



Dear Parents/Guardians:

With great pleasure, I wholeheartedly welcome you and your child back to Highcrest Middle School for an amazing sixth grade year! My name is Michele Gilford, and I will be your child's Learning Behavior Specialist/Case-Manager. I have high hopes and am so optimistic about this school year, and I hope you are feeling that way too!

I am excited to be back at Highcrest Middle School for my eighth year as a Learning Behavior Specialist! I have always been passionate about special education and advocating for individuals with disabilities. I earned my Bachelor's Degree in Special Education from Indiana University. Additionally, I recently completed my graduate program in Special Education from the American College of Education. When I am not in the classroom, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends. This February, we welcomed a baby boy into our family and it has been so much fun becoming a parent and watching him grow!

To me, parent involvement and communication is essential to all student success. That being said, I assure you that you will be included, informed, and involved in your child's sixth grade journey. As a valued member of your child's educational team, your input is essential. Our team understands that when parents and teachers work together, students make the greatest progress. For students on my caseload, I typically communicate via email by sending home monthly and quarterly updates. Of course, individual circumstances vary, and I am happy to work with families to establish communication practices that work with your preferences. To assist with this, please review the following:

- D39's [Home and School Communication guidelines](#)
- ["Who Do I Contact For What?"](#) chart

**If you are ever unsure of who to contact, please always feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns regarding your child's education. As your child's case-manager, I would find it helpful to be copied on any relevant emails to other team members.*

- Procedural Safeguards (attached to this email)

To support communication between school and home, please complete the following:

- The Electronic Consent Form (attached to email) authorizes the exchange of confidential IEP information through electronic communication.
- There may be times throughout the year when it will be helpful for our team or one of your child's private providers to be in contact with each other. I have attached the release of information form to this email. Please note that I will need a separate form for each private provider, along with their names, emails and telephone numbers. Please return this form as soon as possible.

In closing, I want to welcome you to the new school year! Along with our entire team at Highcrest Middle School, I am dedicated to providing your child with the best education possible. I am confident that together we will help your child grow and accomplish many great feats this year. I am eagerly looking forward to meeting you and your child and collaborating with you during the 2023-2024 school year!

Please know that I am here to answer any questions and will make it a priority to ensure that these first few weeks (and the entirety of the school year) are a comfortable and positive experience for you and your child. If you would like to schedule a phone call or a Zoom meeting to touch base, I am happy to do so! Please email me with your availability!

Sincerely,

Michele Gilford, LBS

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