

## **COURSE OVERVIEW FOR 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE – 2009-2010 ACADEMIC YEAR**

### **ADVANCED LANGUAGE ARTS**

Welcome to fall! Our studies are well under way in Advanced Language Arts, with students already engaged in keeping themselves organized and doing the creative work of reading, writing, and speaking. As I write this overview, the students are reading widely, signing up for book talks, and filling in reading records, all part of our new Reading Workshop component in Advanced Language Arts. I am adding this structure as a way to bring together students' lives as independent readers and as Language Arts students. As study after study shows, it is reading that makes lifelong readers, and I am looking forward to this added approach to fostering lifelong reading amongst the great readers at NOVA. The goals are set high, and the response from the students has been overwhelmingly positive.

Within the focus on choice reading, students will be writing about literature in letter-essays to me as well as to one another; they will endorse one book per trimester in a book talk for their class; and along with me, they will monitor the level of challenge, the quantity, and the genres in their reading choices in an effort to extend themselves in each of these areas. I invite you to discuss reading with your student at every opportunity, for there should always be a book-in-progress, and students have a place to save book suggestions.

Over the course of the trimester, we will review the parts of speech and ready ourselves for a thorough study of sentence structure and diagramming that will commence in the second trimester. This section of the curriculum will be review for eighth grade students, while the seventh graders will encounter a deeper grammatical focus than many of them have yet had. This is the only material that is repeated in both years for Advanced Class students, and each year, the eighth grade students are relieved to have that second walk through the material to lay the foundation that will serve them well in both high school and college.

The thematic strain that connects many of the units this year is multicultural literature. Through some of the summer's most popular book choices, students moved with an American-born protagonist's family to her father's childhood home in Jerusalem; they struggled at sea after a shipwreck with a Pondicherry boy who is equally devoted to Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam; they walked in the shoes of a Japanese-American family whose move from Iowa to Georgia illuminates not only the trials of growing up but also those of the immigrant family in our own country; and they immersed themselves in understanding a social system in Mozambique in which the spirits of animals, the role of family, and the grimness of reality are defined very differently from what we know here. In the weeks to come, each student will create a poster analyzing a multicultural text. These will be on display in the library.

Our study of the idea of culture will include the texts *Watership Down* by Richard Adams and *Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver. These two texts give a unique perspective not only on the everyday nuances of culture, but also on the far-reaching impacts of organizational structures used by human – and in Adams' allegorical book, rabbit – groups. Students will work with these books in small groups, taking responsibility for delving deeply into the text with their group members.

In November, we will embark on a study of oral tradition, a genre rarely included in school curricula, but rich with opportunities for learning about universal human themes, various cultural groups, and the richness of our local traditional communities. We will read *Two Old Women*, an Athabaskan traditional story brought to the page by Velma Wallis. During this time, students will use Socratic Seminar to delve into the story. They will also have the opportunity to witness the Lashootseed language and Salish stories with a visit from a local storyteller who will share stories of salmon from Native American traditions as well as Irish tradition. This unit will carry into the second trimester, and will culminate with the students participating in oral tradition by retelling stories that they have been told.

The students are energized by the return to school and their positive experiences at Camp Colman. Our learning community is diving into another year of self-discovery and growth as readers, writers, and speakers with enthusiasm, cooperation, and high spirits. Thank you for all that you do at home to send the students to us so ready to learn and be a supportive community together.  
Here we go!

Janet Hubbard

## **World History/PNW (Pacific Northwest)**

### Description:

This course will focus on answering the following question about various geographic regions and countries of the world: "How does the history and geography of this region contribute to its current social, political, economic, and environmental climate, and how do these ultimately affect my life in the Pacific Northwest?" The following regions will be studied during the following dates:

### 1st Trimester:

Africa (PNW theme: trade/economy, global responsibility):	Sep 9- Oct 21
Southwest Asia (PNW theme: trade/economy, environment):	Oct 23- Nov 24

### 2nd Trimester:

Europe (PNW theme: Government):	Nov 30- Jan 16
Central and South Asia (PNW theme: trade/economy, immigration):	Jan 19- Mar 3

### 3rd Trimester:

East Asia and Australia (PNW theme: trade/economy, immigration):	Mar 8- Apr 23
The Americas (PNW theme: Geography, Native Peoples, immigration, settlement):	Apr 26- Jun 4.

