



**J.E. Cosgriff Memorial School
Middle School Math and Science
"Preparation and Inspiration"
Mr. James B. (Jim) Larson
jl Larson@cosgriff.org**

Dear Parents and Students:

I am excited to return to J.E. Cosgriff for my thirteenth year as a middle school math and science teacher and assistant principal. A graduate of the University of Wyoming, I received my B.S. degree in Petroleum Engineering in 1983. Prior to joining the faculty of J.E. Cosgriff, I spent 21 years in oil and natural gas exploration and production in the United States, Canada and Russia. I have a secondary education license with endorsements in mathematics level two, physical science and middle level science.

The goal for all my classes can be summarized as preparation and inspiration. To help achieve our common goal, I have included our classroom rules on page three. Students, please review the content of this letter with your parents, add your signatures with mine and **bring the signature page only to class on Monday August 22nd in the "Back to School Night" folder.** Please keep the cover letter so that you can refer to the grading and missing work policies in the future. A replacement copy can be located in the student digital locker in TeacherEase.

7th and 8th Grade Science

I will select science-learning activities that are as concrete as possible; "learning by doing". Our frequent laboratory investigations will include experimentation, simulations and construction of working models. I have prepared a middle school science safety contract as a separate handout. Please review the contract and return with signatures in **the "Back to School Night" folder on Monday August 22nd.**

The grade weighting for science will consist of 50% for laboratory reports and in-class assignments and 50% for tests. One late homework assignment per quarter in Science **or** Math will be accepted with a 20% reduction in score until the Friday following the due date. A late homework pass must be stapled to the assignment to receive partial credit. One late homework pass was given to students the first day of school. No credit will be given for any additional late assignments. Make-up work must be completed within one week of returning to school. I do not provide any individual student extra credit opportunities, however, all tests include 10% extra credit points.

Note taking is an integral part of middle school science. Students should come to class prepared to take complete and accurate notes. Seventh grade students will take text, lecture and film notes on Cornell (two-column) notepaper provided by the instructor. A Cornell template is available to download from the digital locker for home use. Students must have a composition book for laboratory reports and journaling. The preferred composition book is quad ruled for ease in graphing.

All 7th and 8th grade students are required to participate in the Cosgriff Science Fair. A detailed "Science Fair Handbook" including procedures and timetables will be sent home in September.

6th, 7th and 8th Grade Mathematics

Regular homework is critical to practice the concepts presented in math class. Assignments must be completed legibly in pencil. One late homework assignment per quarter in Science or Math will be accepted with a 20% reduction in score until the Friday following the due date. A late homework pass must be stapled to the assignment to receive partial credit. The late homework pass was given to students the first day of school. No credit will be given for any additional late assignments. Make-up work for excused absences must be completed within one week of returning to school.

As discussed in the previous paragraph, practicing mathematical skills through homework for mastery of objectives is essential. Most homework assignments will be scored quantitatively for accuracy. The remaining homework assignments will be graded qualitatively on effort. For assignments graded on effort, if the work is complete, legible and steps for problem solutions are visible a score of 100% will be awarded. Please attempt all problems and show your work!

Students will complete opening problems and note taking in 6"x9" steno notebooks. To demonstrate the significance of accurate note taking as an aid in completing homework assignments, I will prepare my lecture notes in a like manner. Often, I will allow stenos to be used during assessments.

Grade weighting will consist of 40% for homework and in-class assignments, 30% for quizzes and 30% for tests.

Technology in the classroom enriches the student's experiences but can be a distraction. The programmable calculators (TI-84) used in the 8th grade curriculum have powerful graphing and statistical features that we will explore during the school year, however, the calculators can be used to download games. Please try the many mathematical problem-solving capabilities of the calculator but do not use this tool to play games in the classroom. If a student is playing games in any middle school classroom I will collect the calculator and require a written apology for the instructor from the student and a parent's signature on the note prior to returning the unit.

Kristin Bonacci will be assisting in mathematics small group instruction for the 7th and 8th grade. This is Mrs. Bonacci's tenth year with the Learning Resource Center at Cosgriff. Mrs. Bonacci has a B.S. from the University of Utah in Family and Consumer Studies, a teaching certificate and extensive post graduate experience in Special Education. Mrs. Bonacci will teach the Common Core State Standards Math 7 and Math 8 curriculum for 7th and 8th grade students that benefit from a small class size and a slower pace of instruction.

Parents: It is an honor and a privilege to assist in your children's education. Students: "Do your best in all things. You cannot do more. You should never wish to do less."

Sincerely,

Mr. Larson

Name: _____
(Please Print First and Last Name)

Grade: _____

Science and Math Classroom Rules

1. Be there, be ready physically and mentally.
2. Walk into the classroom and take your seat immediately.
3. Maintain academic integrity (do your own work)
4. Minimize movement in and out of the classroom.

STUDENTS: I have read the student and parent letter provided at Middle School Back to School Night. I understand the grading and late work policies. I have read the classroom rules and understand them. I will honor the rules while attending Middle School science and/or math.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

PARENTS: I have read the student and parent letter provided at Middle School Back to School Night. I understand the grading and late work policies. My child has discussed the classroom rules with me. I understand the rules and will support them.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

TEACHER: I will be fair and consistent in administering the Middle School science and math class classroom policies and rules.

Signature: _____ Date: _____