ohio. I received my bachelor's degree at Miami University in Early Education and earned a thematic sequence in Computer Science in 2022. This will be my 2nd year of teaching and I can't wait to learn from you all as well as teach you what is the most fun about 2nd grade.

Outside of school, I love exploring downtown with my friends and going out shopping and trying new food! I also love to draw and play board games with my friends and families.

I am so grateful to be teaching at Vista and I can't wait to see you all soon. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Let's have an awesome year in 2nd grade!

Meilian Wang
4.mwang@nhaschools.com



Miss Evans

Hello new 2nd grade Friends! I am so excited to welcome you to my class. My name is Miss. Evans and this is my 4th year at Vista Charter Academy, and I love it!

I graduated from Cornerstone University with a major in Learning Disabilities and minor in Reading and Elementary Education. My favorite thing about working with students is seeing their growth over time, not only in academics, but also in life skills.

When I am not teaching, I love to read, Paint, draw, and watch Disney and Marvel movies. I also enjoy relaxing and having fun with my family.

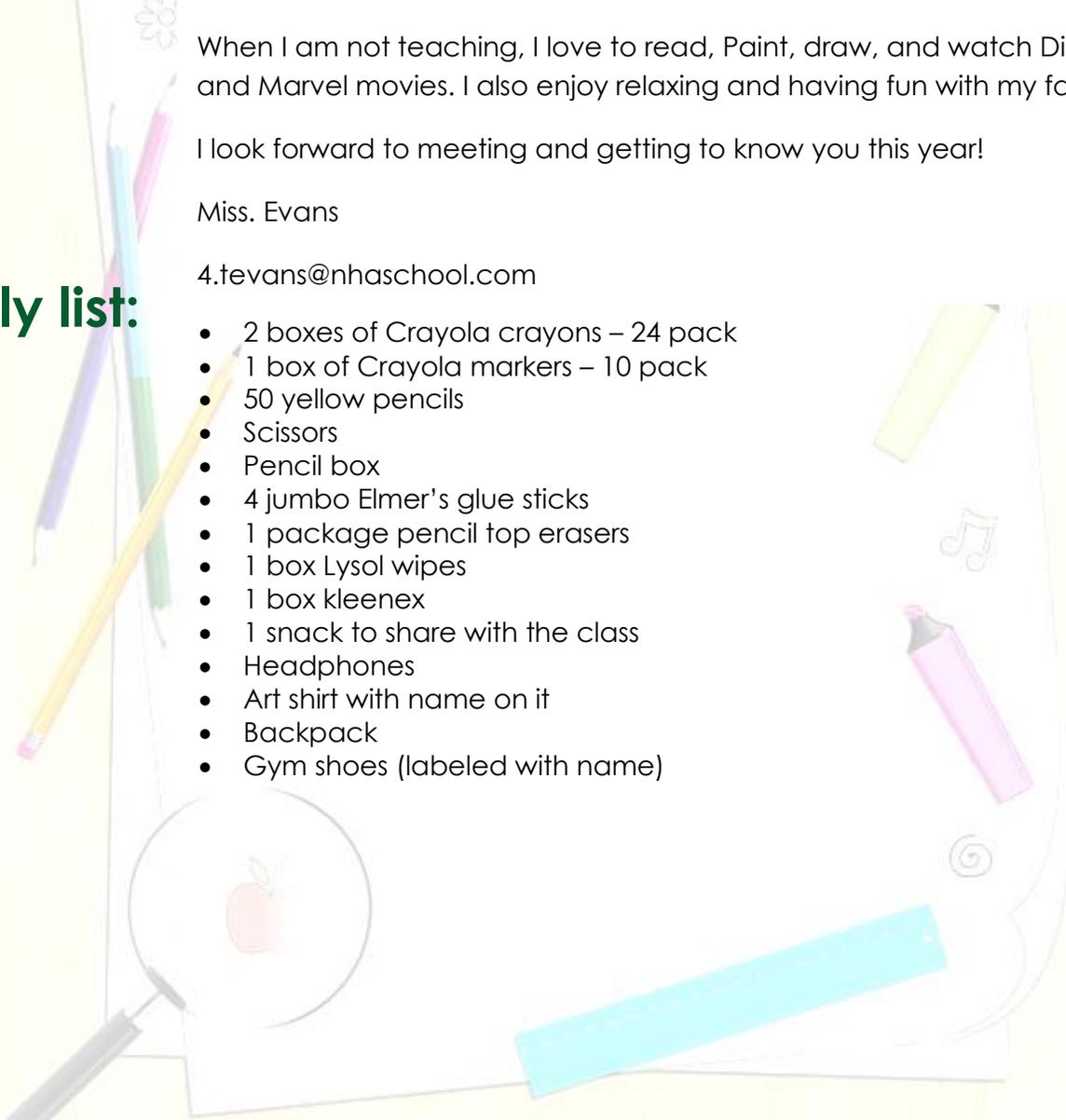
I look forward to meeting and getting to know you this year!

