

Dear Parent and Guardians of rising 6th graders in the Humanities Magnet Program:

I hope that you and your families are staying well. I know that this summer will be a challenge to families, with activities, camps, and even vacations cancelled.

I'm writing to share programmatic updates with you and your child as well as a welcome video from our 6th grade Humanities teachers and the summer assignments that they have developed to prepare your child for next year's classes. These documents will also be available on the Eastern Middle School website.

The focus of 6th Grade Humanities English and the Literature in the Humanities elective is on Lois Lowry's book, *Gathering Blue*. Although you are welcome to purchase the book, Ms. Ray has included a link to a PDF of the book.

I also wanted to update you on some upcoming activities at Eastern. At this time, it appears that students will not be permitted in Montgomery County Public Schools buildings this summer. We realize the unique challenge that this presents to rising 6th grade magnet students, many of whom are not from neighborhoods around Eastern. In place of our traditional summer tours and team building activities for new students, Eastern teachers will be hosting weekly Question and Answer sessions through Zoom meetings. All new students will be able to drop into these sessions and hear about the middle school experience and how they can best prepare to be successful in 6th grade. We anticipate that these sessions will occur weekly and will begin around the first week of July. The schedule for these question and answer sessions will be posted on the Eastern website as of June 15. In addition, we have prepared a virtual tour of Eastern Middle School. It and other introductory videos will be available on Eastern's website no later than July 1.

Finally, in regard to the magnet program's Summer Media Institute. Unfortunately, we have still not received word on whether we will be able to offer this week-long summer program. If we do offer the program, it will be online, rather than in person. It will still be a week long, and we will hopefully have four different sessions for families to choose from. I will contact you just as soon as I hear the final decision.

If you have questions regarding any of the summer assignments, please email the teachers directly. If you have other questions regarding the Humanities program or Eastern Middle School, please don't hesitate to email me.

I know just how hard the transition can be for students coming to a magnet program. Our current situation is definitely making that challenge even more difficult. Please know that whether it be face-to-face, virtually, or combination thereof we are committed to providing your child the rigorous, engaging, and unique instructional opportunities that they need to thrive both academically and socially. Myself and the team will do everything in our power to successfully facilitate your child's transition to Eastern and to make sure that it is an experience that they will love.

Welcome video:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OLNtwKVLZg0HVyW86_297D-wMYzk2e9o/view

Please stay safe

Matthew Kerwin
Magnet Coordinator