

2008-2009 school year

Dear Parents or Guardians:

The purpose of this letter is to familiarize you with the 8th grade Integrated Science course at Smith Junior High School. Eighth grade science is a full-year course that includes topics in life and physical sciences. Learning objectives align with the Arizona science standard, which may be viewed at <http://www.ade.state.az.us/standards/science/grade8.pdf>. Your child's notebook will also contain a list of specific learning objectives for each unit.

According to the *National Science Education Standards* (NAS, 1996), "Learning science is something students do, not something that is done to them." In learning science, students will be actively involved working as individuals and in teams to make observations, acquire knowledge, generate explanations, test ideas, and communicate results.

Many activities and laboratory experiences require the use of specific materials. Below is a list of the **materials** that your son or daughter needs to bring to class each day in order to be successful in 8<sup>th</sup> grade science.

- calculator
- **colored pencils**
- ruler (6 or 12 inch)
- 3-ring binder with dividers  
(may be shared with other classes)
- pencils (incl. extra lead, if needed)
- large eraser
- **red pen (for grading)**
- lined notebook paper

Please contact me if assistance is needed in providing any of these materials.

To help you understand the organization and expectations of our classroom, a copy of our **Classroom Guidelines** is attached, containing a wealth of information for parents. Also, a **Student Information Sheet** is attached to this letter. **Please help us effectively communicate this year by completing the reverse of this form.** Your son or daughter is responsible to complete the front side. The completed form is due by **Friday, August 15<sup>th</sup>**.

I hope learning science is a very rewarding experience for your child. Please encourage your son or daughter to talk with me if he/she has any concerns, and to come in before or after school for additional help if needed. If you have questions throughout the year, please contact me by phone or email using the information below. I will do my best to return calls within one school day. **I can usually answer emails more quickly.** I look forward to a successful year with your child.

Mr. Bill Kirsch  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Teacher  
Smith Junior High  
(480) 472-9951  
wjkirsch@mpsaz.org