Dear Olympus Junior High Parents and Families,

We want to provide you with some background on the process that has become the new Science and Engineering Education (SEEd) standards for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade science students in Utah. Over the past 5+ years teams of teachers, parents, scientific experts, and the State Board of Education have worked to update the content and process of teaching science in Utah. This cohort’s goal was to provide both content and skills that would better prepare students for the increasing opportunities students will have for high school, college, and future careers.

The SEEd instruction emphasizes teaching students to use scientific knowledge and engineering practices to conduct investigations and solve problems. New assessments will reflect these changes. Assessments will be more writing-oriented, activity-oriented, and computer-based. The new core includes setting higher expectations for analysis and interpretation of data as well as problem-solving and group work. Improving the quality of science education can help expand opportunities for all students. We want to equip students with skills while building on the knowledge gained in each grade level.

The classwork and assignments may look and feel different this year. Please keep in mind **the teachers are new to this as well** and will be collaborating as a team to make your student’s class time as engaging and structured as possible as we make these developmental changes. Some examples may include:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Prior Science…** | **The new experience will…** |
| Memorizing facts, dates, and equations | Develop a deeper understanding of how concepts apply in the world around us |
| Different domains of science have specific skills involved (i.e. math is for physics and chemistry) | Experience how concepts and skills are found in all kinds of science |
| One scientific method | Multiple ways to arrive at the same conclusion |
| Following a set lab activity step by step | Developing their own method to test how the parts of a system interact with one another |
| Creating an ‘art’ project to describe the what part of a concept | Developing a model to explain the how and why things interact in a system |

Please feel free to contact us with questions. We want to help you help your student as we learn how science works in the real world today and to prepare students for the college, careers, and lifestyles of the future. We are excited to embark on this new journey together.

Thank you!

Olympus Junior High Science Department