The study of each of these six units will follow this format:

Week one: Historical and geographic review of the region given by teacher in the form of oral notes recorded by the students using an outline format in their notebooks. During this week, students will also be assigned specific countries from that region to research.  
10 pt quiz on notes.

Week two: Students research their specific countries in class, focusing on the question initially stated above and following the guidelines of the rubric below.

Week three: Students finish research and prepare presentations.

Week four: Students present the results of their research using the rubric below as a guideline. All other students take notes from presentations.

Week five: Review and 30 pt quiz on Geographic region using multiple choice, fill in the blanks, map labeling, and essay question.

### Additional points:

- Students will be paired to research their countries.
- Partners may compare and check notes during first trimester

- Quizzes during first and second trimesters are open note
- Quizzes during the third trimester are closed note
- PNW themes for each unit will be introduced and discussed by the teacher and reinforced during the presentations and the Review.

### **Guidelines for Presentation Evaluation**

- Between 5-7 minutes long (2 pts)
- Accurately discusses/describes current political, economic, and environmental climate of assigned country (8 pts)
- Specifically discusses/describes how the political, economic, and environmental climate of assigned country is a result of its geography and the history of its region (8 pts)
- Describes how the geography (include min 2'x 2' map including major cities, physical features, and economically important agricultural/natural resource locations), history(include min. 5' long timeline), and political, economic, and environmental climate of the assigned country specifically affects us in the PNW. This needs to focus on the PNW themes of this unit. (8 pts)
- Includes at least two primary source interviews from divergent perspectives using tools like IM, Skype, or email. These interviews need to reflect different sides of a topically important issue in the country. (handed in at time of presentation or shown in case of Skype) (6 pts)
- Contains a bibliography in MLA format for interviews and at least three other sources in 12 pt, Times New Roman (handed in at time of presentation) (4 pts)
- Contains source evaluation for each source, written in complete sentences, that focuses on the credentials of author or person interviewed in 12 pt, Times New Roman (handed in at time of presentation) (4 pts)
- Self and partner evaluation (0-4 pts)

### **ADVANCED SCIENCE**

Dear Nova School Parents,

I am very pleased to welcome you to another year of science at NOVA. This year's advanced science will place an emphasis on physical science, encompassing many branches of science including physics, chemistry, astronomy, and geology. While physical science generally focuses on non-living systems, I would much rather develop the curriculum utilizing an *integrated* science approach and have students continue to explore the fundamental behavior of matter and energy in both nonliving and *living* systems. Throughout the first and second trimesters, students will explore concepts related to the physical and chemical properties of matter, Newtonian physics, energy transformations, and atomic structure. In the final trimester we will again delve into the study of DNA, genetics, and evolution, many times applying our physical science knowledge and skills to enhance our understanding.

Throughout this course students will be expected to:

1. Use the principles of the scientific method to explore the concepts of motion, force, and matter that are part of our daily lives
2. Correctly identify and use terminology associated with the physical and life sciences (emphasis will be placed on building vocabulary with scientific word roots)
3. Design and safely perform laboratory experiments and communicate findings effectively

4. Make accurate qualitative and quantitative observations and record, organize, analyze, and represent data
5. Reinforce math skills in the context of scientific formulas, interpreting trends, and application of basic statistical analyses
6. Practice and apply scientific computing skills
7. Analyze relationships between science, technology, and society
8. Read scientific literature for information and summarize, synthesize, and paraphrase information
9. Perform good science study habits, as well as find out about their own learning process

As has been emphasized in previous years, it is my hope that advanced science students will continue to learn how to think and communicate like scientists. Additionally, my approach to teaching physical science will be centered on a Conceptual Change Model (CCM), where students will be encouraged to become aware of their own preconceptions and beliefs, regarding a physical science concept, and will work to confront those beliefs and resolve possible conflicts through inquiry, experimentation, and group discussion. Ultimately I am hoping to target misconceptions, all the while promoting an enthusiasm for science learning.