Miss. Evans

4.tevans@nhaschool.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, Dr. Seuss Day, 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!

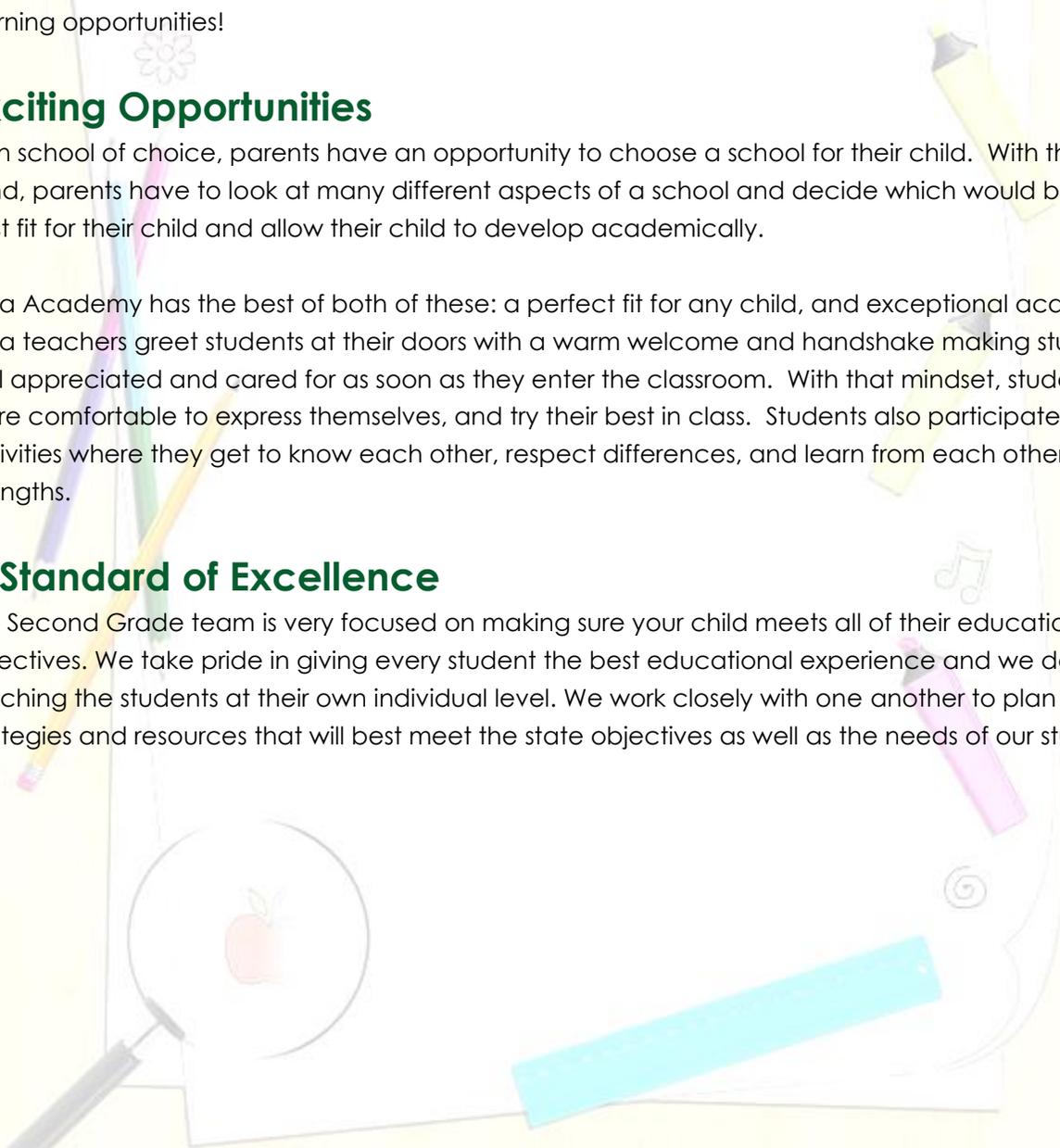
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A Standard of Excellence

