

SARAH W. GIBBONS MIDDLE SCHOOL

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Welcome Back Gibbons Middle School students and families 2018-2019,

It has been a great summer to relax and refresh. After the hectic nature of the past several summers and our school construction project wrapping up, starting our school year without moving into new spaces and unpacking will be a welcome return to normalcy. I would like to share some of my thoughts about the upcoming school year and introduce our new staff. Our staff is the foundation of everything we do and we are very fortunate to have a staff that is highly effective, exceptionally professional, caring and have minimal turnover.

I am pleased to introduce our new staff members:

- **Emma Furmanick** is a Special Education paraprofessional who is transferring from Fales Elementary.
- **Jennifer Madonna** has accepted our permanent .5fte Special Education Reading teacher position. Jen comes to us with a significant amount of teaching experience both in the schools as well as serving as adjunct faculty at a local university training Special Education teachers.
- **Melissa Meehan** is a Special Education paraprofessional who is transferring from Fales Elementary.
- **Katelyn Parkinson** is in the beginning portion of her teaching career and will be serving as Jeanine Hogan's long term sub while Jeanine is on maternity leave.
- **Deanna Sainz** will be Joe Barca's Long Term Substitute for the year teaching English on the 8th grade Purple team. Deanna has recently moved from the St. Louis area where she taught middle school English for many years.

Fortunately, there aren't any major changes to our program, but as always we will be introducing new aspects to our work that refine and advance existing components of our school.

The most exciting 'update' will be to our advisory program and is a direct result of the work and interest of our teachers. As you may know, Jen Nottingham, Denise Casale and Meredith Innis attended an 'Expeditionary Learning' conference at King Middle School in Portland Maine earlier this year. We will be updating our advisory program to reflect the ethos of Expeditionary Learning and 'Crew' support structure. At its core the 'Crew' philosophy is a direct example of

our mission and vision statements and is an extension of the exceptional work that has gone into the design and implementation of our advisory program. My biggest take away and what I imagine will be the most significant impact for our students of the Crew model is that it centers on the advisory teacher establishing themselves as a 'trusted adult' in the lives of a small group of students. Over the course of the year our trusted adults will guide their students through a series of structured and thematic lessons. Each lesson has been designed to provide teachers with several implementation options. The crew themes for the year are as follows first term Building Relationships, second term Learning to Communicate, third term Problem Solving.

The staff here at Gibbons is ready and excited for the new school year, together we can make this a fun and memorable year.