I will be asking students to keep a *separate* science binder for Advanced Science. These binders may be stored in class and will be graded periodically for word aids lists, vocabulary, lecture notes, lab reports, and organization. Homework and lab reports in the process of completion may be kept in their normal school binder to be taken home. Students will be given a set of guidelines advising them on how to organize their binders.

Students will be prompted to use their planners to keep track of assignment due dates. Students will often have multiple assignments in progress at one time (usually a combination of shorter, daily assignments and longer term projects). Projects lasting longer than a week will often have intermediate due dates or check-in steps for different components of the assignment. The 'average' student who uses time efficiently will be able to complete the large bulk of their assignment in class and should have a relatively small science homework load.

I encourage students to turn in *complete work, on time*. Late or incomplete assignments may be turned in completed for up to 75% of the original score, within one week of the original due date. Assignments more than one week late will earn a 'zero.' Students who are absent should be sure to check in with me to find out what they missed, especially if an experiment is in progress and they missed a day of data collection. They can also check the Advanced Science web page (see note below).

As many of you already know, I maintain a NOVA Advanced Science web page.  
<http://web.me.com/teachercampbell>

You will need to type in the user name and password to access the site. **User Name:** nova  
**Password:** school

The main intention of the site is to provide a classroom calendar. I will keep this up to date, and you should be able to see assignments, homework, and due dates. I will also try to make assignments available for download, for students looking for make-up work.

The site also has a blog page where I would like to provide a forum for students to reflect on various labs and activities in Advanced Science. I encourage students to write their own

"blogs", related to what we are learning, and share them with you and other students. Occasionally I will also post homework questions that students will answer by posting as "comments".

I am looking forward to supporting your student in a fun, engaging, and productive year of scientific inquiry.

Sincerely,

David S. Campbell  
[dscampbell1NOVA@gmail.com](mailto:dscampbell1NOVA@gmail.com)

## **Algebra**

### **Dear NOVA Parents,**

This algebra course will go into great depth covering topics including, but not limited to, equations and inequalities, linear and quadratic functions, polynomials, graphing, and problem-solving strategies. Students will receive a strong foundation in algebra and acquire valuable study skills that will benefit them in high school and beyond.

True mastery of algebra is achieved through hard work and perseverance. Success, therefore, is strongly correlated with consistent effort and completion of nightly homework assignments. All assignments are expected to be completed and ready to correct at the beginning of class the next day. If students should become stuck on a particular assignment, they are encouraged to call a classmate for assistance. Should this be insufficient for complete understanding of the material, the student should come to class prepared with specific questions, which will be answered during the allotted time. Homework assignments are graded on a credit/no credit basis (all work must be shown!); however, students will generally be expected to redo/make corrections on selected problems should a homework assignment fall below the 80% correct level.

Test or quizzes will be routinely given (generally every two or three weeks), and corrections will be required for all errors.

My ultimate goals with this class are 1.) that each student will become an effective communicator of algebraic concepts, and 2.) that each student would grow in his or her enjoyment of learning and problem solving. In line with these goals, I expect clear, thoughtful communication from students in all areas of this class. Mastery of concepts and growth in mathematical reasoning will be assessed in homework assignments and tests, along with in-class verbal explanation of problem-solving strategies. I welcome you to engage your child in conversations about the material we are working on and allow them to occasionally teach you about algebra throughout the year.

My ultimate concern is for the success of each student. Learning algebra is an exciting endeavor, and I look forward to watching the students' mathematical confidence and skills grow as the year progresses. Each student was given a more detailed syllabus outlining

classroom procedures and expectations. You may wish to review that as a supplement to this overview. Please contact me, by e-mail ([bkenis@novaschool.org](mailto:bkenis@novaschool.org)) or school phone, if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,  
Bobby Kenis

## **Geometry**

### **Dear NOVA Parents,**

Our geometry course will emphasize self-directed and cooperative learning of topics including, but not limited to, inductive reasoning, properties of geometric figures, area and volume, trigonometric functions, and formal proofs. It is a high school-level course which will provide students a successful transition to Algebra 2 next year.

This course is structured as a set of inquiries which students will answer through the use of mathematical tools, computer software, and in-class discussion. By the end of this course, students will possess not only a solid foundation of geometric concepts, but also an improved set of study skills.