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. Leonard

Hello, my name is Breanne Leonard and I cannot wait to be your Third grade teacher! I have lived in and around the Grand Rapids area my entire life. This will be my 8th year teaching at Vista Charter Academy!

I have been married to my husband, Ryan, for 7 years. We have 3 children Graham (5), Avery (3) and Hudson (1)! I have a mom, dad, sister, and brother. I also have 4 nieces and 2 nephews! In my free time I enjoy reading, kayaking, camping, and going on runs with my dogs, Dakota and Kya.

My favorite thing about teaching is watching students as they understand concepts for the first time after hard work and persistence. I cannot wait to discover new math ideas, learn about exciting social studies and science concepts, and explore reading strategies together. Remember to read your books from our summer reading program. I look forward to hearing about the books that you read! I look forward to meeting you on the first day of school. We are going to have a great school year! If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out! 4.bleonard@nhaschools.com



Mrs. Radlinski

Hello, my name is Mrs. Radlinski and I am excited to be your Third grade teacher! This will be my ninth year at Vista, and my fifth 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!

I look forward to building on the knowledge that your child already has and helping them improve their skills in all areas. I am most importantly looking forward to helping them dive deeper into the texts we read and instilling a true love of reading! I spend a lot of my free time reading, and I hope I can help foster this passion in your child as well.

When I am not teaching, I enjoy spending time with my family, friends, and cat named Prince. I have four younger siblings and three nieces. I absolutely love being an Aunt! I also enjoy being active, traveling, and just enjoying life.

