



## Dear Parents and Guardians of the Eighth Grade,

Welcome to our Eighth-grade year! I hope you all have enjoyed a relaxing summer as we look forward to the exciting year ahead. Our Eighth-grade journey is going to be unlike any experience we have had before as we live through these unprecedented times. With the love, support, and creativity of our community, I am confident that our students will come out strong and grounded on the other side. This final year in the Lower School will be an exciting journey as we explore the land of Africa and the foundations of American History. We will study the forms that create the building blocks of our world in Platonic Solids Geometry as well. I am honored to complete this journey with the Eighth-grade students, and I look forward to moving through the year with joy, enthusiasm, and awe at the world without and within. Our first day of school will be Tuesday, September 8th. My office hours will be from 4:00-6:00pm on Mondays and Wednesdays. I am also available for Zoom meetings, in school meetings, or phone meetings by appointment at any time.

Please reach out with any questions or concerns you may have. You will receive communication about upcoming parent meetings and classroom links for the students in the near future as well. I look forward to seeing all of the students again!

Below you will find a list of supplies that your child will need for Eighth grade.

- 1 eraser
- 1 3 ring 2'' binder
- 1 packet of wide ruled paper
- 1 package of dividers
- 2 folders
- 1 Black marble composition notebook
- 1 compass for geometry (preferably Staedtler)
- 1 black fine tip Micron pen
- 1 pair of scissors

The following items can be purchased at our school supply store:

- 1 graph ruler
- A minimum of 3 lead pencils
- 1 set of Mercurius colored pencils (24 count)

Please keep in mind that upon entering the building, students are not allowed to share or borrow materials.

Warmly,

**Victoria Dehan** (she/her/hers)  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher

## Grade Eight Main Lesson Block Rotation

2020-2021

### September 8 – October 2: Africa taught by Ms. Dehan

Throughout this block, eighth graders will develop an understanding of the vast and varied landscape of Africa. Students will study the different regions of the continent and the Great Kingdoms of Mali, Ghana, and Songhai. We will study the evolution of the landscape itself, and students will learn to identify the different fauna and flora native to different regions within Africa. Students will form an appreciation for this ancient earth as we study African culture and examine how native resources shaped different communities.

We will explore the history of trade in African and study the biographies of powerful figures like Queen Nzinga and Nelson Mandela. Students will research one African country and write a report by the end of the block. Students will give a presentation about their country as well. We will study African music, art, and culture, and the students will create their own mosaics inspired by the African landscape.

### October 5 – 29: Chemistry taught by Ms. Stemkoski

The Eighth Grade study of chemistry explores familiar substances in ways that both challenge student assumptions and broaden understandings of the chemical worlds within and without. What is a chemical? What does it mean to say that something is organic? Students learn through firsthand experiences that many terms used in everyday life have quite precise and different meanings in the field of chemistry. With continuing emphasis on the development of safe and appropriate technique, students gain experience with additional laboratory equipment and procedures while they learn about macromolecules such as carbohydrates, proteins, and lipids.

### November 2 – 25: Platonic Solids taught by Ms. Dehan

We will begin this block by reviewing the geometry of sixth and seventh grade. Eighth graders will review the algebraic proofs of the Pythagorean theorem the practice the different polygon constructions we created in seventh grade. We will explore the recurring principle of the Golden Mean and review the specific polygons that create platonic solids. We will explore where the five platonic solids exist within nature and create our own forms out of different materials. Students will create their own mobiles by the end of the block using the geometry we have studied.

### November 30 – December 18: Revolutions taught by Mr. Yaeger

In this main lesson students will be introduced to key revolutions that changed the course of history. Attention will be paid to the American Revolution and its impact not just on England and America, but on Native Peoples and Africans brought to the New World as slaves. Articles written by the founding fathers will be studied, as will biographies of key figures like Benjamin Franklin and George Washington. Additionally, students will study the American Constitution and the challenges that the delegates faced at the Constitutional Convention.

The Haitian Revolution will be studied in tandem with highlighting the key aspects of the French Revolution, focusing on key figures such as Toussaint Louverture, Napoleon, and Louis XVI.

Great emphasis will be placed on biographical stories that bring to light the life and times, the culture of each revolution. Students will be asked to choose one figure to research and create a biographical research paper that includes a portrait and an artistic project that brings to life a key moment in that person's story. A main lesson book of compositions and illustrations, including historically accurate maps, will be created.

