



Welcome to

World Geography

and Cultures!

Dear Students and Parents/Guardians,

On behalf of the entire WMSFA faculty and staff, I would like to welcome you into our family. At WMSFA, we boast a diverse student population with over 10 different languages spoken, 6 different arts majors, and graduates from over 55 elementary schools. It is our mission at WMSFA to ensure the unique talents and strengths of every student are given ample opportunities to grow and shine. We thank you for allowing us to be a part of your lives over the next three years.

I am so excited to join you as we embark upon this journey together along the path of success! Throughout the course of the year, we will travel to distant lands all over the world, exploring the various landscapes of our planet and the cultures of people who live there. As we tour the regions of the world, we will focus our studies on five key themes as outlined by the Kentucky Core Content Standards 4.1:

* Government and Civics (formation of government; constitution principals; rights and responsibilities)
* Culture and Societies (elements of culture; social institutions; interactions among individuals and groups)
* Economics (scarcity; economic systems and institutions; markets; production, distribution, and consumption)
* Geography (the use of geographic tools; patterns; regions; human environment interaction)
* Historical Perspective (the factual and interpretative nature of history; the history of the US and the World)

Our goal for the year is to expand our horizons and expose ourselves to worldviews that are different from our own. Encounters with lands and people who are unfamiliar can be exciting and challenging at the same time. In order to ensure everyone has a positive and successful learning experience this year, our classroom will follow four guidelines:

1. **Our classroom will provide all students with an equitable education.**

You might have heard before that all students deserve an *equal education,* in which all students receive the same educational resources and opportunities. However, this does not guarantee every student will achieve excellence. Our classroom moves beyond equality and ensures that students experience an *equitable education,* in which all students receive what they need personally in order to achieve excellence. After all, not everyone learns the same way: some students prefer visuals, others learn best when they act out skits with a group, and some work best independently. Sixth grade is a major transitional year for students as they become pre-teens, moving out of elementary school and into middle school. Every year, some students mature faster than others; to accommodate this diversity, we will tailor the lessons throughout the year to meet the individual needs of every student.

1. **All voices are honored and valued in our classroom.**

Because we come from such diverse backgrounds, it is important that everyone’s ideas are treated with respect. Whether we want to be part of the group or stand out on our own, it is important that we learn to work together and embrace one another for who we are. This means absolutely no bullying will be tolerated in our classroom. It also means I will actively seek input from both students and parents/guardians on what we can do to improve our class. Throughout the year, I will send home surveys asking for your feedback on how the year is progressing. Likewise, to ensure all voices are honored and valued in our classroom, we will maintain an “open-door policy.” If at any point you would like to come and observe our class, all you need to do is sign in at the front office and stop by! Our door is always welcome to you.

1. **We will hold each other accountable and maintain high expectations for everyone.**

Because we are a community, it is essential that everyone works together as we strive to achieve excellence. Teachers will be expected to provide detailed feedback to students and parents; to offer additional tutoring opportunities and resources outside of class; and to push the limits of learning with fun activities. Students will be expected to complete all assignments with maximum effort; to practice the skills they learn at school outside of class; and to encourage each other to be the best they can be. Parents/guardians will be expected to check student agendas, newsletters, progress reports, and report cards; to maintain contact with teachers and administrators; and to support their students through every struggle and success. If any us fail to do our part, we must work together to help those who are not living up to these expectations to meet our standards of excellence.

1. **Our primary goal is to become citizens of the world who fight for social justice.**

It is my philosophy that every human being deserves to live in happiness. I also believe that there is more than one way to be happy. As the title of our class suggests, we will study the earth’s surface and the people who live on it. Sometimes this means learning about those who have different worldviews. Sometimes this means learning about those who are less fortunate than us. This kind of “pluralistic curriculum,” while more complicated, is also more truthful and in the long run will develop citizens who think deeply, critically, and creatively—and as a result become active participants in a democratic society. In doing so, our classroom will combat injustices like those we learn about, and cultivate students who actively seek to improve the world around them.

By following these guidelines, I guarantee we will achieve success. As we embark together on the new journey of middle school, I invite you to embrace the changes you will see and experience this the year. Nothing great has been achieved without hard work, and at WMSFA we strive to achieve our greatest.

GO FALCONS!

Sixth Grade Social Studies with Ms. O’Riley

Email: kelly.oriley@jefferson.kyschools.us Phone: (502) 485-8345 Website: http://koriley.weebly.com

Course Structure

Learning is facilitated through the analysis of photos, art, film, music, dramatic skits, maps and other hands-on activities. Students will read and write on a daily basis, and each term they will conduct a research project both in and out of the classroom. Students should expect homework every week and a quiz each Friday.

* Notebooks 10%
* Class work 10%
* Homework 15%
* LT Reflections 15%
* Quizzes 15%
* Projects 15%
* Tests 20%

The Power Classroom

We uphold very high academic and behavioral expectations for students at WMSFA! In addition to the school-wide discipline policy, our class upholds these expectations in order to promote a safe, rigorous, and fun learning environment:

1. Follow directions quickly.
2. Raise your hand for permission to speak.
3. Raise your hand for permission to leave your seat.
4. Make smart choices.
5. Make your teacher happy ☺

Home Partnership

Students and parents/guardians can expect a response to any questions and comments via email or phone within 24 hours. Please regularly check the class Weebly to receive announcements and important reminders. For more information on how you can contribute to your student’s success, please contact myself or our school’s PTSA.

Supplies

* Three-pronged pocket folders (provided)
* Red pocket folder
* Red spiral notebook
* Loose leaf paper
* 24 pens/pencils
* Colored pencils or markers

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***I have reviewed the syllabus with my student and will contact Ms. O’Riley with any questions or concerns.***

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Parent/Guardian Signature Parent/Guardian phone number

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Student Name (Please print) Parent/Guardian email address

Please check all that apply:

€ My student has access to the internet at home. € I would like more information about volunteering in the classroom.