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

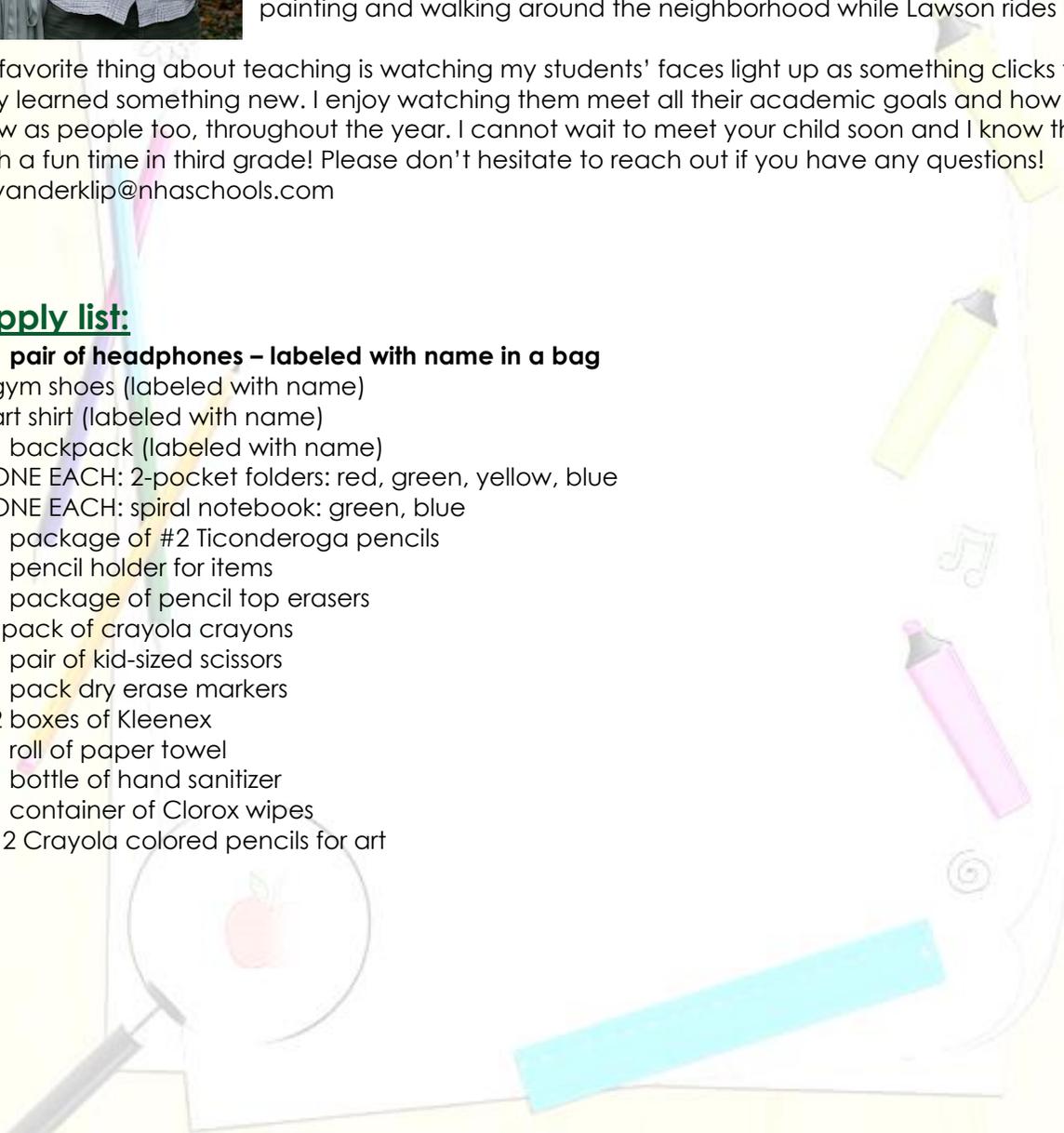
Hello, my name is Mrs. Vander Klipp and I am excited to be your Third grade teacher this year! I attended Grand Valley State University where I earned my teaching degree with an English Language Arts major. This will be my fifth year at Vista, and my second-year teaching Third grade!

My husband Josh and I have been married for 10 years and have a three-year old son named Lawson. 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

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 pair of kid-sized scissors
- 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. Slusser

Welcome to 4th grade! I am very excited to meet each and every one of you, and get the chance to help you grow and succeed this year!

A little bit about me, this year will be my 10th year teaching 4th grade at Vista. I feel so lucky to have the chance to work with a new set of 4th graders, some of whom I already know because I have taught older siblings. I truly love our Vista family community and I am looking forward to continuing to get to know new students and their families this coming school year, as well as work with some families again as their next child enters 4th grade.

Over the summer my husband and I will be very busy taking care of our wild and adventurous 3 year old daughter Olivia as well as a new baby. Olivia loves to go swimming, so I am sure we will spend a lot of time at the lake. My husband enjoys taking Olivia fishing, and I enjoy reading a book on the shore in the warm sunny weather. James Patterson is my favorite author so I have a long list of books I would like to read over the summer!

I hope all of you are having a wonderful summer and reading some great books! I look forward to meeting! We are going to have a wonderful school year, so get ready to become a 4th grade Rockstar!



Mr. Elmi

My name is Ahmed Elmi, this is my six-year teaching at Vista. I joined the Vista community in December 2017 as a paraprofessional. I graduated from Grand Valley State University with a major in Elementary Education with an emphasis on History. My core value consists of building and sustaining strong student relationships, encouraging student exploration, and developing a safe and welcoming classroom for all my scholars.

When I am not teaching, I enjoy reading, writing, and running. I read mostly historical fiction and biographies but lately I have been drawn to philosophy and psychology. My interest in writing is an extension of my reading, the more I read the more I want to write down my thoughts and inquiries about what I just read. I hope to get my students excited about reading and writing as much as I am. I look forward to teaching, exploring, learning from and with all my students.



Mr. Brenninkmeijer

Hello! My name is Mr. Brenninkmeijer or Mr. B; I am very excited to be your fourth grade teacher. This is going to be my fourth year at Vista Charter Academy and I cannot wait!

