

DISCLOSURE DOCUMENT
Room 29—6th grade
James G. Martin, Ed.D.
2018-19 school year
<http://martinsixthgradedriggs.weebly.com>
801-518-5273 (cell)

Dear Families,

I am so thrilled to be back in the classroom. My educational journey has taken me a variety of places, from teaching kindergarten, first, fourth, and fifth grades, to being an administrator for 12 years, and now here to Howard Driggs Elementary. I love teaching and come from a long line of teachers. I always wanted to be an educator and would “play” school in my bedroom as a child. I look forward to working with your children and you this year. It will be a year of incredible learning and growth.

Sincerely,
Dr. Martin

DAILY SCHEDULE

MONDAY - THURSDAY

8:35 First Bell
8:40 Tardy Bell
8:40 Announcements, Attendance, Morning Meeting
9:00-10:25 Language Arts
10:25-10:35 Recess
10:35-11:00 Language Arts
11:00-12:30 Math
12:30-1:00 Lunch
1:00-2:00 Science/Social Studies
2:00-2:10 Recess
2:10-3:20 Science/Social Studies/Genius Hour/Fine Arts
3:20 Dismissal

***Wednesday 1:15-2:00 is PE - wear athletic shoes*

FRIDAY

8:35 First Bell
8:40 Tardy Bell
8:40 Announcements, Attendance, Self-Starter
9:00-10:00 Reading
10:00-11:15 Math
10:25-10:35 Recess
11:15-12:30 Genius Hour
12:30-1:00 Lunch
1:10 Dismissal

LANGUAGE ARTS

6th graders at Driggs are grouped for language arts with attention to providing students who score above grade level with an opportunity for differentiated, higher-order language arts instruction.

I will be working with students who are above grade level in reading and writing. Your child's language arts teacher will be providing you some specific information about the expectations for that class.

We will be using the program *Wonders* by McGraw-Hill Education. This comprehensive language arts program contains instruction in spelling, vocabulary, reading, writing, and grammar. It is a well-constructed program that we will use as a learning tool throughout the year. Students will also be participating in book clubs using texts from *Wonders* as well as trade novels.

For students in my language arts class, I expect 30 minutes of daily reading for homework. I have quite a few books in our classroom library that the students help to organize in the first week of school. This allows them to know what is available in our library and to begin to spark interest. Your children will be able to borrow books from our classroom library and bring them home. I encourage students to read a variety of books, some that are easy (which we call holidays), some which are just right, and some that are challenging. If they come upon a book that they just don't enjoy, they should abandon it and find something they can get excited about. I will be taking a status of the class daily and asking students where they are in their books of choice. I am looking for approximately 20 pages of minimum progress daily.

I am here to help your child find books they love. I want them to look forward to reading. In the beginning of the year, I will be asking your child about their interests so I can help them find books that align with their interests.

As students complete books, they will record what they have read on a list that is kept in their reading folders here in class. The lists ask students to record the title of the book, the author, the genre, what they would rate it on a 10-point scale, and whether it was a holiday, just-right, or challenging book.

Every month, your child will be expected to share a book that would rate a 9 or a 10 on a 10-point scale. This is called a book talk, and the schedule for book talks will be posted on my web site (see above). The components of the book talk can vary (it is like a commercial for the book) but should generally include a brief description of the main character, the main character's problem, maybe a theme of the book, what made us love the book, and a numerical rating. The book talk should take little preparation and should be about two minutes in length.

In addition, students will be expected to write regularly in response to their reading. This response writing will take place in class.

In addition to writing in response to reading, students will participate in a regular writer's workshop. During writer's workshop, students will learn the elements of effective writing and will have the opportunity to write in a variety of genres. They will take a piece to publication (completion) approximately once every month.

SPELLING

I use a combination of methods for spelling instruction. Again, students will be grouped for their language arts instruction, so your child's language arts teacher may approach spelling differently. Your child's language arts teacher will be sending home information on their expectations.

I use a text called *Words Their Way* based on a developmental approach to spelling. At the beginning of the year, I administer a spelling inventory that helps me understand where

students are in their spelling development. I then design word sorts and activities that are specific to your child's abilities. Many students in my language arts class will be working at the derivational level, meaning that they will be studying words with affixes (prefixes and suffixes) that have Greek and Latin roots.