Success in this course is the result of hard work and perseverance. With geometry, these qualities manifest themselves in consistent in-class discovery and completion of nightly homework assignments. Each assignment is expected to be completed and ready for correction and discussion at the beginning of the next class meeting. Due to the particularly low class size, students have the advantage of significantly more opportunities for working cooperatively with each other.

Homework assignments are graded on a credit/no credit basis. All work must be shown. If a student's work should fall below the 80% competency level, he or she will be asked to redo selected problems. Tests or quizzes will be given routinely and corrections will be required for incorrect answers on these evaluations. Formal student assessments will be based on the ability to clearly communicate understanding of the subject matter.

To help develop such skills, I invite you to engage your child in conversations about the material we are covering and allow your child to teach you a few things about geometry during the year.

Please contact me with any concerns or questions. I am available by email

([bkenis@novaschool.org](mailto:bkenis@novaschool.org)) or by school phone.

Sincerely,

Bobby Kenis

## **BIENVENIDOS A LA CLASE DE ESPANOL!!**

I am looking forward to an exciting year of teaching Spanish at NOVA and to getting to know another great group of engaging and enthusiastic students!

This year we have 2 Advanced Spanish classes and 3 Regular Spanish classes which will meet two times a week. 6<sup>th</sup> Grade students will have an additional class on Tuesday

mornings in order to learn some basic skills and to bring them up to speed with the returning students in the Regular Spanish class. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders have TPRS Spanish class on Monday mornings. (Ask your child what that means and to act out the vocabulary!)

All classes will focus on listening, reading, speaking, writing (and singing!) Spanish through individual, partner and group activities and assignments. Most of the class time will be conducted in Spanish. \*\*Homework can be expected to be given in all classes (the 6<sup>th</sup> grade Monday class and the 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade Tuesday class will have homework from time to time) and will be due the following class\*\* Please encourage your child to spend time reviewing the vocabulary and grammar concepts of the week and practicing speaking at home (even if no one else understands!) as the more time spent with the language, the more comfortable your child will feel in class and the more he/she will learn. Ask your child to teach you some Spanish! It is normal for beginners to feel frustrated and lost at first, but after a few months of repetition, they will begin to recognize and put together words and concepts in Spanish.

Grades will be given for written and oral assignments, quizzes, tests, projects and participation. Students are responsible for asking for the work missed while absent and will have as many days as were absent to make up the work. Late work may be handed in up to one week after the original due date but will only be worth ½ credit and must have the designated late slip signed by a parent attached to the assignment.

This year both Advanced and Regular classes will be working from the text book, Paso a Paso. We also have a video accompaniment to the book which will expose the students to various accents and idiomatic expressions. Students may check out the book at any time to make up class work or to practice at home. In the Regular Class we will begin the first trimester reviewing the classroom vocabulary, our class schedules and learning to tell time. In the Advanced Class we will begin by reviewing material, interviewing each other, writing acrostic poems with our Spanish names and writing and speaking about our summer vacations using the past tense. Both classes will study the vocabulary of the family in the first trimester. Throughout the year we will be learning about Latin American culture by studying and celebrating certain holidays. In November look for activities related to el Dia de Los Muertos. In the spring we will be preparing for and participating in the Mercado, an all school, all Spanish, marketplace simulation.

If you have a connection to the Spanish speaking world and would be willing to share information about life in a Spanish speaking country, would like to practice speaking Spanish with NOVA students, or would like to help out with the Mercado let me know.

I am looking forward to meeting the new families and to working with your exceptional children! I can be reached at school Monday-Friday or at home (956-2521) for questions, concerns, ideas about the class.

Con mucho carino,

Anne L. Weldon (Maestra)

**\* P.E. \***

Physical education at NOVA pushes students to be active and fully engaged. The rules of the games are adapted to fit the wide variety of skill levels, body sizes and strength, age, and experience. The games promote participation, cooperation, and exercise through activity. Team sizes are typically small (4 to 5 people) in order to emphasize the importance

of each team member to the whole while encouraging individuals to step outside of their comfort zone and try new things in a safe environment. Students learn to be positive and patient problem solvers. Also importantly, students will have fun playing games with their friends while releasing all of that pent-up energy!