I graduated in 2017 from Southern Methodist University with a Bachelor's degree in Business. After a couple of years in Marketing, I decided I needed a change. My love for teaching, coaching and being a positive role model for children inspired me to pursue a teaching career. I spent a year in Japan teaching English to students. It was during this time that I was certain teaching was for me!

When I'm not teaching, I enjoy spending time with my wife Livi, puppy Dobby and our cat Momo :D. I am also an avid sports fan, enjoy the outdoors, and love reading a good book to relax!

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.

Ryan Brenninkmeijer- 4rbrennkmei@nhaschools.com

Supply List

- backpack (big enough to hold folders, agenda, extra)
- gym shoes (labeled with name)
- art shirt (labeled with name)
- 50 pencils (no mechanical pencils)
- 1 package erasers
- 5 pocket folders (with name)
- 6 spiral notebooks (with name)
- 3 boxes of Kleenex
- 1 roll of paper towel
- 1 package of white board markers
- sock, old washcloth etc. for whiteboard eraser
- 1 box of crayons or 1 box of colored pencils (with name)
- 1 pair of scissors (with name)
- hand sanitizer
- 1 container of Lysol wipes
- 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. Antles

Welcome to the 5th grade! My name is Mrs. Antles. I have been a teacher for over 20 years and have taught 5th grade for the last 11 of those years. My wonderful family consists of my husband of 30 years, Scott, and our children –three daughters, Ashley, Aubrey, and Alexis; a son named Ryan and a son-in-law named Andrew. I also have 3 amazing grandchildren: Samuel is five years old; Addison is three and a half years old, and James is one. I spent my summer spending time with my family, traveling, and working on projects around my home. I am very excited to be teaching at Vista Charter Academy again this year. I can hardly wait to get started with the many things that we will be learning together. I am looking forward to our journey together and the wonderful year ahead!

Mrs. Zillich



Welcome to the 5th grade! My name is Mrs. Zillich. I have been a teacher for 18 years. This will be my 3rd year at Vista. I have been a 5th grade teacher, a reading specialist, and a literacy coach. I have a wonderful family. My husband, Evan, and I have been married for 6 ½ years. We have an adorable, sassy 4-year-old daughter named Jamie. I also have two tabby cats, Mocha and Taz; they are my fur babies!

I am originally from Chicago, Illinois. I come from a very large family. I am number 5 out of 7 kids! I moved to Grand Rapids in August of 2014. I went to Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin for my bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. I went to Benedictine University in Lisle, Illinois for my Masters in Reading & Literacy, and another Masters, in English as a Second Language.

In my free time, I enjoy spending it with my family, reading, going to Chicago, and being outside. I am also very excited to be teaching at Vista Charter Academy again this year. I can hardly wait to get started with the many things that we will be learning together. I am looking forward to our journey together and the wonderful year ahead!

Mrs. DeWitt



Hello and welcome to the 5th grade! My name is Mrs. DeWitt. I have worked in K-8 Special Education, Young-fives and as a reading and math interventionist over the past 16 years. I have worked at Vista Charter Academy for more than 6 years and am excited to begin teaching 5th grade this year! I have also coached Science Olympiad and Odyssey of the Mind and have even taken a couple teams to OM World Finals. I truly enjoy teaching children to ask questions, problem solve and develop their own solutions. I have a degree from Central Michigan University (Fire Up Chips!!!)

I have been married to my husband Dirk for 32 years. We have 3 boys/young men named Parker, Riley, and Landon. We have 2 fluffy kitties that my sons named DJ and Boost. I enjoy campfires, hiking, and hanging out at the beach in the summer. I believe each student is special in their own way and I can't wait to get to know each of my students. I also believe this is a partnership, and I look forward to partnering with each family to help these students grow emotionally, socially, and academically. Working together, it will be an amazing year!

