

Welcome 6th Grade Parents

Heyde/Brisky/Espinoza/Flanagan/Whiston

2018-2019

Welcome to Sixth-Grade House 2! Attached is some information about our house that may make your family's first few months in 6th grade at Highcrest a little more comfortable. Please carefully read through the information; it will help you understand some of the ins and outs of 6th grade. We look forward to a highly successful year!

Student Intake Form (This is the Google form attached to the email you received from your child's homeroom teacher)

This form is optional, but we find that it can be very helpful to us as we get to know your child better. If you like, you may print and complete a paper copy by hand and send it back to school with your child, type the form and email it back to us, or simply send us an email with any information that you think would be helpful for us to know.

Homeroom Teacher

Your child's homeroom teacher is your main contact person. If at any time you need information or have questions, please feel free to contact us. The best way to reach us is through email. We love to communicate with families through email. Our district email addresses are listed here: heydec@wilmette39.org, briskyw@wilmette39.org, espinozm@wilmette39.org, flanagan@wilmette39.org, whistonm@wilmette39.org. Voice mail and written notes are other ways to contact us, but email is the fastest way to communicate with us.

Organization

Students should always have their **charged** iPads and binders with them. Notice of assignments, tests, and quizzes will be posted in Schoology, and on the boards in our classroom. Assignments are posted in Schoology, and most students will be using an app to list homework assignments; we will not be requiring students to complete the paper assignment notebook, but it is an option for students who wish to use it. It is very important for students to stay up to date with their assignments. We will have regular locker and binder clean-outs at school, too, to help students stay organized.

Homework

Dr. Heyde (ELA), Ms. Brisky (science), Mrs. Espinoza (ELA), Mrs. Flanagan (math), and Mrs. Bassett (accelerated math) all will be keeping a class calendar and posting assignments in Schoology. Parents are invited to check Schoology to keep up-to-date with daily and long-term assignments. Specific information about daily homework, projects, and tests will be found on Schoology.

Absence

If your child is going to be absent from school and you would like us to pull together work to leave in the front office, please email your child's homeroom teacher by **9 a.m.** on the morning of the absence. If you contact us before 9 a.m., we generally will be able to leave homework in the Highcrest Office for you to pick up after 1:30 p.m. ***Most assignments will also be posted in Schoology, so do not feel that you need to contact us for homework. Checking the Schoology site is a good first step and usually all that is needed.***

If your child misses class due to band, orchestra, a doctor's visit, or another appointment, please have him or her check in with us before the end of the day. He or she is still responsible for the work missed during that class period.

Highcrest Idols

Each week one student will be recognized from each homeroom for displaying one or more of our character education traits (service, leadership, responsibility, integrity, compassion, tolerance and self-awareness). In order to learn a little bit about each student in our class, we will invite your child to decorate the Highcrest Idol bulletin board with family photos, awards, and certificates.

Classroom Economy

House 2 uses a classroom economy system. Classroom economy is a student accountability tool we use to teach students about financial responsibility, as well as to encourage them to take an active role within the classroom. At the beginning of the school year, students applied for different responsibilities within each homeroom. Students will earn and bank a "salary" from their jobs, as well as pay "rent," while still budgeting enough money to participate in activities throughout the school year. They will gain experience managing their money as they fulfill their daily responsibilities and contribute to the overall success of our classrooms.

Homeroom/ELA Teacher Information:

Hi! I'm Dr. Christina Heyde. This is my fourteenth year teaching sixth grade at Highcrest. I will be teaching English Language Arts (ELA) (a reading and writing block), as well as a section of social studies with my homeroom students. I earned an undergraduate degree from Harvard University in 1988 and a law degree from Northwestern University in 1992. Before coming to Highcrest, I practiced law at Jenner & Block for three years (1992-1995) and then was a clinical associate professor at Northwestern University School of Law for eight and a half years (1996-2004). I earned my master's degree in elementary education with endorsements in middle school language arts and social studies from Northwestern in 2004, and I earned a doctorate degree in educational leadership from National Louis in 2013.

My husband, John, and I live in Park Ridge. John is an attorney with Sidley Austin. Our younger daughter, Katherine, is a sophomore at Emory University in Georgia. Our older daughter, Elise, just graduated from The University of Illinois and is working for a non-profit in New York. Our son, Alex, is a third-year doctoral student in mathematical biology at Harvard University. I am an avid reader, trivia player, and moviegoer, and I enjoy traveling. In my free time, I participate in a women's book group and volunteer with a few service organizations. I also am one of the WJHS-HMS debate team coaches.

We will have a fun year together! I look forward to getting to know everyone.

Dr. Christina Heyde

English Language Arts and Social Studies

heydec@wilmette39.org

Homeroom/Science Teacher Information:

Greetings! My name is Ms. Brisky. This is my seventh year as a teacher, and my fourth year teaching in the Wilmette School District. I will be teaching science for House 2 and Social Studies for my homeroom students. Before coming to Wilmette, I helped establish a school called LEARN in North Chicago where I taught science, math, and social studies to 6th - 8th graders. Three years ago I joined the Wilmette team and taught 8th grade math and social studies at WJHS. I received my undergraduate degree in Elementary Education from Elmhurst College in 2009, and I have just completed my Masters in Education degree in Curriculum and Instruction.

