

Welcome to Sixth Grade, Bursley Students and Families!

We hope that this letter finds you enjoying the last few weeks of summer vacation and beginning to prepare for the year ahead!

Sixth grade is going to be a memorable year, filled with exciting challenges and rewarding experiences. A primary focus for our year together will be growing in the areas of organization, responsibility, and moral character. Strategies to be successful in these areas, combined with high academic expectations, will (we believe) prepare your sixth grader for Junior High and beyond.

It is our hope that this packet will answer many of your questions about sixth grade, and will help you prepare for our year together. We look forward to meeting you at Open House on September 2 and answering any questions that remain.

Enjoy the rest of your summer!

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Sixth Grade Staff and Schedule

Mr. Huck and Mrs. Steele are the sixth grade classroom teachers. Regardless of homeroom placement, all sixth graders will spend time with both Mr. Huck and Mrs. Steele each school day.

Mr. Huck is beginning his third year at Bursley after teaching sixth grade Language Arts for seven years in Milan, Michigan. Mr. Huck and his wife have two sons, Louis and Harrison. Mr. Huck is a graduate of the University of Michigan and teaches reading groups, writing, and science to Bursley sixth graders.

Mrs. Steele is beginning her third year in sixth grade at Bursley, after teaching fifth grade for seven years. Mrs. Steele and her husband have one daughter, Tessa Mae, and are expecting their second child in February. Mrs. Steele is a graduate of GVSU and teaches morning math groups, math lab and vocabulary, and social studies to Bursley sixth graders.

Mrs. VanDyken is an important member of our sixth grade teaching team too, supporting our students and their families through her role as an Intervention Specialist. Mrs. VanDyken and her husband have two children, Trenton and Alexa. Mrs. VanDyken is a graduate of GVSU and teaches Fusion reading to Bursley sixth graders. Mrs. VanDyken also supports students in math and writing.

Our primary goal as a teaching team is to meet the needs and challenge the talents of each of our students to the very best of our ability. To help make this happen, sixth grade students will be placed on teams with peers of similar academic ability for much of our math and language arts instruction. Students will be part of either the Green Team or the White Team, and their team placement may change as the year progresses and we encounter different units of study. Groupings will be based on pretests given at the beginning of each unit.

Sixth graders will spend some time in their homeroom groups, too. Each day homeroom groups will attend read aloud and science with Mr. Huck, and social skills and social studies with Mrs. Steele. Students will also attend their "specials" with their homeroom class, following the schedule below:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
H6 Homeroom	Art (11:30-12:20)	Music (11:30-12:20) & PE (2:05-2:55)	Band, Orchestra, Spanish – "BOSS" (2:05-2:55)		STEM (11:30-12:20)
S6 Homeroom	Music (11:30-12:20)	STEM (11:30-12:20)		Art (11:30-12:20)	PE (2:55-3:45)

About the Attached Documents

We have attached four documents to share additional information with you. Below is a brief description of each.

Bursley 6th Grade Supply List

This supply list was sent home with fifth graders' report cards in June, but we know that sometimes they can get misplaced during summer adventures. Please take a look at the requested school supplies and optional donations.

Bursley Sixth Grade Classroom Effort Rubric

As a teaching team, we strive to communicate students' level of effort in the classroom with parents on a regular basis. We also believe that work ethic and classroom behavior should be a separate score than that shown on an assignment or assessment. To make this happen, we have created the attached Classroom Effort Rubric to summarize our expectations for sixth grade work ethic and behavior.

Each sixth grader will begin the school year at a level 2 (Meets Expectations) for each row of the rubric, and for each subject of their school day. As students demonstrate effort that exceeds expectations in a given area, they will move up to a level 1. If effort in a given area becomes inconsistent or becomes a concern, the student's score for a given row of the rubric will be changed to a level 3 or 4. Current scores will be accessible to parents for each subject, at any time, by accessing your child's PowerSchool Gradebook account.

Connect with us using Remind.com

Check out this handout from Mrs. Steele for information about a unique way for parents to stay updated on homework expectations, special events, due dates, and topics being studied.

Mark Your Calendars

We have a busy semester ahead! Fundraising and preparing for Sixth Grade Camp leads to many due dates and deadlines. Check out this summary, and consider adding these dates to your family calendar or posting this page somewhere in your home.

Final Notes

As a sixth grade team, we strongly believe in establishing relationships with all of our students and their families. For this reason, we have decided to invite all students and families to **Bursley's Open House on Wednesday, September 2 (6:30-7:30 pm)** in addition to our **Sixth Grade Curriculum Night on Tuesday, September 15 (7:00-8:00 pm)**. Please note, this is a change from what was originally stated on our teacher brochure distributed in the spring. Open House will be a great time for a quick meet and greet, while Curriculum Night will be used to provide an informative overview of sixth grade curriculum. We hope you can join us for both of these important back-to-school evenings!

