Sixth Grade Students and Parents,

Welcome to Gateway! I am excited to have you on this amazing middle school journey with us! Though we are disappointed not to start school live, that won’t stop us from welcoming you to the Gateway Family. Typically, we would have an in-person orientation to help you become acquainted with our school, the building, and opportunities for clubs and activities. Rest assured, when the time comes to re-enter the building, we will still give families the chance to get acquainted with the school and programs ding and ensure our sixth graders know how to navigate our building. I am writing this letter to provide you with an orientation to help get you started for now.

Principal
I am Mr. Bennett, and I am happy to be your principal. I am beginning my 2nd year as Gateway’s principal, and my 9th year in school administration. Previously, I was assistant principal at Cascade High School as well as a high school and junior high school in the Phoenix, AZ area. Prior to that I taught English and coached speech, debate, and technical theater. My wife and I have two children who will be in 7th and 1st grades next year. We love camping, cooking, and enjoying the amazing summer weather in the Pacific Northwest. Our fingers are crossed to watch some Seahawks games!

My vision as your principal is that each of our Gateway Guardians has a place they can see themselves in our school, and that each student has opportunities and a voice. I am passionate about expanding our approach to instruction, curriculum, and activities to include each of our students and be inclusive of background.

What is my job? My job is to connect with students and parents to ensure the experience at Gateway is a positive one, whether we are online or in person. I oversee our staff, curriculum, instruction, and operations. While we are remote learning, some of these roles are a bit more challenging. I encourage students and parents/guardians to contact me directly. My email is mbennett@everettsd.org and my phone number is (425) 385-6690. I will be reaching out to many of you as school starts to check in and to get to know you. I believe in transparency and two-way communication.

Gateway is an amazing school, and that is because we have supportive parents, hardworking staff, and the best students we could ever ask for!
**Assistant Principal/Athletic Director**

Our assistant principal is Mr. Campbell. Mr. Campbell is starting at Gateway with years of experience as K-12 and middle school administrator. Prior to that, he taught music, technology, and math. Mr. Campbell loves listening to, playing, and creating music, as well as sports.

Mr. Campbell will oversee athletics when athletics resume. He also supervises half of our teachers and staff. Mr. Campbell also works with students needing assistance resolving conflicts or talking through issues. You can contact Mr. Campbell at dcampbell@everettsd.org and his phone number is (425) 385-6691.

**Counselor**

Your school counselor is Mr. Schilaty. Mr. Schilaty has been a friendly face at Gateway for many years, and coaches here as well. He is a sports fanatic – you can check him on his sports trivia!

Mr. Schilaty will be your counselor for the three years you are at Gateway. His job is to help get your schedule worked out, and to help resolve conflicts with peers, help with social and emotional needs, and to be there to listen to students when you need someone to talk to. His email is jschilaty@everettsd.org and his phone number is (425) 385-6624.

**Schedules**

You will have 5-6 teachers at Gateway for your different classes. Schedules will be available to retrieve online in late August or early September, when counselors have finished. We will notify you when schedules are ready.

**GUARD Your Character!**

At Gateway, we say “Guard Your Character.” I’ve had parents and students ask if that means that we expect all students to be the same. Absolutely not! Each of our students has a one-of-a-kind personality, and come from a variety of cultures and backgrounds, speak different languages, and learn and interact differently. To “Guard Your Character” means that we teach you our expectations up front so there are no surprises, and that you as students learn and be social while expressing your own values in an environment that keeps everyone safe but lets everyone express themselves.

G – Grit – Be positive with a stick-to-it attitude  
U – Universal Respect – Be respectful of peers, property, and self  
A – Acceptance – Be willing to help and work with others, know that each Guardian is different  
R – Responsibility – Be ready to learn, take accountability for your actions  
D – Do What’s Right – Be honest and positive, speak up and help the community

GUARD expectations are different depending on where you are: in a classroom, in the cafeteria, and online.

**Guardian Gear**

To help show your school spirit, your class color is navy blue! This will be your class color for your three years at Gateway. We encourage you to pick blue when buying your Guardian Gear to show your school spirit and your class pride. Guardian Gear is sold by our PTSA as a fundraiser. Access the online store here: https://gatewayguardianwear.square.site

**PTSA**

We have an amazing PTSA, and they will continue to support Gateway when school is closed. They have plans to continue student recognition and staff support. We encourage our families to join and to get involved! Join here: https://gateway-pta-7-3-72.cheddarup.com
Athletics, Activities, and Socials
A very important part of middle school is getting involved and learning who you are and what you are interested in. We are sad that it will be some time before we can participate in athletics and socials. We are working to determine how best to facilitate some clubs or other activities. Once the online year starts, we will let you know!

Changing Classes
An exciting part of middle school is changing classes! We know that the biggest concern that 6th graders have is finding their classes. With our distance model this fall, you will be able to enjoy having multiple teachers in the day without have to walk through the halls. However, when we are able to start in-person classes we will have time to help orient you to the building, lunches, and other activities.

Class Fees and Yearbooks
We are working hard to eliminate as many course fees as possible for family for next year. Yearbook sales will be available online. We will let you know when ordering is available.

Drive-Through Welcome Party and Item Pick-Up
Mark your calendars! You are invited to our 6th Grade Welcome Party! This is our chance to celebrate our students and greet students and parents. We hope to make this a fun experience for all. We’ve invited 6th grade teachers to attend if they are in town and able.

When: Wednesday, August 26th, 3pm-7pm  Where: In your car, in the Gateway bus loop

Who: 6th grade students and their families. Please note, that if your family has older students, you will be able to pick up items for them while you are here for the 6th grade party. Also, if you can’t make it to the 6th Grade Welcome, you can pick up materials the next day from 9-1 or 3-7.

What: We have a lot to give you!
- ChromeBooks – you will get a brand new ChromeBook that includes a touch screen, a stylus, a heavy-duty case, and a charger. WiFi hotspots will be available for families that need them
- English book – You will get a SpringBoard workbook for the year that is yours to keep, and write in
- Math books – You will get several Open Up workbooks, one per unit, that is yours to keep, and write in
- Social studies textbook
- Other supplies

We will send you more details closer to the event.

We are here to serve you!
The entire staff at Gateway, and myself included, are here to help make the best experiences that we can. Though we are starting online this fall, I do not believe that it is “distance” learning because that makes it seem like we are isolated. If I can help you and your family in any way, please contact me directly. If I can’t resolve your need, I will work to put you in contact with someone who can.

Warmly,
Matt Bennett