I grew up in the local North Shore area. I was even a competitive gymnast through the Wilmette Park District when Highcrest was still the park center. I have many memories of running down the hall towards the gym to complete my vaults. Outside of the classroom, I like to spend my time reading and visiting with my family that lives in the area.

I am excited to kick off another exciting year at HMS!

Ms. Whitney Brisky

Science and Social Studies

briskyw@wilmette39.org

Homeroom/ELA Teacher Information:

Hi! My name is Mrs. Meghan Espinoza. This is my twelfth year of teaching and my eighth year here at Highcrest where I will be teaching ELA (English Language Arts). In addition to this block of reading and writing, I will also be teaching my homeroom Social Studies. I earned my undergraduate degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and my Masters of Education degree from National Louis University.

My husband, Pancho, and I live in Skokie with our three children. My son, Matthew, is turning 17 and is a junior at Niles North High School. I also have two daughters, Emma and Sophie. Emma is 12 and a 7th grader, and Sophie is 10 and just started 5th grade. In my free time I enjoy reading many different genres of books as well as cheering on my favorite team - Go Cubs!

We will have a fun year together! I look forward to getting to know everyone.

Mrs. Meghan Espinoza

English Language Arts and Social Studies

espinozm@wilmette39.org

Math Teacher Information:

Hello! I'm Mrs. Nikki Flanagan. This will be my 15th year teaching at Highcrest. I teach math for the house and a section of social studies with my homeroom students. I graduated from Purdue University, and I majored in Psychology and Youth, Adult, and Family Services. Upon graduation, I moved to Chicago, planning to open a non-profit driving school. Quickly, I learned that I loved teaching, but I preferred being in a classroom as opposed to being in a car, so I enrolled at North Park and earned my master's degree in Teacher Leadership. Throughout the year, I also teach undergraduate and master's level classes to pre-service teachers for North Park.

I live in Wauconda with my husband, Patrick, our 8-year-old son, Connor, 4-year-old daughter, Kayley, 2 year-old son, Charlie, and our dog, Shannon. Our family loves going on excursions around the Chicagoland area, and we've been known to take quite a few road trips to Wisconsin and Indiana, as well. I am so excited for this year, and I am eager to get to know your child!

Mrs. Nikki Flanagan

Math and Social Studies

flanagan@wilmette39.org

Learning Behavior Specialist (LBS) Information:



Hello! My name is Mrs. Maura Whiston, and I'm the Learning Behavior Specialist (LBS) for the house. This is my 19th year teaching, 16 of which have been spent at Highcrest. This year, I will be co-teaching morning math classes with Mrs. Flanagan, and the afternoon ELA block with Mrs. Espinoza, in addition to teaching two Academic Strategies classes. I grew up in Chicago and later attended Prospect High School. I received my BA from Benedictine University, my MA from Northeastern Illinois University, and my Middle School Endorsement from National Louis University. I currently live in Des Plaines with my husband, a stock strategist, and our newly-minted kindergartener, Jack. Outside of school, I enjoy travel, cooking, and arts & crafts. I am excited to get to know your students this year and am looking forward to another great year at Highcrest!

Feel free to follow me on Twitter! I often Tweet about events and activities that are going on in House 2, along with helpful articles/resources about students and learning. My YouTube channel also has some helpful videos for students, especially in the area of math.

Mrs. Maura Whiston

Learning Behavior Specialist

whistonm@wilmette39.org

 @WhistonHMS	 https://tinyurl.com/y96jzly5	 https://sites.google.com/wilmette39.org/whiston/home
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Curriculum:

ELA (Reading)

We will read novels from a variety of genres, and we will learn about the ways in which these genres differ. Your ELA teacher has a classroom library with many titles, and she is happy to help students choose interesting books at their reading level. By the end of the year, students will increase their reading comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary, in addition to gaining a deeper understanding of the storytelling concepts of plot, setting, character, point of view, theme, and author style and purpose.

ELA (Writing)

We will do a lot of research, writing, and public speaking. Throughout the year, your child will engage in various types of writing, including narrative, argumentative, informational, and creative writing. For most pieces of writing, we will follow the writing process of pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. We will also study vocabulary and grammar to help students develop the knowledge and skills that a writer needs in order to be clear, concise, and engaging.

Math

We will cover number sense and computation, factors, multiples, equivalent expressions, ratios, comparing fractions, estimation, variables and equations, geometry, and statistics and data. Our study of math will emphasize problem solving, and your child will learn a variety of strategies to solve multi-step problems. Teaching math with real world applications is very important. We will engage in computation review in addition to working on enrichment projects.

Science

This year, we will explore chemistry, astronomy, and light energy through a hands-on, inquiry-based curriculum. Your child will act as a scientist to discover scientific concepts by performing various experiments within collaborative groups. Students will use their iPads to create digital lab notebooks in which they will record their observations and conclusions during lab activities.

Social Studies

Our curriculum focuses on two key questions this year: (1) What are the elements that comprise a culture and help it survive over time? (2) How do times of crisis and adversity affect culture? We will study ancient civilizations, including Ancient Greece, and we will compare ancient civilizations to modern civilizations. Our goals this year are to develop an understanding and appreciation of the political, economic, and cultural achievements of each of the civilizations we study and to understand the geographic and physical features of the land that contributed to the development of each civilization. We also will focus on current events through regular assignments.