Additionally, we will be giving the sixth graders a "working snack time" each morning. We ask that you only send **healthy snacks** to be consumed during this time, as we are trying to fuel our bodies and minds for learning. Great healthy snacks include fruits and vegetables, graham crackers or goldfish crackers, pretzels, dry cereal, fruit snacks, or cheese and crackers.

Last but not least, we have one request. We have put together an online **Family Information Survey** that we would like to have completed before the start of the school year. We will have this available on laptops at Open House, but we invite you to complete it in advance by visiting the website listed below and answering a few questions. All responses will be kept confidential and will only be seen by Mr. Huck, Mrs. Steele, and Mrs. VanDyken. Thank you, in advance, for your help!

<http://goo.gl/VytcXB>

Bursley 6th Grade Supply List

We will have a fun-filled and busy year in sixth grade, and we can't wait to share it with you!

Organization and responsibility will be a primary focus of our year together. To begin this process, we have included (below) a list of supplies that students will need when school starts in September. School supply sales typically start in July. Keep your eye on the ads!

Instead of desks, sixth graders will store their school supplies, textbooks, and novels in their locker. For this reason, it is important that students do not commit to an organizational system that is too large. One ½" three-ring binder with tabs for reading, solid-colored folders for each of the other subjects, and a few notebooks will work best.

If you have questions or concerns about this, please contact your child's teacher.

One ½" three-ring binder with 5 divider tabs

6 solid color, two-pocket folders (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple)

Three spiral-bound one-subject notebooks

One Composition Notebook – These are *not* spiral bound and typically have a black, marble-looking cover.

At least one dozen #2 pencils

At least one pack of ink pens

At least two pads of sticky notes

One multi-colored pack of highlighters (at least one yellow and one pink or blue)

One pack of colored pencils

Erasers – "Pencil Toppers" or larger, hand-held erasers

One plastic pencil box or zippered pencil pouch

A note about **calculators**:

A calculator with just the basic operations is necessary for sixth grade math, and we will have these available in the classroom for students to use. However, the Junior High asks all students to have a Texas Instruments *TI-30X IIS* calculator, so this model would be a good long-term investment. These can be purchased at Meijer, Target, Walmart, and office supply stores for about \$15.

If you are willing to make **additional donations** to our classrooms, the following items are very helpful:

Kleenex

Rubber Cement or Glue Sticks

Disinfectant Wipes

Ziploc Plastic Bags (quart or gallon size)

Index Cards

Extra Sticky Notes or Colored Pencils

Finally, if you have a minute before school starts, please help us collect some contact information for your family by filling out the survey at the following link:

<https://goo.gl/VytcXB>

Thank you!

Mr. Brent Huck

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Bursley Sixth Grade Classroom Effort Rubric

	1 Exceeds Level Expectations	2 Meets Level Expectations	3 Inconsistent Behavior	4 Concern
Homework Completion	<p>Student meets level expectations (see next column).</p> <p>Also, student uses homework tasks as a foundation for further discussion with teacher and/or peers.</p>	<p>All homework assignments are completed on time and are readily available for collection or review.</p>	<p>Homework assignments are frequently incomplete and/or not readily available for collection or review.</p>	<p>Homework assignments are often incomplete or missing.</p>
Quality of Work	<p>Student meets level expectations (see next column).</p> <p>Also, student work is consistently "final copy" quality.</p>	<p>Student seems to take pride in their work.</p> <p>Tasks are neatly presented on complete, clean sheets of paper and multiple pages are stapled in the upper-left corner.</p> <p>Tasks demonstrate legible handwriting, appropriate punctuation and grammar, and effort toward great spelling.</p> <p>Work demonstrates student thinking in an organized way.</p>	<p>Work frequently lacks attention to detail.</p> <p>There are errors in presentation, handwriting, punctuation and grammar, spelling, and/or organization.</p>	<p>Work quality is a concern.</p>
Uses Time Wisely	<p>Student meets level expectations (see next column).</p> <p>Also, student chooses other academic tasks to focus on if/when assigned tasks are completed.</p>	<p>During independent work time, student is focused on completion of academic tasks.</p> <p>Gathering materials to complete their tasks is done quickly and quietly.</p> <p>When questions arise, student seeks support in an appropriate way.</p>	<p>Student frequently needs reminders to stay on-task during independent work time.</p>	<p>Student focus during independent work time is a concern.</p>
Focuses Well in Classroom	<p>Student meets level expectations (see next column).</p> <p>Also, student takes a leadership role in class activities and ensures that others are on-task.</p>	<p>During instruction, student strives to keep their workspace free of distractions.</p> <p>Student is engaged in the lesson, participates appropriately, and completes tasks without specific reminders.</p> <p>Conversations with peers are on-topic and appropriate.</p>	<p>Student frequently needs reminders to stay on-task during instruction.</p>	<p>Student focus during instruction is a concern.</p>
Behavior Issues	<p>Student meets level expectations (see next column).</p> <p>Also, student assists or encourages peers to meet or exceed this standard.</p>	<p>Student is appropriate in all interactions with peers and staff members.</p> <p>They strive to use appropriate manners in the classroom.</p> <p>Student conducts him/herself around the building in a way that shows leadership and respect.</p>	<p>Student frequently needs reminders about appropriate behaviors in and outside of the classroom.</p>	<p>Student behavior in and outside of the classroom is a concern.</p>