Supply list:

Backpack	6 spiral notebooks
12 glue sticks (2-3 for art)	4 packs of lined paper
36 pencils	4 erasers
1 box of markers (classic colors)	1 pencil box
4 dry erase (Expo) markers	4 packages of lined note cards
1 pair of scissors (Fiskars brand works well)	1 box of 24 count crayons
1 box of colored pencils	art shirt with name on it
5 2-pocket folders	gym shoes
2 pkgs. of colored 8 ½ x11 construction paper	headphones (can be ear buds)

Donations appreciated: tissue (Kleenex), paper towel, hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes

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 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, 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 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 6th Grade!



Mr. Hook

Hello, my name is Mr. Hook, and I am one of the 6th grade teachers! I am a proud alumni of Michigan State University, and I have a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education with double concentrations in Mathematics and English Language Arts. This will be my second year teaching 6th grade at Vista, and I'm pumped to teach you math that you will use for the rest of your lives!

During the school year, I live in Grand Rapids and enjoy playing music (guitar, piano, cello), hiking, backpacking in the wilderness, playing pickleball, and coaching. During the summer, I work and live at a summer camp called Camp Roger. There, I serve as the Staff Life Director for the overnight camp where I spend my days outside with our amazing counselors and the over 1,600 campers we serve each summer.

My favorite thing about teaching sixth grade is the young minds that I get to be around all day. I love the questions my students have, and I love seeing that "light bulb" moment where a student finally understands something they didn't before. Whether you love math or just think you aren't a "math person" I hope that by the end of school year, you feel confident in your math abilities and challenged to be a better mathematician!



Miss Meadows



Hello and welcome to Sixth Grade! I graduated from Grand Valley State University in 2014 with a degree in education and English. I began my career at Vista as the Teacher in Residence before getting my own classroom. This will be my eighth year at Vista Charter Academy and my seventh-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 and friends. I love to travel and explore new places and cultures. I also love reading and making crafts. I'm excited to get the 2023-2024 school year started!

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 6th 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, running with my dog Thor, 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 twelfth year at Vista and my seventh year teaching 7th grade math.

My wife, Erica, and I have four fabulous children. Chloé (24) attended Grand Rapids Community College and has moved into her place. Oriana (22) recently graduated from East Kentwood high school, and Lennon (16), and Saturn (13) will be entering 11th and 8th 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 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. Hosko – Science

I am a graduate of Cornerstone/Grace University in Grand Rapids. I am currently working toward my teaching certification, and this will be my second-year teaching science at Vista. I am excited to return as the 7th and 8th grade science teacher. I am looking forward to next year at Vista!

Teaching is my main passion. I love being in the science classroom because students get to participate in fun experiments and activities. Students are responsible for their learning through labs and scientific research. I am excited to lead experiments with all you and I hope this will be a fun experience for you also!

During my free time I enjoy to hike, travel and I enjoy being active. I have lived in several different places including the state of Washington and now Grand Rapids. I have been married for a year and we are excited to move into our new home that will be constructed this summer!

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:

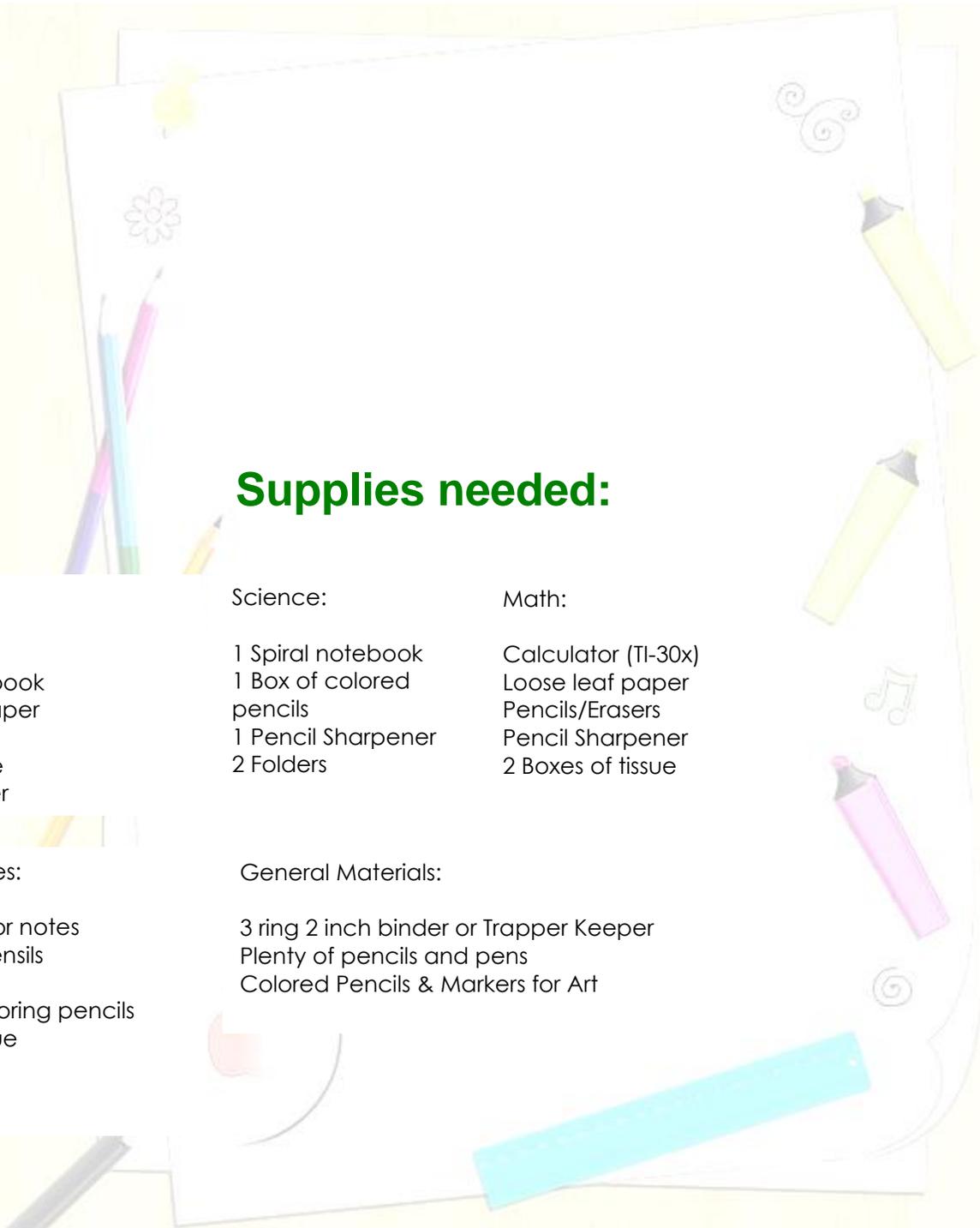
Calculator (TI-30x)
Loose leaf paper
Pencils/Erasers
Pencil Sharpener
2 Boxes of tissue

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

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 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 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 five 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 four in April and a brand-new 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, and Puerto Rico. 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.

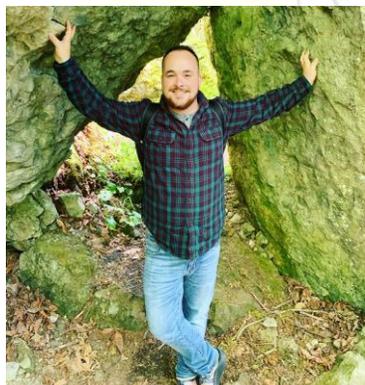
Mrs. Lesniak- Mathematics



I am a graduate of Grand Valley State University with a degree in Elementary Education focusing on Mathematics. This will be my fifth-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. Hosko —Science



I am a graduate of Cornerstone/Grace University in Grand Rapids. I am currently working toward my teaching certification, and this will be my second-year teaching science at Vista. I am excited to return as the 7th and 8th grade science teacher. I am looking forward to next year at Vista!

Teaching is my main passion. I love being in the science classroom because students get to participate in fun experiments and activities. Students are responsible for their learning through labs and scientific research. I am excited to lead experiments with all you and I hope this will be a fun experience for you also!

During my free time I enjoy to hike, travel and I enjoy being active. I have lived in several different places including the state of Washington and now Grand Rapids. I have been married for a year and we are excited to move into our new home that will be constructed this summer!