I will also be issuing a weekly spelling list that comes from *Wonders*. Students will be given a pre-test on Monday. They will need to study the words that they miss on the pre-test for the post-test on Friday.

CLASSROOM RULES/PROCEDURES

Our classroom rules align with the school rules: Be safe, be respectful, and be responsible. We will be discussing what these rules mean in our classroom and school the first week of school. We will be practicing the rules through role plays and demonstrations.

In addition to our rules, we also have several classroom procedures that students will be learning in the first week of school. I have routines set up to keep things orderly and to keep students safe. The procedures are meant to facilitate learning. Again, I will be teaching these procedures and routines the first week of school through demonstration and role play.

If a student is following school and classroom rules, they will be rewarded with drawing tickets for rewards, extra recess, additional computer time, choice of seat, specific praise, school wide recognitions, and positive phone calls home. If students are struggling with rules, I will give them a reminder, followed by an opportunity to think about their choices in a quiet place in the classroom, away from other students. There, students will complete a reflection sheet which will be sent home for your review with an accompanying phone call. If the behavior problem continues even after independent reflection, the student may be asked to visit a buddy room and complete work there for a short period of time (no longer than 30 minutes). Of course, families will be notified about the buddy room placement. Finally, severe or chronic behavior problems may be referred to the principal and/or result in a parent conference.

Students who require multiple reminders about classroom rules may be placed on a daily contract as a way of incentivizing and developing positive behavioral choices. Families will always be included on the development of a daily contract.

GROWTH MINDSET

I am a firm believer in the concept of a growth mindset (Dweck, 2007). This means that I will work throughout the year to build your child's academic confidence. We will position mistakes as attempts, and we will talk about how people's failed attempts through history have led to persistence and some incredible discoveries. My hope is that students will develop a persistence and when faced with a challenging problem, they will keep working through it until they find a solution.

MATHEMATICS

We will be learning mathematics for about 90 minutes a day and using the math program *Go Math!* We will be differentiating our math instruction similar to language arts, where the more advanced students in math will be taught by Mr. Black. If your child is placed with Mr. Black, you will be notified of this and receive information about his expectations.

I will be teaching students who are on level and almost on level in math.

I will typically send some practice homework in math. It is important for students to be able to complete the homework independently. If they spend approximately 30 minutes on the homework and are not finished, please have them stop. They can show me what they were

able to do the next day, and I can help them where they struggled. The homework I send home should generally be able to be completed in 30 minutes.

Math homework may also take the form of reflection questions. Here are examples of questions that might come home as homework (from Boaler, 2016):

- What were the main mathematical concepts or ideas that you learned today or that we discussed in class today?
- What questions do you still have about _____(what we studied today)? If you don't have a question, write a similar problem and solve it instead.
- Describe an attempt or misconception that you or a classmate had in class today. What did you learn from this attempt or misconception?
- How did you or your group approach today's problem or problem set? Was your approach successful? What did you learn from your approach?
- Describe in detail how someone else in class approached a problem. How is their approach similar or different to the way you approached the problem?
- What new vocabulary words or terms were introduced today? What do you believe each new word means? Give an example/picture of each word.
- What was the big mathematical debate about in class today? What did you learn from the debate?
- How is _____ (concept) similar or different to _____ (another concept)?
- What would happen if you changed _____?
- What were some of your strengths or weaknesses in this unit? What is your plan to improve in your areas of weakness?
- How could the ideas in today's lesson be used in life?

GENIUS HOUR

Every week, your children will have time to research their passion projects, to learn research skills. I will be teaching them these research skills and process of bringing together information into a final product that they will present to the class. All of the genius hour work should be done in class, in small groups. Students should be able to complete approximately one genius hour project every quarter.

FRIDAY FOLDERS

Every Friday, I will be sending home a folder and a guide sheet for you and your child to review. It will contain work from the week. Generally, I won't send work home every day. It will come in the Friday Folder. You and your child will reflect on your child's strengths and opportunities and return the completed guide sheet and folder on Monday. You may keep the work that is inside. Feel free to write me notes and questions on the guide sheet that you return on Monday.

