8th Grade Information

Dear 8th Grade Parents and Students,

We enjoyed meeting with many of you Monday night during our Fall Parent Teacher Conferences.

If you were not able to attend your 8th grader's Fall Patent Teacher Conferences and you have concerns about your child's academic or behavioral progress please contact us at your earliest convenience.

Here is the link to the **8th Grade Contact Information**

Sincerely,

Upcoming Calendar Dates:

- **Picture Retakes** - Tues., Oct. 27th
- **Last Day of the 1st Quarter** - Fri., Oct. 30th
- **Reward Day** - Fri., Oct. 30th
- **Activity Night** - Fri., Oct. 30th
- **Workshop Day** - No students - Mon., Nov. 2nd
- **Thanksgiving Break** - Wed., Nov. 25th to Fri., Nov. 27th

The 8th Grade Team

Sarah Baxter - Science and Forensics
Laura Boillat - Band
Abby Gunnarson - Language Arts
Melanie Lawrence - PE and Health
Peter Neuman - Choir
Kevin Riemenschneider - Geography and Current Events
Cady Shaw - Mathematics and Collaborative Relations
Sara Varner - Spanish

Academic News:

Language Arts: In Language Arts, we are deep into our first novel of Frankenstein. This literary classic is introduced to students in the form of a graphic novel where students can rely on detailed images of the characters and scenes to help guide their understanding of what is actually taking place. The skills we have

already covered in this unit include paraphrasing, strengthening our vocabulary, comparing and contrasting different forms of media, and showing our understanding through a multitude of comprehension strategies.

Mathematics (Linear):
We have officially turned a major corner in math class, and I am so incredibly proud of our students' resilience! We kicked off the school year with an intense, condensed review of seventh-grade concepts. It was a heavy lift that brought some understandable stress, and I want to thank you for your patience and partnership at home during that demanding stretch. The great news is that the hardest hill is behind us; we are now stepping into fresh content, which allows us to finally slow down, breathe, and focus on learning with real depth.

After mastering the foundations of slope and slope-intercept form, we are expanding our toolkit this month to tackle point-slope and standard forms. We will wrap up the unit by exploring special geometric relationships, including horizontal, vertical, parallel, and perpendicular lines. We are shifting our classroom focus from "speed" to "growth," and I am confident that this steadier pace will help the kids find their rhythm and build lasting confidence. As always, please reach out if you have any questions or concerns!

Mathematics (Non-Linear):
We have officially crossed our first major milestone in Non-Linear Algebra, and I am proud of how our students are adjusting to the high expectations of this course! We began the year with a rigorous review to bridge some tough gaps in foundational knowledge, which was a demanding stretch for all of us. Because this advanced track requires a deeper level of independent ownership, we are currently focusing on how to study and practice effectively outside of class. The great news is that we are now diving into exciting nonlinear content, where students can truly stretch their analytical thinking.

After reinforcing our equation-solving skills, the students are currently mastering the core concepts of functions. Over the next few weeks, we will expand our horizons by exploring more complex graphing relationships, including piecewise functions, absolute value functions, and step functions. Because advanced math requires active engagement outside of class hours to truly absorb the material, I encourage you to check in with your student at home to ensure they are consistently practicing and reviewing their notes.

Geography: We are nearing the end of our introductory units in geography! Last week, students explored the role of government, the importance of constitutions, and the similarities and differences among various forms of government. To bring these concepts to life, students participated in a diplomacy activity in which they worked in groups to tackle real-world global issues. Each group developed a plan to address its assigned challenge and then compared its proposed solution to how the situation actually unfolded in history.

This week and next, we are shifting our focus to culture. This is often one of students' favorite units, as we explore the many elements that shape societies around the world, including religion, language, clothing, food, traditions, and customs. Through these discussions, students will gain a deeper understanding of the diversity of our world.

Science: We just took our first quiz on the Scientific Method Test on Thursday, October 3rd. Retakes for quizzes and tests are available when my students complete their retake form. Paper copies of the form are on my lab bench; here is the link to the digital version. All retakes must be completed within one week of the original assessment date. We are currently focusing on converting metric units in class, graphing, and identifying variables in experiments. The test should be scheduled toward the end of October. The review guide is posted in Google Classroom and there are review games posted as well. I will send an email home at least a week before the test so that you are aware of the test date. Next we will explore a unit about energy called Harnessing Human Energy. This unit is the foundation of the physical science we will learn for the rest of the year. There is a Rube Goldberg "At Home" Project that I will introduce at the same time; I will send home an email about this project when it is assigned which includes the directions and the grading rubric.

Physical Education/Health:
In PE students are currently doing fitness testing along with learning new cooperative games. They learn how to improve their muscular endurance, muscular strength, cardiorespiratory endurance, and flexibility. The national averages are posted on Google Classroom for reference. It is great to see students setting goals and challenging themselves. In Health students are finishing up their Home Cooked Meal project that applies everything they learned in nutrition to make a healthy meal for their family at home. (see the email I sent). Next up we will be talking about body image, self-esteem, and eating disorders.

Spanish: Our 8th graders have been exploring the world of animals and colors in Spanish! Students are building their vocabulary as they learn to identify animals and describe them using different colors. It has been fun to see them make connections, participate in class activities, and grow more comfortable using their new Spanish words. I'm proud of their effort and enthusiasm and look forward to seeing them continue to build their Spanish skills throughout the last couple weeks of the quarter!

Choir:
The Junior High Choir has made impressive progress this month! We have been focusing a lot on building a space where the students feel comfortable expressing themselves as well as making mistakes. If they are not willing to make mistakes they won't learn and become better singers. We have also started our three pieces for the Winter Concert! I am very proud of the Junior High Choir students and their dedication to their musicianship so far.

Band:
The Junior High Band is doing well and has been working on music for our concert on December 17th at 7:30pm. Our focus has been on rhythms and key signatures. In addition, some students have been expanding their musical horizons and branched out to some of our specialty instruments, such as bass clarinet and baritone saxophone. The Middle School Jazz Band (Jazz II) started up at the end of September and has been working on playing together in a new medium (and some students are even new to their instruments) and making great progress! The concert is sure to be fantastic!