#### **January 4 -29: Early U.S. History taught by Mr. Yaeger**

Early US History will shine a light on slavery in America and the incredible stories of many important figures, such as: Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, and Henry Box Brown. Turning our attention to the Civil War, students will hear stories about Abraham Lincoln, Generals Grant and Lee, as-well as stories of lesser known figures such as Robert Smalls and Elizabeth Van Lew.

The Reconstruction period in America will be highlighted as students learn about the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments, and the contributions of Senator Hiram Revels. Emphasis will be placed on discussing the failures of Reconstruction and its impact on the Black population.

Students will keep a main lesson book that brings to life the figures studied through portrait work and bringing to life important speeches visually that defined this time period. A final project will be the telling or singing of the story of one of the figures chosen by each student.

#### **February 1 – March 5: Anatomy taught by Ms. Stemkoski**

The Eighth Grade study of anatomy continues the investigation of the human body begun during last year's physiology coursework. What else is in our "insides," invisibly yet essentially at work? The focus of this course is the understanding of the physical structural supports found in the musculoskeletal system. The muscles and bones are considered separately and then together; as was discovered before, there are amazing relationships found between the parts of the whole human. As time permits, attention is also given to understanding the unique roles that the eyes and ears play in human experiences. Comprehensive compositions and beautifully technical illustrations form the foundation for the main lesson book in this course.

#### **March 9 – April 9: US History - Rights taught by Mr. Yaeger**

This main lesson will continue the thread of freedom and equality touched upon during Early US History, bringing the class closer to our present day. Various important Supreme Court Cases such as *Brown v Board* and legislation such as the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 will be studied, as well as the various forms of nonviolent resistance used in the Civil Rights Movements, such as Sit-Ins, the Freedom Bus Riders, and the Voter Education project. The Presidencies of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson will be explored, as well such essential figures in the Civil Rights Movement as Martin Luther King, Fannie Lou Hammer, Malcom X and the Black Panther Party.

In our study of the Women's Rights Movement, we will examine the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment and ERA, and learn about Lucy Stone and Susan B. Anthony, Ida B. Wells and Sojourner Truth, as-well as explore the importance of the Seneca Falls Convention.

The Gay Rights Movement will bring such figures as Harvey Milk to light for the students, and the Stonewall Riots will be studied in-depth. Students will study and debate topics such as the Right to Marry and hear first-person accounts that demonstrate and reflect this ever urgent and still-growing movement.

Students will keep a main lesson book of compositions and reflections, including illustrations of key moments in stories told and explained. A final group project will allow students to work together to recreate key speeches or dramatic scenes that capture the power and voice of their chosen movement in history.

#### **April 12 – May 7: Short Stories and Class Play taught by Ms. Dehan**

The Eighth-Grade play is a rite of passage for the students of the lower school. The class play is an opportunity for the students to work together and develop a number of social and technical skills. The students exercise tremendous creativity as they organize and build set pieces throughout this block, contributing to every part of the production. The Eighth-Grade play provides a space for every student to utilize their strengths and fulfill a meaningful role in the theatre process. From managing, to set design, to costume design, and stage crew, each student finds a purposeful role in this block.

Throughout this block, eighth-graders will study the mechanics of short story writing. We will learn about the history of story-telling in different cultures and identify how writers use strong techniques to convey universal messages. We will study literary elements and devices within several short stories, and the students will apply what they have learned to their own stories. Students will experience in-depth writer's workshops throughout the block, working in small groups to hone their writing skills. By the end of our block, students will be able to identify and articulate how literary devices and elements create a world of meaning for the reader.

#### **May 10 – June 4: Physics taught by Ms. Stemkoski**

Physics in the eighth grade provides students with their last year of a survey course experience, before transitioning in the high school to focused study in one field of physics each year. Revolutionary technologies are revealed and studied within the fields of acoustics, optics, thermal physics, and electromagnetism. Fluid dynamics, especially hydraulics, are introduced as well, and playful investigation soon gives way to serious consideration. Attention is also given to historical development of theories, engaging students in an experience of paradigm shift and reinforcing the importance of careful consideration of all available evidence and information. Technical writing skills combine with beautifully accurate illustrations to create the record of work in this main lesson book.

#### **June 7 – 4: Review by Ms. Dehan**

Together as a class we will review the year and prepare for our Eighth Grade Promotion into High School.