

Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year! This is probably the most important handout this year because the expectations, rules, and procedures are outlined. It is a syllabus of sorts. You will find answers to expected questions regarding the 6th grade classroom.

Curriculum Outline: Curriculum is determined using the Arizona State 6th Grade Standards as a foundation. Every month students will receive a calendar with the month's class trips, school events, big assignments' due dates, quizzes, and tests. Please pay close attention to these calendars, but remember that they are subject to change and any changes will be noted by your child in his/her agenda.

Math: Students will use the Scott Foresman/Addison Wesley 6th Grade math book. There will be math homework every night, Monday through Thursday. Students will receive their math homework packets every Monday and will be checked daily, each assignment is worth 2 points towards their final grade. There will be a math quiz every week worth 10 points, unless there is a test scheduled that week. We will follow the math book and complete most sections of the book. Algebra is a huge theme throughout the year, but we will also cover decimals, fractions, ratios, percents, positive and negative integers, geometry, statistics, measurement, and basic number theory. In-class practice problems are not sufficient to master the 6th grade standards, homework and at-home studying of the material presented in class is crucial to mastery.

Science: The major science units that we will cover include: plant biology, environmental quality, atmosphere and natural cycles, human biology, and energy. The science book that we will use as a resource is Houghton-Mifflin's 6th Grade Science Textbook. Science curriculum will be covered by using non-fiction texts, inquiry-based experiments, reports, field trips, presentations by local scientists, and a school science fair project that we will begin in December.

Language Arts: Language Arts will be sub-divided into 3 categories, Writing/Grammar, Book Clubs, and Vocabulary. In writing, students will be writing everyday in their writer's notebook and modeling after their favorite writers. Grammar will be infused throughout all subjects through modeling and reviewing/learning fun grammar rules. We also will be studying the methodology of "HOW" to write a report/essay. By the end of the year, students will have produced one or more of the following genres of writing: research paper centralized on a thesis statement, informational report, literature response, persuasive essay, personal narrative, original poetry, and functional text. Book clubs will be student/teacher led and students will have a choice based on various genres. Students will engage in literary analysis through a variety of

activities designed to enhance their critical thinking skills. Vocabulary is crucial to improving both writing and reading skills. We will be using a program called "Flocabulary". It is a music based program that will allow students to hear, see, and write their vocabulary. Every 2 weeks they will receive a new song that includes 15 vocabulary words. The students will sing the song every day and through a variety of activities, begin to strengthen their vocabulary. Upon the completion of each 2 week vocabulary list, students will demonstrate their knowledge through a vocab/spelling test. As the year progresses, we will have cumulative evaluations. Students will be encouraged to use their new vocabulary in their writing and speech. The CD is available for individual purposes but is **NOT** necessary or required as students will have ample exposure in the classroom. Please see Ms. Kim for order information if you feel your student would benefit from additional repetition.

Social Studies: The major social studies units that we will cover include: foundations of cultures (religions and governments), Ancient American cultures, Mesopotamia, Egypt and Nubia, Ancient China, Ancient India, Ancient Africa, Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, European Middle Ages, and European Renaissance. Geography and current affairs will be covered throughout the year, alternating between the two every other week. The social studies textbook that we will use as a resource is Houghton-Mifflin's *Discover Our Heritage*.

How much homework should we expect?

Expect that students will have approximately one hour of homework every weekday. Homework will include about 20-30 minutes of math work, about 5 minutes of vocabulary review, at least 15 minutes of assigned reading and/or free choice, and miscellaneous projects throughout the year. Students will leave school with assignments written down in their agendas and the homework in the right pocket of their assigned homework folder.

How many book reports will students have?

Students will have at least 3 book reports, one per trimester, plus one from their summer reading. You will be seeing the first assignment soon!

How will student assignments be graded?

Projects, assignments, and quizzes will be graded based on rubrics, achievement, and effort. We will consistently and clearly share our expectations at the start of an assignment. Most assignments will have a point-value.

Completed homework assignments will be worth 2 points per day, quizzes will be worth 10 points, and tests and reports will typically be worth 50 points (unless otherwise noted). Like other grade levels at Mountain School, the report cards will communicate whether the students have met specific academic and behavioral standards. Report cards will also reflect a letter grade earned in English, social studies, math, and science.

What are the Classroom rules?

The classroom rules will be decided as a class during the first couple weeks of school. A behavioral contract will be sent home once the rules are established for students, parents, and teacher to sign. Please see the Mountain School Parent Handbook for details on school-wide policies.

What if a student chooses to break a rule?

1st time: student's name will be written on the board = warning

2nd time: 1 check next to name, lose first recess and fill out behavioral reflection sheet

Pink slips will be written and documented in the office according to the parent handbook.

Note: Individual behavioral plans may need to be developed by the teacher, student, and parent if necessary.

Are there rewards for good behavior?

Yes, the class and individual students will be rewarded with activities, privileges, and a positive learning environment. Class trips must be earned and are considered a privilege.

What field trips will my sixth grader go on?

We have several day trips planned that complement and enrich the subject areas we are teaching. An end-of-the-year camping trip is also tentatively planned.

Trips must be earned by the class and by individual students. Students will have

to demonstrate that they are in good academic standing and behaving appropriately to be able to attend school-day field trips and sleepovers. Parents will often be invited as chaperones on the trips. There will be a limit to how many chaperones are needed according to the trip and the logistical needs, the needs will be communicated in newsletters. Parents will need to have fingerprint clearance cards on-file with the office before attending any trips. We appreciate your understanding of the time and effort it takes for us to plan these exciting and unique educational experiences.

What is the 6th grade Classroom food policy?

Students can eat RAW fruits and vegetables throughout the day as long as they do not leave baggies or Tupperware containers behind. We let them do this to keep their blood-sugar levels stable. Students have a morning recess period where they can eat healthy snacks daily, as well as a lunch period and afternoon recess.

What are the parent volunteering opportunities?

Whether you want to arrange a regular volunteer schedule, teach a mini-lesson, help with special events, organize book orders, or stop by to lend a hand in classroom tasks, we appreciate all of your assistance and participation. It is best for our classroom environment if you communicate when you will be in the classroom with Ms. Laurie and Ms. Kim, rather than just stopping by. We will have a parent volunteer sign-up at Orientation Night and will frequently request parent volunteers in our weekly newsletters.

How will parents know what is going on?

Every week a newsletter will be sent home *electronically* via email. Please read the newsletter to know what the students are studying, upcoming events, and any other news. A printed version of the newsletter will be posted on the hallway cabinet, please check periodically to assure that you are receiving school communication. Also, the students will write down their assignments daily in their

agendas. This is their responsibility, please assure that they are keeping organized and on top of their assignments.

Which teacher should I contact?

Please address Ms. Kim with anything that pops up first trimester as Ms. Laurie will be on maternity leave. In subsequent trimesters, please address Ms. Kim about anything related to language arts, social studies, or Wednesday/Thursday programming and Ms. Laurie about anything related to math, science, or Monday/Tuesday programming.

How can I contact the appropriate teacher?

Email is the best way:

Ms. Laurie can be reached at lauriea@mountaincharterschool.com

Ms. Kim can be reached at kims@mountaincharterschool.com.

You may also call the school at 779-2392 during school hours and leave a message and the appropriate teacher will return your call as soon as possible.