Connect with us using Remind.com

As an educator and a busy mom, I recognize and value the importance of communication between our classrooms at Bursley and your homes. To that end, I have created an account with the website **remind.com**, and I'd like to invite you to try it out!

Remind provides teachers with an easy way to send text message "blasts" to parents and students, while protecting the privacy of each individual. If you choose to subscribe to my Remind group(s), you will receive text messages on your cell phone from me, but you will never see my personal cell phone number, nor will I be able to see yours. This one-way communication system is meant to deliver reminders only, so replying is not an option. The Remind service does not cost anything, but your mobile phone provider's text messaging fees may apply.

If this sounds like something that you – or your sixth grader – might be interested in trying, please read on for more directions and for your group options. If you have any questions, please let me know. I look forward to a year of collaboration!

To enroll in my Remind groups, you must send a text message from your phone to the following Remind.com phone number:

(616) 232-6915

In the text message, you must type the code that corresponds to the group you would like to join. If you'd like to enroll in more than one group, a separate text message will have to be sent for each group. These codes are provided below.

@manners One of my goals for our school year together is to help sixth graders grow in the area of moral character. We will do this by focusing on one good manner each week. (See <http://SteeleSixthGrade.weebly.com> for more information!) If you choose to join this group, you will receive one text message each Sunday evening, summarizing our "Manner to Master" for the week. Text **@manners** to the Remind phone number above to join this group.

@bu6-remind This second group will be used to share general reminders about Sixth Grade Camp, upcoming field trips or fundraiser due dates, and Bursley events like Parent/Teacher Conferences or holiday parties. Text **@bu6-remind** to the Remind phone number above to join this group.

@bu6-all This third group will be used to share important homework reminders that apply to all sixth graders, including due dates for long-term projects or upcoming assessments. Text **@bu6-all** to the Remind phone number above to join this group.

Finally, for much of our math and ELA instruction, sixth grade students will be placed on teams with peers of similar academic ability. Your child will be on either the Green Team or the White Team, and their team placement may change as the year progresses. My last two Remind.com group options will be used to share homework reminders that are specific to one team, and should match information recorded in student planners. This will be a great way to stay on top of nightly homework expectations, but parents/students should plan to subscribe after the school year starts and teams have been formed. These codes will be **@bu6-green** and **@bu6-white**.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Sixth grade is going to be an exciting and eventful year, and there are a number of events that we already have on our calendar for the first semester. Please make note of these, and let us know if you have any questions.

Thank you!

Mr. Brent Huck and Mrs. Becky Steele

Wednesday, September 2	Bursley Open House, 6:30-7:30 pm
Tuesday, September 8	First Day of School! (8:45 am – 3:45 pm)
Wednesday, September 9	Sixth Grade Camp Fundraiser Kick-Off – Little Caesars Pizza Kits
Tuesday, September 15	Sixth Grade Curriculum Night, 7:00-8:00 pm
Friday, September 25	Sixth Grade Camp Fundraiser Money & Orders Due
Wednesday, October 7	Sixth Grade Camp Fundraiser Product Pick-Up, 3:00-6:00 pm (Bursley 6 th Grade Hallway)
Monday, October 19	Sixth Grade Camp Parent Meeting, 7:00 pm
Wednesday, October 28	Sixth Grade Camp Paperwork & Payment Deadline
Tuesday, November 10 – Friday, November 13	Bursley Sixth Grade Camp at YMCA Camp Pendalouan
Wednesday, November 25 – Friday, November 27	Thanksgiving Break
Monday, December 21 – Friday, January 1	Christmas Break

Visit our classroom websites to stay up-to-date on the latest news and events!

<http://SteeleSixthGrade.weebly.com> and <http://HuckSixthGrade.weebly.com>