August 13th, 2025

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to Mr. Sweet's 6th grade class! I am pleased to be your child's teacher this unique year and I look forward to meeting, or seeing you again, at our **Back to School Night on Thursday, August 21st at 6:00-6:30pm.** I can't emphasize enough the importance of attending BTSN because I cover the entire school year with very important information you will need to know for your child's 6th grade experience.

I believe all children are full of remarkable possibilities and I look forward to helping each student reach his or her potential this year. I believe that each student is responsible for his or her own learning. Therefore, I expect my students to do their best regarding both schoolwork and behavior. With the guidance and direction of both teacher and parents, this can be accomplished.

Goals

My highest goal is **to cultivate a passion in my students for learning and growth.** Learning is one of the most important things in life and I hope to make this process fun, engaging, and accessible for **all** students.

Expectations

I will be putting forth my best effort and I will expect the same from all of my students. Even though each student brings different strengths and weaknesses in various subject areas, I expect the work turned in to be their best quality. Assignments need to be handed in when they are **due**. A list of necessary classroom supplies is available on my blog. Students are expected to come to class on time, prepared with the appropriate materials, computers charged and ready to learn with a positive attitude. Encouragement from home is very important in this regard. This will help prepare them for junior high school. Along these lines, your child will become much more adept and independent and be able to confidently advocate for themselves and communicate with their teacher. We move to letter grades along with a GPA this year with a different report card that is aligned with other middle schools.It will certainly be an adjustment at the beginning of the school year!

Our class will have a blog again this year to keep parents and students informed of homework, procedures, announcements, upcoming events, and much more. You can find the website at: http://mrsweetriodelmar.blogspot.com. This website will help support learning in the classroom and keep students aware and accountable for what is due. If you forget the web address, just go to the school's website for the link. Furthermore, this will help guide students who are absent due to illness and re-teach math lessons. Students are required to make up work, even when they are on a trip or sick.

As your child's teacher I expect each student to be: understanding, caring, and respectful to other students and adults. These characteristics are of the utmost importance. I want the classroom to be a positive, encouraging place where students can learn and present their views in a safe, non-threatening atmosphere. Put-downs and negative behavior will **not** be tolerated. We will watch videos and have discussions together about safe digital citizenship and participation norms.

Grading/Homework

I sent a sheet home for email sign up and Tech permissions In addition, I will also use your e-mail for iGradeBook login for you to share login credentials with your child. Parents and students will be able to login into the gradebook to check their progress with that same email. Each subject has various components that contribute to a student's grade (tests, projects, homework assignments, participation, extra credit etc.). One important area is the effective use of time on each task during the day at home. There are numerous things we will work on in class and, provided students use this class time constructively, longer homework assignments should be averted. The homework time per night should be less than 60 minutes excluding Fridays. On Thursdays we will have a smaller amount of homework to give students more time to study for tests using study guides that will be posted a week prior. I encourage you to view the blog link with my homework philosophy.

Finally, please remember to give your child adequate time and a quiet place at home to do work **without** distractions, social media, video games, and minimal texting! As mentioned earlier, **the class blog should be checked daily** for assignments by your child. I will use the blog/google doc links and infrequent e-mails home. iPhones will stay in backpacks and not be used in the classroom.

Personal Background

I was born and raised locally and attended California State University of Monterey Bay where I was in the first graduating class in 1997. I graduated from the CSUMB Liberal Studies program with an emphasis in Human Development. At this time I knew I wanted to be a teacher so I moved on to the CSU Monterey Bay Credential Program. My first teaching experience was as a 6th grade counselor at Kruz Kidz Day Camp in 1994. I have taught grades ranging from 3rd – 6th grades. This is my 28th year teaching at Rio Del Mar Elementary School. I have worked with children for the last 30 years and deeply love my job.

I graduated from San Jose State University's Educational Administration Program and received my Master's Degree in 2003. For over 20 years I was the After School Coordinator at Rio del Mar, and I have spent numerous summers as a principal during summer school in PVUSD. I am married to Hilary Sweet and we have an active 24 year-old son, Josiah, who just graduated from UC Irvine and is working as a Medical Scribe in the ER. He loves running, biking, playing and music ultimate frisbee and he wants to go to PA school soon. Our 22 year-old daughter, Juliet, is a hard-working graduate from UCSB and she just got a job in Marketing. She loves tennis, music and celebrating life. They both went to Rio del Mar and survived my class!

I look forward to an excellent year filled with learning, growth and fun! Remember…"85% of life is just showing up." (*Woody Allen)* Please make EVERY effort to get your child to class. We have 185 days to schedule vacations when we are not in school. Otherwise, each child gets behind AND the school loses money. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call me at 728-7838, or you can e-mail me at: **martin_sweet@pvusd.net**. I am always available via email when you have questions, or concerns. Thank you and let the learning begin!

J Martin Sweet

6th Grade Teacher