**Units:** We play variations of many traditional and some non-traditional sports, but essentially we cover the basic elements of base games, basket games, life sports (off-site P.E. during winter term), net games, and field games. Within that framework our games utilize many basic, individual sport skills and typically emphasize the many facets of teamwork. We rarely play the same game twice in one year as there are just too many good variations to cover.

**Dress Code:** Tennis shoes (with laces) are required for all students in every P.E. class period. Otherwise, any comfortable clothing (many students prefer shorts or sweats) is sufficient, keeping in mind that many P.E. classes will occur outside in the rain. Outside games are not cancelled due to weather, so students are expected to always come prepared for cold, wet, and muddy conditions.

**Class Time:** After learning the rules for the day, students are assigned teams and spend the rest of the class period playing the game! The students self-referee and learn to resolve any conflicts or disputes quickly and without drama.

**Grading:** I want all students to find enjoyment in playing games with others. Consequently, my grading reflects what I hope the students will also learn to value:

*Effort, Participation, Sportsmanship, and Teamwork*

Eighth graders are also graded on their leadership skills. This means that they are not only responsible for themselves, but also for helping their classmates feel comfortable in class. I often tell them that the success of their particular P.E. class is a reflection of the leadership of their 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

**After School Sports:** NOVA organizes a few sports teams for students to participate in outside of the school day: Fall – cross country, Winter – basketball, and Spring – soccer. All of our teams welcome participants at any level as our focus is on learning the individual skills of the sport and then coordinating our efforts as a team. Detailed information is available prior to each sport season. School spirit at our games is amazing!

I hope that both students and parents will feel comfortable contacting me. The best way to reach me this year will be by email at [Lmanning@novaschool.org](mailto:Lmanning@novaschool.org). If you would prefer to talk, please leave a message with the office and I will get back to you as soon as possible, most likely in the early evening.

Let the games begin!  
Sincerely, Linda Manning – aka Mo

## **ART**

Dear Parents,

Welcome to a new year of art at NOVA! As always, we will be interlacing hands-on studio work with art history, theory, and appreciation. We will also use the rich intellectual, psychological, and emotional aspects of art study and art making to expand students' understanding of the world and themselves. This year we will work with drawing, sculpture (mostly plaster), and mixed media/installation. First trimester will be devoted to drawing. The drawing unit begins with a sort of traditional approach to mastering the craft of drawing. We will learn and practice how to really see objects as they appear visually and translate that observation into a two-dimensional representation. Students will study line, shape, and shading and use what they learn to produce drawings of static objects (still lifes)

in black and white that look real. Next, we will study drawing with color. From there, we will move to experimenting with using drawing to express ideas and feelings. Second trimester will find us making sculptures. The bulk of second trimester will be spent using plaster. We will carve and cast sculptures. Third trimester will be spent creating installations and site-specific works of art using a variety of media.

I am thrilled to be beginning another year of art (my 10th at NOVA!). Students have art twice a week at NOVA. In general, the first half of the week is packed with instructional content (almost always hands on) and the second half of the week is open studio where students can work and receive one-on-one guidance. The students and I work together to assess their progress and determine the best way to help them reach objectives and goals. Part of this process involves you. I will be sending home an assessment rubric that each student and I will collaboratively create that will give an impression of their progress on each major project. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email or phone me, or stop by the MOD!

Warmly,

Mr. Fleming

## **Computers**

Dear NOVA Students and Parents,

### **Purpose:**

The overall purpose of the NOVA School Computer Class is to:

- Give students practice with computer applications that will serve as valuable tools in their other courses.
- Promote technological literacy and computer solving skills.
- Provide students with the opportunity to use their creative and/or analytic talents with computers.

### **Curriculum:**

At NOVA the focus of the computer course changes every three years. This year the course focus is on databases; what they are, how to use them, and how to create them. Students will meet for computer class once per week during the fall and winter trimesters, and twice a week in the spring. This year the students will spend fall trimester on keyboarding skills, working towards an eventual goal of 45 words per minute. Because class only meets once per week in the fall we are requesting that students practice keyboarding skills at home if possible. We will also spend time going over the basics of the Open Source software we have at school touching on creating and saving text documents, spreadsheets, and presentations. New students will cover fundamentals of using our network, operating systems, and office productivity software. Students who have already demonstrated proficiency with their keyboarding skills will have other options available to them, such as learning a programming language or 3-D computer animation, website design (or whatever else we can arrange that is both interesting and challenging to the student).

