

Hello Parents and Welcome to a New School Year!

I wanted to introduce myself to everyone, especially if I have not taught one of your children before or if you are new to the St. James community. For those of you who don't know me my name is Mrs. Esquivel. I teach both seventh and eighth grade Social Studies. I have been at St. James for fourteen years now and love sharing my passion for history with my students.

I will use e-mail on a regular basis when sending out information to all parents, such as details about the unit we are studying or projects that the students are completing. If you have an additional e-mail address that you would like added please let me know. All Social Studies Newsletters will be posted on my school website. You can find that web address below my email signature. Homework assignments, notes, and other materials will be posted on the students' Social Studies Google Classroom.

In 7th and 8th grade, we focus on American History. Seventh grade will begin by studying the development of our new government after the Revolutionary War and then continue on all the way through the Civil War and Reconstruction Era. Eighth grade will pick up their studies with the opening of the Western Frontier through the 1950s and Civil Rights Movement.

In addition to American History, the students will focus on additional enrichment subject area in the Social Sciences. The 7th grade will focus on Economics/Personal Finance and Geography. The 8th grade will focus on Media Literacy and Political Science. We will also complete a few Thematic Units this year in which students will analyze several primary sources and reflect upon how an issue in our history has developed over time. This will promote deeper engagement with the past and allow students to find connections to current events.

The students also review the Illinois and United States Constitutions. The seventh graders will study and take the United States Constitution Test in the fall. The eighth graders will study and take the Illinois Constitution Test in the spring. Passing both tests is a requirement for graduation.

This year, the entire school moved to a new version of the Social Studies curriculum that includes an online component and eTextbook. Students will be able to use the same Realize Platform for Social Studies that they have been using for their Science classes, which should help to make it a smooth transition. If your child would prefer to have an actual textbook at home please let me know.

In class this week, I shared with the students my procedures and expectations, and we read through the class agreement form. Next week, we will discuss the extra credit opportunities I offer to the students. We will also review the three Themes of U.S. History and the Pyramids of Love & Hate that we will make connections to throughout the year. All of this information can also be found on the students' Social Studies Google Classroom.

I will soon be inviting each of you to join your child's Google Classroom so you can receive regular updates about their class. Please contact me if you should have any questions. I hope to have the opportunity to speak with each of you at some point along the way and I am looking forward to a wonderful school year with you and the students!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Esquivel