SCIENCE

In science, we will be studying the following units: energy affects matter, Earth's weather patterns and climate, ecosystems, and the solar system. In the new science core, there is a great emphasis on inquiry-based science, meaning that students are taught to investigate questions through the scientific process. There will be a lot of hands-on activities, videos, and opportunities to read about science in nonfiction text units. Our science textbook is a self-published text through the Utah State Board of Education.

ASSESSMENT/TESTING

My approach to assessment, also called testing, is to evaluate where students are daily. I like to issue some kind of exit ticket that tells me if the students mastered the content from that lesson. If they did not, I can immediately intervene and help them master it before we move

on. Students are not graded on these daily tests—I essentially use the information to give me feedback on my teaching and how I can improve to help all children learn the content.

There will also be weekly and unit tests. These tests give me information about how well students are learning the content. They also give me information about how well my teaching is being understood. Students who do well on weekly and unit tests will be given opportunities to accelerate and go beyond the core. Students who are struggling will be provided additional assistance. When I mark grades on the report card, I will be sharing how much of the core curriculum your child has mastered in all major concept areas.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Our social studies core is focused on world history and current events. We will occasionally be using the text *Discover Our Heritage* by Houghton Mifflin. We will also be using lots of trade books, magazines, and the newspaper. In addition to our social studies readings, we will be participating in class projects, simulations, role plays, songs, and research.

GRADING

4	=90-100
3	=80-89
2	=70-79
1	=Below 70

Language Arts

Assignments 25%
Tests/Quizzes 25%
Grammar 10%
Writing 40%

Mathematics

We will be utilizing proficiency-based grading (PBG) this school year. There will be more information to come about this as we learn more about it. Essentially, PBG emphasizes mastery over performance, using 3 or more assessments for every standard to ensure that students have truly learned concepts. In math, a 1 means that the student has partial success with help on a particular standard. A 2 translates to success with simpler content. A 3 is proficient and is where most students would be. It means that the student has mastered a content standard and met 6th grade expectations. A 4 in PBG is reserved for students who experience success with more complex content, usually with real-world application. For the report card, students' performance on individual standards are combined to reach a final grade (1, 2, 3, or 4).

Look for additional information about PBG as the year progresses.

Science

Assignments 50%
Tests/Quizzes 50%

Social Studies

Assignments 50%
Geography 25%
Tests 25%

Late work will not be penalized and will not have a negative impact on grades. However, late work may result in some class goal-setting related to responsibility (one of our school rules). It also benefits your student to complete homework when assigned as it supports what we are learning in class.

FOR PARENTS

- You are welcome to come and observe in our class at any time. Please let me know when you are coming.
- We celebrate birthdays in class. Usually, each member of the class will make and give the birthday child a card. I provide birthday students with a pencil. If you choose to bring a birthday treat, feel free. We will most likely enjoy it after our last recess (see schedule above).
- If you would like to review any of the texts we are using as a class, please let me know. I am happy to share.
- Please schedule appointments and vacations outside of the school day and school year as much as possible. Generally, the nature of our class makes work difficult to “make up.” However, for extended trips or absences, I have a packet of material that I am happy to send home in advance of the absence. The packet will then be due on the day the student returns from the extended absence.
- I love to visit with families. I am available every morning before school and every afternoon after school. If you would like to visit, please schedule a time with me so I can be ready with the materials that we need to have a productive discussion. I can also be emailed at jgmartin@graniteschools.org. I check my email every evening, so it may take me a day to get back to you. You are also welcome to call or text me on my cell phone and/or by text (information above).
- Please sign on to Remind (instructions attached), which is a way to group text parents of the class. I will try to keep you informed of major events and due dates.
- Please read through the first 20 pages of your student’s planner with your child. These pages outline the school’s policies on attendance, discipline, field trips, safe school, computer use, etc. Some pages require a parent’s or guardian’s signature.
- Check your student’s grades online by accessing Gradebook via the school webpage, my webpage, or <https://gb.graniteschools.org/portal/> Please check this regularly as it will help you monitor your child’s progress.

DISCLOSURE DOCUMENT

We have read the disclosure document and understand what it contains.

Name of child _____

Signature of child _____

Date _____

Name of parent _____

Signature of parent _____

Date _____

Please detach this page and return it to Dr. Martin! Thank you!!