



SEVENTH GRADE SCIENCE

www.sciencewithmrjones.com

Mr. Jones

jjones@howell.k12.nj.us
(732) 836-1327 Ext. 6877

Mr. Ross

jross@howell.k12.nj.us
(732) 836-1327 Ext. 6859

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

OVERVIEW

Through the lenses of various crosscutting concepts, the seventh grade science program will engage students in science and engineering practices, while focusing on disciplinary core ideas in life science, physical science, and engineering. The ultimate goal will be for students to develop explanations for the phenomena we observe in the natural world, as well as develop solutions to problems. This approach acknowledges the inquisitive and sophisticated thinking capabilities possessed by students, and will provide them with opportunities to learn by acting as scientists and engineers. Ultimately, the major goal is for students to be critical consumers of scientific information, with the ability to engage in public discussions on science and engineering related issues that impact their everyday lives.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to bring their laptops and a positive attitude daily. Our one-to-one digital environment has helped limit our paper usage and therefore it is not necessary for students to have binders. However, it is still recommended that students bring a folder and a writing utensil. Students should organize and be responsible for any files or paperwork disseminated in class. Additionally, a course [website](#) and an online learning platform ([Schoology](#)) containing many resources are provided for additional support - students are encouraged to utilize these when

necessary. Finally, all students are expected to build teamwork skills, as group interactions are an essential component of science education and beyond. We have high expectations for **EVERY** student, and we are looking forward to helping **EVERY** student meet those expectations.

GRADES

The grades will be achieved through use of a point system, where a percentage is calculated by dividing the number of points earned by the total number of possible points for each of the highlighted categories (alternative assessments, assessments, and homework). The computer grading program will then perform the necessary calculations to determine the overall grade. **It is important for both parents/guardians and students to understand that students are ultimately responsible for their grades; the grades earned are based on clearly articulated expectations and reflect what the students have provided based on these expectations. When/if there are concerns about grades, the question that should be asked is not, "What grade did the teacher give you?" but "What grade did you earn?"** Along those same lines we encourage students to submit assignments early or ask questions prior to handing them in for a grade. This provides them with the opportunity to revise an assignment based on teacher feedback, which typically results in a better grade. Additionally, students are encouraged to come to us for clarification regarding grades if necessary. We are always more than happy to sit down with students to address any questions or concerns they may have.

ASSESSMENTS

Students will typically encounter assessments, in the form of quizzes or tests, after collaborative tasks. These assessments will be based on information and experiences encountered while engaging in the lesson tasks. The assessment formats may include: multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-blank, true/false, short answer, and open response questions. Assessments will require students to not only have a general understanding of the tasks and information gathered after working through them, but they will also require them to generalize what they learn to novel situations/scenarios. To prepare for these assessments students may be asked to use some [method of study](#) (other than simply looking over notes taken in class or from the computer). It is very important for students to understand that their success on assessments is contingent on them being engaged in all collaborative tasks. Students should also be aware that

unannounced assessments may be given sporadically throughout the year, so it is important to do a thorough job on all classwork and homework.

ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Alternative assessments such as group tasks and a variety of other long-term assignments will be given throughout the year. These alternative assessments will help students better understand concepts and give them the opportunity to apply their understanding of these concepts. Additionally, these assignments will enable students to cooperatively come up with an explanation or solve a problem, which means student teams/groups will be necessary. These groups may be assigned or chosen by the students, but whenever students **work with others of their choice, careful thought and consideration must go into choosing partners because the final product results in a group grade.** Finally, deadlines/due dates are very important for students to keep in mind; thus, for every day an alternative assessment is late, **the grade is lowered by twenty percent** (unless there are extenuating circumstances).

HOMEWORK

Students can anticipate receiving homework assignments multiple times a week. Additionally, a small block of time should be set aside every night to review and study material to help the students prepare for assessments and daily activities. Homework is to be handed in on time and complete. **Although homework will not directly contribute to the overall term grade, when done thoroughly and consistently, it will help support student learning and indirectly have a positive impact on grades earned. Additionally, homework assignments are reflected when parent/guardians or students access grades; however, the letter grades reflected for these homework assignments DO NOT directly impact one's term grade.**

EXTRA HELP

Students are encouraged to come for extra help if they are experiencing any difficulties in class, if they would just like to review material learned, if they would like assistance with organization, or if they would like to work on study skills. It is recommended that we be notified that day in class if a student is planning to come in for help during lunch. Students should take advantage of this opportunity since self-

advocacy is a tremendous tool and will be especially important as they advance in their education.

This year we hope to work closely with all of you to make the transition to eighth grade, and beyond, as smooth as possible. We look forward to learning as much from the students as they learn from us. Any thoughts you may have regarding this upcoming school year are welcome. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Sincerely,

John R. Jones Jr.

John C. Ross Jr.

Student Name (Please Print): _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature(s): _____

**The classroom policies contained in this course outline may change as needed.*