

Dear Parents:

Welcome to a new school year! The schedule for your student and his/her computer lab class is listed below. All students are scheduled in the lab once per week and their class time is for 45 minutes. The teachers for your student's class are also listed.

6B Wednesday, 1:45-2:30 p.m. Joanne Gerth, Patty Hidy
6E Thursday, 11:30-12:15 p.m. Patty Hidy, Gail Motz

7L Thursday, 1:45-2:30 p.m. Patty Hidy, Gail Motz
7W Thursday, 9:00-9:45 a.m. Patty Hidy, Gail Motz

8E Wednesday, 1:00-1:45 p.m. Joanne Gerth, Patty Hidy
8H Wednesday, 11:30-12:15 p.m. Joanne Gerth, Patty Hidy

All students will be working on their typing skills and this is generally done in the first 10-15 minutes of their class time. Students will be learning to type through the 'Type to Learn', Typing Web program or in an individual plan utilizing a program 'Typing Quick and Easy'. In the 6, 7 and 8th grade years the computer class will focus on math, grammar and social studies. The student's PowerPoint skills will be finessed in these grades, animations will be done in 7th grade and 8th graders will help with preparing for their high school entrance test. 6th grade will be introduced to Google SketchUp (3-D architectural design program) and 7th grade will be introduced to Scratch (beginning computer programming language). Skills in each of these programs will be enhanced in subsequent grades.

You may be asked by your child about downloading a program they heard about at school, specifically **Google SketchUp** and **Scratch**. A little background on these:

Google SketchUp is a free and safe download for your computer. We have had parents and students both in the past that have enjoyed exploring how to create 3D projects at home.

Scratch is a simple programming tool created by researchers at **MIT**. It is also free and safe to download. **Scratch** encourages problem solving, experimentation, critical thinking and collaboration. Students acquire these skills by 'playing' **Scratch**.

We have lesson plans that are grade and curriculum appropriate, however if a teacher requests additional work on a particular area or support for a particular project they have been studying, we are able to add support for their class.

Our goal in the computer lab is to enrich and support the learning that is happening in your student's classroom. We would like to see each student feel comfortable using the computer for more than games and social networking! We hope everyone has a wonderful school year ahead and hopefully computers and technology are part of the learning process.

Sincerely,
Joanne Gerth, Patty Hidy and Gail Motz