TBD —Social Studies

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)
Hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes

Math:

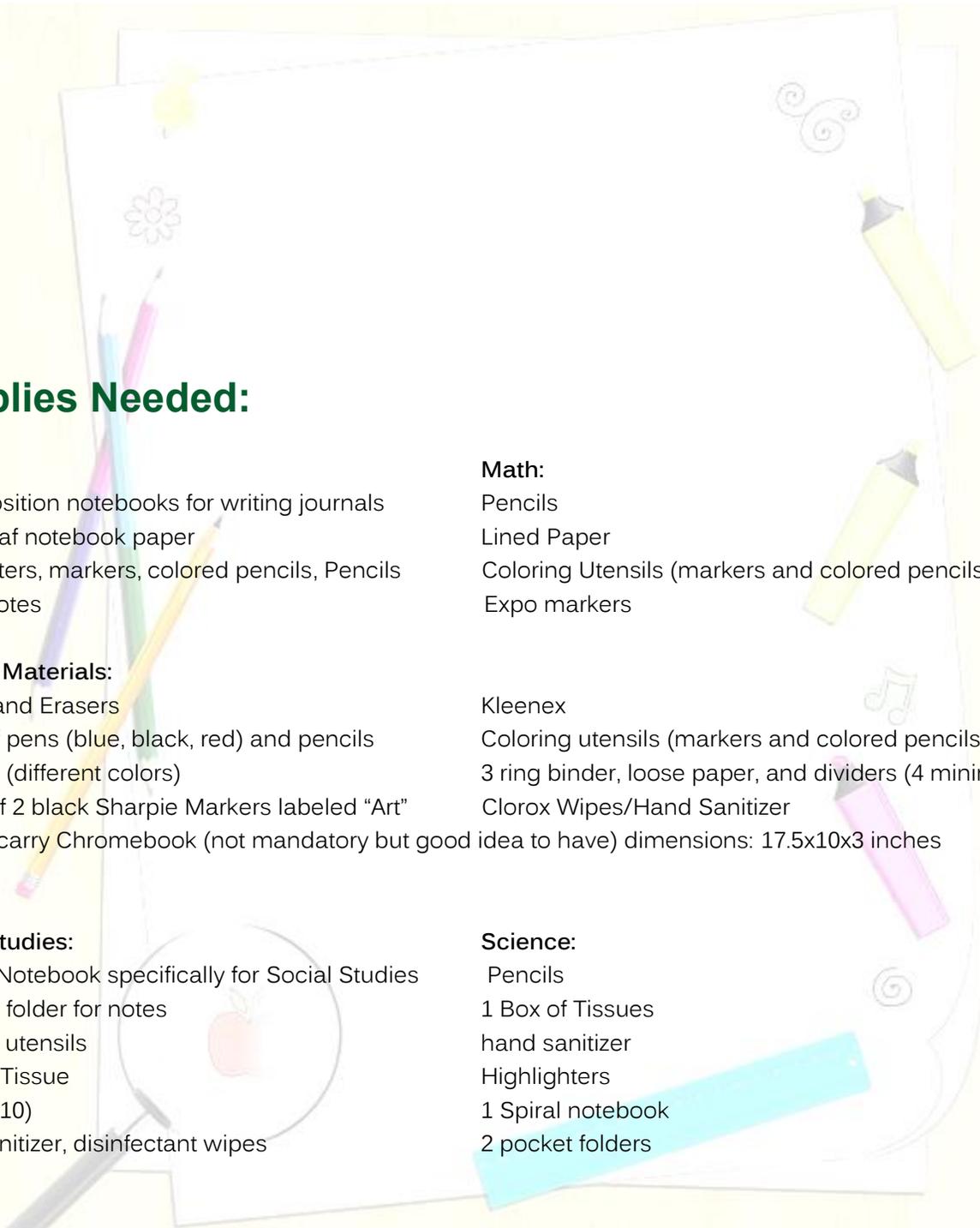
Pencils
Lined Paper
Coloring Utensils (markers and colored pencils)
Expo markers

Kleenex

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

Science:

Pencils
1 Box of Tissues
hand sanitizer
Highlighters
1 Spiral notebook
2 pocket folders



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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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. Please be on the lookout for information regarding 8th grade field trips. Your child will have the opportunity to go to Washington, D.C. There will be more information released when school starts in the fall.

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.