

Happy 2019! We hope you had a wonderful holiday season with your family! We are officially halfway through the school year, and want to give you an overview of the semester ahead. We covered all of the following information with your kiddos during SEL yesterday, so we should all be on the same page.

(As a side-note, don't forget to check out the [5th grade calendar](#) (it's up-to-date!), and [Middle School Info. tab](#) on our website.)

We have covered most of the new 5th grade curriculum at this point, which will give us a solid month to review before STAAR testing in early April. Our tentative scope and sequence for the next few months is as follows:

- Financial Literacy: this week, testing next Tuesday Jan. 15
- Geometry and Measurement: Jan. 16 - Feb. 15
- Data Analysis: Feb. 18 - March 1
- STAAR Review: March 4 - 15
- Spring Break: March 18 - 22
- More STAAR Review: March 23 - April 8
- Math STAAR Test: April 9

The remainder of the school year we will focus on our favorite and most fun 6th and 7th grade math concepts, and pulling small groups/targeted intervention for students who don't pass the first round of STAAR testing.

We are about two weeks ahead in our curriculum, which is fantastic because we will have a substantial chunk of time to review before STAAR. We have MOY (middle-of-year) benchmark testing coming up at the end of January, and those results will help us determine what supports your child will need before STAAR testing in April. Your child will take a math, reading, and science benchmark test, all of which are last year's 5th grade STAAR tests. We'll enter the benchmark data into the grade book with "0-weight" so that you can see your child's scores, but they won't impact report card averages.

We are excited for our month of review, and we think your child will enjoy and greatly benefit from this time as well! Along with using benchmark data, we plan on giving short daily(ish) quizzes either in BLEND or using our clickers to determine what your child needs each day. We'll have all kinds of stations, games, small groups, etc. in place, and based on how your child scores on these short assessments will determine how they spend their class time each day. If your child shows proficiency in a topic, they'll have an extension activity or project available. If they need more practice, enter the stations, games, small groups, etc. Ms. Salome and I have been doing LOTS of flexible grouping these last few months, and are doing more and more each week. Some days we combine classes so that students get to learn from both of us and work with other classes; some days we do large station rotations between both of our rooms; some days we take each other's classes then swap ("switch-and-swap" days); some days we divide students into ability-based groups to review for tests, where Ms. Salome takes one group to do an extension, and I take another group to target gaps (or something similar). It's been lots of fun for us as

teachers, fun for the kids to get variety in their day-to-day math experience, and has overall allowed us to differentiate instruction a great deal more than normal. 90 minutes and 27 kids is a lot -- so these creative teaching models are really helping us reach all learners in fun and engaging ways. We'll continue this throughout the year and definitely into our month of review so that not a minute is wasted for your child, regardless of their needs!

STAAR testing in 5th grade carries more weight than in years previous; students must pass the reading and math tests to advance to 6th grade. We will get scores back within a few weeks of the first administration, so by early May you should know your child's test scores. At that point, students who didn't pass the first round of testing will receive targeted small-group intervention in math and/or reading, preparing them for the second testing administration in mid-May. If your child doesn't pass the second round of testing, your child will test a third time at the end of Summer School in mid- to late-June. \*\*\*While this is all very important, it's nothing to stress yourself or your child over. We have been communicating any and all of our concerns with you throughout the year, so we don't anticipate any surprises during testing season. As long as your child comes to class ready to learn, does their homework, and stays engaged, they will be **READY!**

As we come closer to STAAR testing, or definitely after the first administration, we will limit after school tutoring to those who need the most intensive support. For now, if you've received an invitation from one of us, keep sending your kiddo each Wednesday!

We know this is a lot of information (probably full of typos) so if you made it to this point ask Ms. Salome for two tickets 😊 This is a busy time of year, but we want to assure you that we have a plan, and your kiddos are in good hands! We'll of course send out more info. when we get closer to testing, etc. but hopefully this gives you a good overview of the semester ahead!

Sincerely,  
Bess Wirht & Lorrie Salome