August 1, 2021

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome to seventh grade! We are very excited to welcome you to Team Equinox and to get this school year up and running. This letter is intended to give you the information you will need to begin the year as smoothly as possible. We look forward to a productive start to our journey together.

We, the Equinox Teachers, have had a busy summer innovating an engaging and rigorous plan for the year. We are very much looking forward to working to build our team culture while we get to know each of you as individual learners. Together, over the next two years, we will cultivate a strong sense of community, based on respect and relationships.

We look forward to a successful school year. Please be sure to ask your student to show you his/her Google Classroom Site periodically throughout the year, as this is the place we post links to assignments and other important information. Additionally, we plan to communicate with families via a weekly emailed newsletter outlining information about each subject area, as well as the latest Team Equinox happenings. Let us know if you would like a printed version of the newsletter. If you have any questions, please contact us through email at mtalbott@ewsd.org, lgraham@ewsd.org, ewaters@ewsd.org and kbouchard@ewsd.org. Also, be sure to see this year’s school supply list (included) and a short biography about each of your new teachers on the back page!

Sincerely,

Laurie Graham (Science)
Elizabeth Kielty Waters (Mathematics)
Monica Talbott (Humanities)
Keith Bouchard (Special Educator)

Equinox Bios

**Monica Talbott** (she/her) (Language Arts & Social Studies): Hi, everyone. I am very excited to be your 7th and 8th grade Language Arts and Social Studies teacher. This will be my 21st year as a teacher, but my first year in Vermont. I was born and raised in Kansas, but have traveled extensively and have always loved New England. My daughter will be a grad student at UVM this fall; we have enjoyed traveling around Vermont this summer and can’t wait for our first fall here. I love books and am excited to share my love of reading and history with you!

**Laurie Graham** (she/her) (Science): Hi there, I am Ms. Graham and I am excited to be your 7th and 8th grade science teacher! My favorite science topics include geology, physics and biology. I always strive to make learning relevant, interesting and student-driven. This summer, I visited my hometown in Massachusetts and spent some quality time outside hiking, kayaking and bird watching. I am excited to make observations, ask questions and participate in scientific learning with you this year and I look forward to meeting you all. Go Eagles!
Elizabeth Kielty Waters (she/her) (Mathematics): I am excited to be your mathematics teacher on Team Equinox for the next two years! I am a Florida Girl, “Go Gators!!” This is my tenth year in education. I have five years experience teaching a variety of high school mathematics, including Algebra 1 and 2, Geometry, and Math for College Readiness. I graduated from West Port High School and the College of Central Florida in 2010. I earned my Bachelor’s degree in Mathematics Education from Saint Leo University in 2013. I am currently working on my Master’s Degree through the Vermont Mathematics Initiative at Southern New Hampshire University. My husband works for the United States Postal Service and took a position in 2016 which moved us to Burlington. I have been working at Essex Middle School for the past four years. I take pride in creating a structured, safe learning environment in which all students can be successful. When not in the classroom, I enjoy weightlifting, motorcycle riding, and trips to the beach. I look forward to building new relationships and supporting students as we build the skills necessary to be successful in high school mathematics.

Keith Bouchard (he/him) (Special Education): I’m excited to start a new school year as the team special educator. This will be my 9th year at EMS and 15th year as a special educator. I was born and raised in VT. I grew up along the Canadian Border on a dairy farm. I have a wife and a three year old daughter. Some of my interests are woodworking and refinishing old furniture during the winter months and landscaping during the warmer months. My main role is to support students identified as needing extra support throughout their day and helping the team teachers adapt curriculum. I also provide in-class and out of class support, small groups and one on one instruction.

In light of the recent pandemic, we want to minimize the amount of supplies that students share while in the building. Additionally, students will not have access to a locker and will need to have a bag or backpack to keep their belongings in.

The following list is what we are recommending that students bring in order to be prepared for learning:

- Pencils and Pencil Cap Erasers
- Blue or black inked pens
- Math Binder (1 ½” with 5 dividers)
- Language Arts/Social Studies Binder (2” with 5 dividers)
- Loose leaf lined paper
- Graph Paper
- Water Bottle

Additional Optional Suggestions:

- Highlighter
- Hand held sharpener
- A case or pouch to hold extra pencils, pens, etc.
- Scientific Calculator
- A box of tissues to donate to your homeroom teacher