At the end of fall trimester and into winter trimester the students will be learning the fundamentals of databases by completing activities around organizing, categorizing, and retrieving data from databases. Spring trimester will involve the students putting those skills into action for a final project--creating a quality usable database. This unit will require students to work independently and to use extreme care and accuracy.

Although specific feedback will be given to students on their projects, students will be graded in computer class strictly on effort. Students should remain focused and make steady daily progress on assignments.

### **Computers/Network/Software**

We ask students to work quietly whenever they are in the computer lab, conversing in a whisper voice when needed. Students may listen to music through headphones during independent work time. Students will be held to the acceptable use policy at all times. Students face a warning/restriction from using computers (depending on the severity of the action) if they are caught breaking the acceptable use policy. Food and drink are strictly prohibited in the computer lab as well as at other computer stations throughout the building.

Students will have accounts on the school network for saving work. Students will not have individual e-mail accounts at Nova School, but may access free e-mail accounts (Hotmail, Yahoo, G-mail, etc...) during school for academic purposes only. Portable USB drives also serve as an efficient way to transport work between home and school.

NOVA has computers which use Windows 2000, Windows XP, and Ubuntu LINUX operating systems. NOVA uses a large assortment of open source software, including OpenOffice. Documents made with OpenOffice are compatible with Microsoft Office. With rare exception, teachers at NOVA will not accept technical difficulties as an excuse for a late assignment. However, students will generally not be expected to complete computer class assignments as homework.

Sincerely, David Campbell & Kiirsten Flynn- Computer Class Teachers

### **SILENT READING**

Silent Reading class is an opportunity for students to pursue a variety of reading interests. There are three main requirements for the class. The first is that students keep a record of the works they read in class. The second is that students read at least one selection during the trimester from the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, or 8<sup>th</sup> grade canons. The canons are recommended reading lists meant to appeal specifically to our community of middle school students. The third requirement is that students create a book recommendation card to be displayed in our school library. Beyond this, students are encouraged to read books they enjoy reading. To insure students read different types of literature in class, students may not read books from the same genre consecutively. Otherwise, we have a great collection of books in our library and we encourage students to challenge themselves in their reading and to read new things. Silent Reading is a chance for students to have a bit of a rest and to read interesting things.

Jason Gacek  
Kiirsten Flynn

## **DRAMA**

Dear NOVA Parents and Students,

Drama class meets once a week for two trimesters and will focus specifically on developing dramatic movement and expression. Each class usually begins with a warm up exercise before moving into an activity. This class is designed to help students understand basic stagecraft and become more comfortable and appropriately expressive in front of an audience. I would like to encourage all students to try out for either dramatic or tech roles in our school play which will occur after the new year.

## **EXPLORATORY**

Dear Families,

I am delighted to be back teaching Exploratory this year. This is actually one of the first classes that I taught when I started at NOVA 10 years ago.

We will study media, comparative beliefs, and health and wellness. I am looking forward to starting the year with a study of the media. Students will use a variety of media to convey information in different ways. For example, we have started working on writing a newspaper article about current and relevant news stories. Each article will be laced (intentionally) with bias using the ways that bias (intentional and not) appears in different news sources. We will also study new media. This will include blogs, podcasts, texting, twitter (and the like), and imagined future media. Students will learn the social and professional mores related to new media and will explore ways to use these new forms of media constructively and responsibly.

In the comparative beliefs unit, I will be looking for guest speakers/teachers who have a deep and intimate understanding of their belief systems (religions/philosophies) who are willing to teach us the core principles and rituals. I will be sending out more information as second trimester approaches. I know many of us are sensitive about the beliefs we hold dear, and I will be designing the unit to insure that all belief systems are held with reverence and respect. If you feel like you might be someone who could speak to a certain belief system, or if you know of someone who could, please contact me. At the very least, I will have a guest who represents every belief system that we have here in our NOVA community.

