Dear Parents and Guardians-

Welcome to 7th grade Math! I am looking forward to a great year. This will be my fourth year teaching Math at Bridger Middle School, and I love it more every year. Just a little about me: I grew up in Independence and Blue Springs, went to UMKC for my Bachelor’s degree and just completed my Master’s degree at the University of Kansas (sorry MU fans)! In my free time I love to read, drink coffee, eat candy, exercise, and see plays, especially musicals.

I believe that school should help students maximize their capacity as learners. Everybody can learn and get better at math! Not everyone learns the same way, and in my class I like to provide opportunities for every student to learn in the way that is best for them. That means not every student will be doing the exact same thing every day, even though they will all be learning the same thing.

This summer at KU I learned a lot about differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction is a way of teaching that provides different ways for students to acquire content and process skills. Differentiated classrooms are different from traditional classrooms, where every student does the exact same thing every day, like listening to a lecture, taking notes, and solving practice problems. In a differentiated classroom, each student completes a different task in order to learn the same thing. Sometimes they work in groups, sometimes with partners, and sometimes they will work by themselves. Grouping will probably be different every day. Students will be grouped based on their learning styles, interests, and needs.

Differentiated instruction gives every student the opportunity to be appropriately challenged and successful in Math class. It also makes math more interesting and fun! While students are grouped based on their learning styles, interests, and needs, it is NOT like the tracked reading groups I remember back in school, with the blue jays, the robins, and the buzzards. Our groups change all of the time, so students get an opportunity to work with many of their peers. Sometimes students get to choose their groups or tasks, and other times I will assign groups and tasks.

A day in a differentiated classroom might go like this: Everyone gets an introduction to the topic of the day, integers, and maybe we will take some notes together. Then I will put students in groups depending on their learning styles. One group might make a poster about integers, another might produce a short film about integers, and another might do a computer exploration about integers. At the end of the day, the class will come together to discuss what we learned. The next day, students will work in different groups, based upon how comfortable they feel about integers. Each group will get a different set of problems to solve together, and at the end of the day we will come together to discuss our problems and the strategies we used to solve them. In the end, everyone reaches the same goal: understanding how to solve problems using integers, but every student gets there in a different way.

I am looking forward to getting to know your students and help them learn to love math! Here’s to a great school year!

Ms. Bach