

Frequently Asked Questions for 5th grade Parents

Is there the expectation that kids entering middle school know how to take notes? 5th grade teachers want to be coaching the kids on good note taking skills to prepare them for secondary school.

Answer: Note taking skills are taught in elementary school and in middle school. At this level, it is helpful to know a variety of note taking structures so that students can choose what works best for them and for the subject.

My student is struggling with organizational skills. Are there resources at the school to help?

Answer: Organizational skills are taught to every 6th grader through their core classes and their Advise class. The Study Skills class is for students who need significant support in one or more of the following areas: reading improvement skills, listening and note-taking skills, test-taking skills, organization skills, logical thinking and writing. This class replaces one of the students' electives.

How does the math placement work? Some students said there were things on the placement test that 5th grade hadn't covered yet

Answer: We use a math placement test and standardized test scores to determine placement into Math 6, Math 6/7, or Math 7/8. Thus, the test has questions from both 5th and 6th grade standards. ***We really only expect that students that have had Math 6 instruction will be able to answer all the questions on the test, so the 6th grade content does not "count against" students for placement into Math 6/7.*** Traditionally, students that are coming from Math 5 and are doing exceptionally well on the 5th grade concepts would go into Math 6/7.

How will my student's math placement affect their high school math career and beyond?

Answer: Grade level math will have them on track to take Pre-Calculus or Calculus their senior year in high school. This math level would ensure they have the math skills necessary to potentially score well on College Entrance Exams.

What is Infinite Campus and how does it work?

Answer: The Campus Parent Portal provides parents access to their student's grades, school class schedules and attendance information. It can be accessed through the *Family Portal* tab on our website.

When do teachers update it? How can I keep up with my child's grades and missing assignments?

Answer: Teachers are expected to update their grades weekly. It is expected that they have grades in by Monday evening. Parents and students should check grades weekly. We try to send out a D and F dialer every two-three weeks. If you have questions or concerns, please contact your child's teachers through email or voicemail. It is expected that teachers respond to questions within 24 hours (with an exception for weekends and vacations).

How can my student get feedback on assignments? Many assignments are done online, and he/she isn't getting written feedback – just a grade.

Answer: If an assignment does not have comments and the student feels that they need feedback, encourage him/her to talk to the teacher.

What's the best way for my student to approach a teacher if they have a question about a particular assignment—emails, phone call, schedule a meeting?

Answer: Students should talk to the teacher and ask for help. If more extensive communication is needed, all teachers' contact information is available on our website.

Does my student ever get papers back? Nothing seems to come home. How can I coach my student or help them get better? Can teachers encourage students to bring home their assignments?

Answer: Papers are returned to students. Students need to be responsible for bringing home their papers. Teachers and parents should encourage students to bring home their papers.

Why do we not have textbooks? If parents/students want textbooks, can't we offer the opportunity for them to pay for the textbooks as part of fees or separately?

Answer: Since curriculum evolves every year and textbooks are extremely expensive and cannot be changed every year, we do not have textbooks in most classes. Some textbooks are used as occasional resource material but cannot be used as an everyday resource. Our teachers use a combination of online resources, books and materials that support a current unit, and our district online curriculum. To see the *Year At a Glance* curriculum for your child, please go to http://www.jeffcopublicschools.org/academics/curriculum/curriculum_by_grade

We do have math textbooks. Some parents ask to buy the textbook. If you are interested in purchasing a math textbook you would need to ask your child's math teacher or Debbie Jessee to get the correct edition and then purchase it on Amazon.

My child is supposed to be studying for a science or social studies quiz or test, but there are no textbooks to study? What are they supposed to study? Is there a published curriculum so that I know what my student is learning and how I can help my student study?

Answer: Most teachers have students use a study guide and/or their class notes for test preparation. If you would like to see the Jeffco curriculum you can access *A-Year-At-A-Glance* on the public Jeffco website.

Some teachers encourage students to study their notes for tests, but what if my student is a poor note taker? How can he/she improve? What else can he/she study to ensure they do well on the tests?

Answer: Please contact the teacher and let him/her know about the concern. Work with the teacher to determine the best way for your child to prepare for tests.

Is there a consistent place online where we can find resources for my child?

Answer: All teachers are expected to have a website providing information about assignments and resources. Please contact the teacher if you cannot find what your child needs.

How does the academic tracking system work?

Answer: G/T Center placement is determined by district G/T personnel. Students in Honors classes must be either in the G/T Center or be on an ALP. G/T Center students are typically scheduled in all Honors classes; however other ALP students may or may not be in Honors classes depending on their area of strength, grades, scores, and class availability. Honors classes should have higher expectations and possibly move more quickly through the curriculum allowing students to get deeper into the concepts.

Are World Language classes offered at WJMS?

Answer: WJMS offers Spanish 1 in 8th grade.

At 5th grade orientation, it was mentioned that WJMS is a STEM/STEAM school. What is Problem Based Learning and how does it fit with a STEM/STEAM school?

Answer: STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) at WJMS

In the 2016-17 school year we will be implementing a STEAM strand in our science classrooms. The level of rigorous content will increase through the application of the science content standards. Students will develop their teamwork, collaboration, and communication skills in a problem-based learning environment that focuses on the application of their learning to local and global issues. The ability to work successfully in this collaborative problem-solving environment develops skills to be competitive in the 21st century work force and successful in STEM-related careers. In addition, we have Pre-Engineering and Robotics elective courses that complement this challenging science curriculum.

Though we are only implementing STEAM in our science classrooms, core teachers will be planning for PBL (Problem Based Learning) in their classrooms at least once each trimester.

Each student also has elective periods where a variety of electives are available to explore art, music (band, orchestra, choir, music other), drama, computers graphics, yearbook, family & consumer science, broadcast technology, pre-engineering, robotics and physical education.

Who is the social/emotional learning specialist and what does that person do?

Answer: David Fennimore – He works with all students and teachers in the building around Social/Emotional Competencies. These are as follows: Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Responsible Decision Making, Relationship Skills, Self-Management. In his role, he teaches or co-teaches lessons about the social/emotional competencies, works with small groups, provides professional development for staff, and supports the entire school in understanding the needs of students.

Who are the counselors and what do they do?

Answer: Shea Robinson and Jen Baker – They work with students to support social/emotional growth, academics, and planning for college and career-readiness.

My student is struggling and I don't know who to turn to. How do I navigate the waters and find the right person to help me?

Answer: Start with their school counselor and they can help you to find the correct solution.

What are the digital platforms used at WJMS and what does my student need to know?

Answer: Teachers at WJMS primarily use Schoology and Google Classroom for learning and assignments. Starting in the 2017-2018 school year, every 6th grader is required to take a Computer Applications class where they will learn the platforms and technology skills needed to be successful in middle school and beyond.

How does my daughter carry the things she needs on a monthly basis around during the school day?

Answer: Girls usually carry what they need in their pockets, in a small purse, or they visit their lockers on the way to the bathroom.

Is there snack time at middle school?

Answer: There is not an official snack time but some teams allow one healthy snack a day. Bottles of water are allowed in every classroom.