Third trimester will be spent cooking and planting a garden. This will be wed with a study of healthy eating and healthy living.

Exploratory, like Advisory, meets just once a week. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me.

Warmly,

Mr. Fleming

## **Advisory**

Dear Parents,

I am very excited about Advisory this year. This is a year when students identify and develop their personal philosophies on life, study honesty and integrity, and work with conflict resolution. We finish every year in advisory the same way, developing strategies and techniques that are helpful through transitions (7th to 8th grade and 8th grade to high school). We will begin the year identifying and developing personal philosophies. Students will be guided through exercises and activities that help them find out what they really think about themselves and their world. We will then work with our beliefs to find ways to strengthen them or modify them (if need be). Then we will apply our philosophies to real world situations to examine how closely we follow our own beliefs and why we do or do not. For example, in years past most students have expressed a belief that they should be honest. A laudable belief! But when asked if they would lie to someone they care about in certain situations (like a grandparent who asks if a new haircut looked good), most said they would lie. In years past this has led to discussions about prioritizing beliefs (placing compassion over honesty in certain situations) and strategies and techniques that might help students adhere to their highest principles in difficult situations. It is through examining these kinds of situations that students come to understand that their personal philosophies are powerful tools that they can use to be their very best selves. We will also study honesty and integrity (this includes plagiarism) with a focus on interpersonal relationship of all kinds and academic situations. We will also study healthy ways to resolve conflicts of all kinds.

Advisory meets once a week. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me.

Warmly,

Mr. Fleming

## **STRINGS**

Welcome to NOVA Strings!

Goals: We will concentrate on the goal of each individual student having correct position, good tone, and careful intonation. The goal of rehearsals as a group will be the 10 elements of group playing: tone, quality, rhythmic accuracy, articulation, balance, note accuracy, pitch accuracy, musical direction, style period awareness, ensemble interaction, and convincing performance style.

Practice: Students should practice daily at home, preferably at least 30 minutes. Practice times should be recorded on a 3x5 card with a parent's signature, and the weekly totals given to me each Tuesday. Practice should consist of 1) scales, 2) technique exercises, 3) slow practice on music literature, and 4) review or up-to-speed sections of the orchestra music.

If a student is taking private lessons, the 30 minutes of required practicing may include the private lesson music.

Concerts: We will be having assembly and concert performances throughout the school year, and the dates will be posted on the NOVA website calendar. Reminder newsletters will also be sent home with the students before each concert or assembly performance. Attendance at the

performances will count towards the students' effort grade. Dress for assembly performances may vary, but concert dress is, for girls, white blouse, long black skirt, and black shoes. For boys, white shirt, black pants, black socks, and black shoes.

Grades: Grades are given in achievement, effort, and behavior.

The *achievement* grade is 50% participation in class and concerts, and 50% is from playing quizzes. Students are tested individually on certain parts of the music. Testing dates and sections of the music to be tested are assigned one week before the test. The students should write this information in pencil in their music and also in their assignment books. I can be available during lunch to help students before tests. Tests may not be made up; however, students may raise their lowest test score by one letter grade if they attend a concert *of my recommendation* and turn in the program and notes from the concert.

The *effort* grade is 50% effort in class and 50% practice time at home.

The *behavior* grade is following school rules in the rehearsals, as well as being prepared, on time, and respectful. No food, drink, gum in the Trow.

If you ever have any questions, please email me at [juliepsalm150@hotmail.com](mailto:juliepsalm150@hotmail.com) or call me at home at 360-970-3793

Sincerely,  
Miss Funchion

## **BAND**

Hello students and family, I am looking forward to a great year at NOVA with our Band. The students all seem engaged and eager to learn/grow as musicians.

We will perform a few concerts throughout the year (dates to be determined) and perhaps one or two performances outside of school for a taste of "real world" experience. In keeping with our philosophy, we add a spoon full of knowledge to every day; Music theory, Italian Language, and Ear Training are part of our daily routine.

I encourage all our new students to find a private instructor for the year. Students find greater enjoyment in playing as their performance level increases. You can find beginning books for your instrument at Yenny's Music on the Westside.

Best Regards,

Tracey D. Hooker