



Gator Bytes

June 3
2020

Learning, Leadership and Laughter...The JRG Journey

J.R. Gerritts Middle School • 545 S. John St. • Kimberly, WI • 920-788-7905

Thank you!

Well, we made it to the end of the strangest school year most of us have ever experienced. We not only made it, we thrived! On behalf of our staff, we thank our students and families for their hard work and perseverance during our school closure and move to online learning.

We really miss the traditions that would be occurring this week - our 8th Grade Recognition Celebration, Sources of Strength Celebration and our class trips to Great America for 8th graders and Bay Beach for 7th graders. We hope that all of our students have been able to connect with their teachers and classmates online this week, and we hope everyone enjoys a fun, safe, and healthy summer.

For our 8th graders, since we can't gather together in person this year due to the COVID-19 school closure, we have [created a video for you to enjoy](#). While we are disappointed that we can't celebrate together, and no video can fully replace being able to see and cheer on our classmates and family members in person, it does give us the chance to recognize this milestone and send this great group of students off to the high school.

Congratulations to all of our 8th-grade students! You have left a legacy of kindness and responsibility, and we will miss you. On behalf of our staff, we wish you the very best as you move on to bigger and better things!

Finally, this year is ending with the national outpouring of grief and anger in reaction to the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. I had the great privilege this year of meeting regularly with a small group of students of color at JRG, and have so appreciated the insights and wisdom they have shared with me. I'm not being dramatic when I say that they have changed forever how I view our community and our school. They helped remind me that we can all benefit from first seeking to understand before striving to be understood.

Earlier this year, JRG [hosted a visit](#) from John Noltner of A Peace of My Mind John lives in Minneapolis and [has spent several days listening to and taking portraits](#) of those impacted by George Floyd's death. I encourage you to explore their words by following the link above. To me, they represent voices that are lost in news coverage and the wider national debate. During this troubled time, my deepest wish for all of us is that we be people who seek justice, speak kindness, and work for reconciliation and peace.

Mr. Brinkmann, Principal
Mr. DeLain and Mr. Bumgardner, Assistant Principals

8th Grade Thank You Notes To Teachers

At the end of each school year, 8th grade students take time to write thank you notes to their teachers. Under normal circumstances, this is done as a group during the school day. [This form](#) was emailed directly to students yesterday, but we wanted to share it here as well. Please encourage your child to take a few moments to practice gratitude and share their thoughts with their teachers.

Summer Technology Assistance

As our Summer School offerings have shifted to online learning, there may be times when your student has an issue with their Chromebook. From June 9 through July 3, technology support will be available at JRG on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 am - 2 pm. If you need help, please feel free to email Mr. Brinkmann, Mr. DeLain or Mr. Bumgardner and we will ask someone from our technology staff to follow up with you.

Summer School

Summer school classes will be held virtually and you will need to re-register for certain classes. Please click [here](#) for more information on virtual classes and to register. The district is hoping to hold courses such as band and sports camps as scheduled and you do not need to re-register for those courses.

School-Owned Items: If You Will Be Enrolling In Another School District

If your family will be leaving the district, please contact us and we will arrange for a time for you to drop off items in our front entryway. All items will be quarantined for 48 hours before we inventory them. Contact 788-7905 or jrg@kimberly.k12.wi.us with questions.

School-Owned Items: If You Will Be Continuing in the Kimberly Area School District

For now, we are asking families to hold on to district-owned materials (Chromebooks, textbooks, library books, etc.) until a future date when we can arrange for those materials to be returned. Textbooks and library materials that were in lockers have been removed and will remain at JRG. For district-owned band instruments, we will ask current 7th graders to keep their instrument over the summer. We are developing a process for parents of 8th graders who have district-owned instruments to drop those off at school. Mr. Hietpas and Mr. O'Donnell will be contacting those families soon.

Grading

Many students and parents have questions or are experiencing stress about grades. Please know that we understand we are not living in normal times, and our normal approach to grading won't work. Our process this year will take a "first do no harm" approach (to quote Hippocrates) to grading in a way that will be fair to students and take into account their previous grades in a class (where applicable) along with the extraordinary circumstances we are asking students and families to learn in. Some students thrive in this new online world, and their final grades can certainly reflect that. But many students find online learning much more challenging, and they shouldn't be penalized by the unexpected and unwanted move to online learning. We are confident that final grades will be fair to your child.