

Dear Parents of Rising 6th Graders,

We would like to welcome you and your child to the Center Montessori Middle School program. You probably remember middle school as a time of change in your lives. While our ways of working may be different here at CMS, middle school is still a time wrought with huge changes for children and their parents. There are changes in the daily routines, changes in teacher expectations, and changes in the classroom environment.

We would like to pass along what we think is valuable information which may help make the transition smoother for everyone. Below we have included information on our 6th grade curriculum and communication as well as some of the major differences you and your child will encounter when entering the first year of middle school at CMS.

- The children are on a two-week work cycle rather than the one-week cycle in E2. This requires they manage their time and work over a longer period of time. To deal with this increased level of time management responsibility, the students are encouraged from the beginning to set their own personal daily goals for work.
- You will receive a weekly e-mail from Deana updating you on classroom activities and your child's progress that week. It will also inform you of any unfinished work your child may need to complete at home. There will no longer be a blue sheet as in E2.
- You will receive a Friday folder after each work cycle. The folder will no longer come home on a weekly basis.
- You will have scheduled parent-teacher conferences with Deana two times a year and other ones as you or we may request.
- The reading program changes from New Practice Reader (NPR) books to weekly assignments in the Reading Comprehension in Varied Subject Matters (RCVSM) series. The reading content is much more in depth and is topical. In addition to sharpening both their reading and writing skills with the RCVSM series, sixth graders also read several novels over the course of the year. Some of these are novels which the students choose, while others are assigned shared literature books (similar to E2's literature circles). The students prepare book reports and presentations on their choice novels. Students participate in discussions and answer questions in writing on the assigned novels.
- Students work more in depth on their writing and editing skills. Writing will include the basic structures of sentences, paragraphs, and essays. Students will work on creative writing, narrative writing, and expository writing and will also edit their work.

- Students will continue to work on Key Books, including the algebra series. The math curriculum also includes a Saxon math textbook. Children are grouped based on their skill levels. There are small group lessons as well as class lessons. For some children, 6th grade will be the beginning of algebra studies.
- In history, we continue where the E2 Montessori curriculum left off, beginning with the study of ancient Rome, followed by the Dark Ages, Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. Students look for common threads in the development of different cultures during different time periods. Sixth graders also cover selected topics in American history as a precursor to the detailed, comprehensive study of American history in 7th and 8th grades.
- Sixth grade focuses on earth science, environmental science, and related topics in physical science. The curriculum includes the study of atmosphere and weather, the chemistry of combustion, lessons on tension and compression as it relates to engineering bridges, the study of and experiments on density and surface tension, as well as an expanded look at the water cycle and invasive species. The students conduct many hands on science experiments throughout the year.

Of course, we want to make the transition to 6th grade as seamless and positive as possible. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time regarding your child's progress or just for routine questions. You will receive much more information at our **6th Grade Orientation** (your new 6th grader should attend) that is going to be held on Tuesday, August 8, from 6:15pm to 7pm. Please mark your calendars. You can also always e-mail Deana directly at dreemelin@centermontessori.org.

We look forward to having your child in our 6th grade program. Have a wonderful summer.

Most sincerely,

Deana Reemelin, 6th Grade teacher

Mara Fulk, CMS Administrator