

# Welcome to 8th Grade SCIENCE

with Dr. Mary Ploense

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this letter is to acquaint you with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Science course at Smith Junior High School.



- Eighth grade science is a two-semester course that includes topics in the Life and Physical Sciences. During the academic year students will investigate Human Genetics and Principles of Heredity, Adaptations of Organisms, Newton's Laws of Motion, and finally Properties of Matter.
- Learning objectives are aligned with the Arizona Science Standards. Refer to your student's notebook during each unit for a list of the specific objectives taught. Additionally many classroom activities reinforce State Standards in English Mathematics, and Reading as well. You may access all of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade AZ State Standards at <http://www.ade.az.gov/standards>.
- In learning about science your student will be actively engaged in the learning process, both physically and mentally. Students are expected to work individually as well as in teams to make observations, acquire knowledge, generate explanations, test ideas, and communicate results clearly.

- Attached you will find a copy of the specific Classroom Guidelines that your student has received to help you better understand the organization and expectations of my classroom. Please take some time to go over these guidelines with your student, as they also contain a wealth of information for you.

## PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Research has consistently shown that one of the most important elements of student success in school is the amount of contact and cooperation that exists between parents and/or guardians and teachers. Therefore, I am inviting you to join with me in a partnership to help your student achieve success in 8th grade Science.

*What you can expect from me:*

- I will treat your student with respect and compassion, and do my very best to teach them well - everyday.
- I will be available to your student before or after school if they need additional help in my class.
- I will write your student's grade in their planner every Friday. You will also receive a detailed grade sheet at the completion of each major unit as well as at the regular progress and

report card dates determined by the district.

- I will respond to communications from you in a timely manner and will act upon suggestions that you make to me.

*Your role in our partnership is to:*

- Review the Classroom Guidelines that is with your student. You may keep this copy - your student has been given their own copy to keep in their Science notebook.
- Check your student's planner every Friday to see their current grade.
- Encourage your student to come see me for extra help if they are confused about the material or concerned about their success in my class before they fall behind.
- Frequently ask your student "What exciting thing did you do or learn in Science today?"
- Contact me at 480-472-9949 between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM or by email at [mrploens@mpsaz.org](mailto:mrploens@mpsaz.org) if you have any comments, concerns, or questions about your student that will help me ensure their success in my classroom.
- Your student has been given a Contact Information sheet to bring home to you for completion as their first homework assignment. Please help us communicate effectively this year by filling in the section entitled Parent/Guardian Contact Information and have your student return it to school as soon as possible.

## MATERIALS

Many of the activities and laboratory experiences in 8<sup>th</sup> grade Science require

the use of specific materials. Below is a list of the materials that your student should bring to class each day in order to be successful.

- calculator
- colored pencils
- ruler (6 or 12 inch)
- pencils
- large eraser
- lined notebook paper
- 3-ring binder with dividers
- pocket folder with clips  
(to turn in work for grading)  
*NEEDED BY FRIDAY 8/15*
- red pen (for grading)

Please contact myself, or the Counseling Department (480-472-9904), if you need any assistance in obtaining materials.

Thank you in advance for working with me to make this academic year a great exploration in science!

Sincerely,

Mary Ploense, Ph.D.  
Science Teacher  
Smith Junior High School

