C:\Users\maureen horn\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\FVSTEW70\MC900413460[1].wmfAugust 5, 2013

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Cordova Middle School! We are looking forward to an exciting year of learning in sixth grade science. To further that goal, we will be using an **interactive notebook** as both a tool to deepen understanding and a journal of student thinking and achievement. This notebook will provide a means of communicating, tracking, assessing, and reflecting on the work students do. I use the term ‘interactive’ to describe how the notebooks support an exchange of ideas from teacher to student, student to student, student to parent, and parent to teacher**. For example, each quarter you, as a parent, will actually be grading some of your own child’s work. This grade will be used as one of the test grades for the quarter. This enables you to see the quality of your child’s efforts and reward (or encourage them) them in their achievements.**

Another great feature is that at any time during the year that you want to see what we are working on in science class, a look at the notebook should detail what has taken place in the classroom and how your child has reflected on what he/she has learned from the class experiences. I truly believe the notebooks will encourage your child’s growth both in his/her critical thinking and achievement level. I also believe it is one of the reasons that 95% of my honors students in the 2011-2012 school year scored proficient or advanced on the TCAP exam in science.

Here is what one student wrote about her interactive notebook:

*“It’s my own piece of property that I have taken responsibility for. It shows my personal thinking and my creativity. My notebook shows that I can think for myself and figure out where I went wrong for myself, instead of someone telling me. I like my interactive notebook because it feels like my own little book where I can write down my own questions and answer them. I think it represents me. Like, if I were to look through a stranger’s interactive notebook, I would get a sense of their personality.”*

**We will begin using the notebooks on Monday, August 12th.** There are a few supplies your student will need to be equipped for his/ her scientific journaling. Please refer to the list below:

**70 page spiral notebook**

**Scotch tape (2 or 3 rolls for the entire school year)**

**Colored pencils (mandatory)**

**Crayons**

**Sticky notes**

**Graph paper**

**Tabs (to separate course units) these are optional and can be handmade**

**The notebooks will be collected and graded periodically (using the rubric the students will have at the front of their journals). I cannot stress strongly enough how important this interactive science notebook will be to success in this class. It is absolutely imperative that your child treats it responsibly and keeps up with it. If it is lost he/she will need to copy everything in entirety that has been covered.**

Our class will be very inquiry based and students will reflect on their learning quite a bit. The notebooks will enable them to “start thinking like scientists” and at the same time, allow them to creatively express themselves. I am very excited about the year ahead as we explore the world of science and record our observations in our notebooks. If you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Thank you for your help!

Maureen Horn

6th Grade Science Honors

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