

Dear Sam Adams School Family,

 Welcome to the 2015-2016 school year! The Sam Adams Staff has been busy planning and preparing for a wonderful, educational year! Here are a couple of new things you can expect!

 **Curriculum** 

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All K-6 grade Science students will be taught specific Common Core Content from the Battle Creek Science Kits. This will help our students be prepared for the Next Generation Standards that will be implemented by the state in the near future. These kits include:

**Kindergarten**

Unit 1 - Senses

The *Senses* unit is based on skill building of sound inquiry practices, focusing on the use of the senses to make purposeful observations and raise questions for investigation.

[*Senses* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/KPS1PL.pdf)

Unit 2 - Kindergarten in Motion

The *Kindergarten in Motion* unit develops students’ prior knowledge of motion and changes in motion through observation and investigation on the playground and high interest classroom investigations.

[*Kindergarten in Motion* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/KPS2PL.pdf)

Unit 3 - My Earth

Using students’ natural curiosity about rocks, soil, sand, water, etc. the unit develops their observation skills and recognition of the importance of earth materials in growth and living things.

[*My Earth* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/KESPL.pdf)

Unit 4 - Is It Living?

Students recognize living and nonliving things and the basic needs of organisms. They compare physical characteristics of organisms and how the organisms use the characteristics for survival.

[*Is It Living?* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/KLSPL.pdf)

**First Grade**

Unit 1 - Sorting Things Out

Students sort objects by their observable properties and explore the interaction of different material and magnets. States of matter are introduced through solids keeping their shape and liquids taking the shape of the container.

[*Sorting Things Ou*t Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/1PSPL.pdf)

Unit 2 & 3 - Weather Watchers

*Weather Watchers* unitis taught in 2 quarters to span seasons and increase observations in changes in weather and seasons. Students collect weather data, temperature, cloud cover, wind speed and direction, and precipitation over a long period of time. They relate their weather observations to the changes in seasons. Weather observation tools are introduced, thermometer, rain gauge, and windsock.

[*Weather Watchers* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/1ESPL.pdf)

Unit 4 - An Animal’s Life

Students study the basic needs of animals for survival and the life cycle of animals. The monarch is observed through its life cycle and common schoolyard animals are observed in a model habitat. Students observe and care for the animals.

[*An Animal's Life* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/1LSPL.pdf)

**Second Grade**

Unit 1 - Measuring Matters

*Measuring Matters* focuses on common objects and substances and their physical properties that can be observed and measured. Students describe objects and substances and identify the properties of matter through the application of measurement and material composition.

[*Measuring Matter*s Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/2PSPL.pdf)

Unit 2 & 3 - Earth’s Land and Water

After identifying and designing models of landforms and bodies of water, students explore how water exists on Earth in three states and the movement of water on land and through the atmosphere. Students apply their knowledge to help identify sources of water and what is usable. Lessons include identifying and keeping track of uses of water in the classroom, home, and community. Students design a plan for water conservation.

[*Earth's Land and Water* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/2ESPL.pdf)

Unit 4 - A Plant’s Life

Students explore the parts of a plant, what they do, and how they contribute to its survival. Through planting seeds and observing their growth, they examine the life cycle of plants and consider their importance to the survival of all living things.

[*A Plant's Life* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/2LSPL.pdf)

**Third Grade**

Unit 1 - Changes in Motion

Using their everyday observations of motion and through a variety of activities, students build on their Kindergarten experiences and explore concepts of motion and forces. They compare and contrast motion in terms of direction, speed, and the relationship with gravity and friction.

[*Changes in Motion* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/3PS1PL.pdf)

Unit 2 - Light and Sound

Beginning with an exploration into the properties of light and sound, students apply their knowledge to concepts related to shadows, color, pitch, and volume. They compare and contrast the properties of light and sound and relate their ideas to observation of change and evidence of sound and light energy.

[*Light and Sound* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/3PS2PL.pdf)

Unit 3 - Earth and Me

Students identify earth materials and surface changes and apply their knowledge to natural resources and how humans use natural resources. The effect of human dependency and activity on Earth’s natural resources is applied through ways to protect, conserve, and restore the Earth’s resources and environment.

[*Earth and Me* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/3ESPL.pdf)

Unit 4 - Organisms Have Character

Students take a deeper look into the physical and behavioral characteristics of organisms and their role in growth and survival. The function of different body parts is related to their environment and how animals survive in their environment. Students apply their knowledge of organisms to the food chain and food web.

[*Organisms Have Character* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/3LSPL.pdf)

**Fourth Grade**

Unit 1 - Energy Transfer

This unit concentrates on heat, magnetism and electricity as energy transfers. The interaction of magnetic materials is explored through investigation. Students explore electrical circuits and apply their knowledge to build and electromagnet.

[*Energy Transfer* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/4PS1PL.pdf)

Unit 2 - States of Matter

Previous units have laid the foundation for a more in-depth study of the states of matter. Students explore the physical properties of solids, liquids, and gases through measurement and observation and investigation into the changes of states and apply what they discover to heat transfer and energy.

[*States of Matter* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/4PS2PL.pdf)

Unit 3 - The View from the Earth

Students make long-term observations of the position of the sun and moon in the sky to develop an understanding of relative distances, the appearance of movement across the sky, and relate it to day and night, Earth’s orbit, the spin of the Earth, and the visible shape of the moon. The unit concludes with a look into fossils and evidence of environment and changes in the history of the Earth.

[*The View From the Earth* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/4ESPL.pdf)

Unit 4 - Organisms in Their Environment

Students take a deeper look into the requirements of plants and animals to survive, the roles animals play in their environments, and how some animals and plants have variations that give them an advantage for survival. Students apply what they know and explore the effect of change on the environment.

[*Organisms in Their Environment* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/4LSPL.pdf)

**Fifth Grade**

Unit 1 & 2 - Forces and Motion

Students continue to learn about how things move and participate in an exploration into force and motion as related to distance, time, speed, balanced and unbalanced forces, contact and non-contact forces. Students collect data and describe force and motion in qualitative and quantitative terms. Students illustrate how motion can be measured and represented on a graph.

[*Forces and Motion* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/5PSPL.pdf)

Unit 3 - Objects in the Sky

This unit builds on the concepts of the 4th grade unit, *The View from Earth*, and students demonstrate using models rotation on axis and orbits due to gravity of Earth and other planets. They relate the relative position of the sun, moon, and Earth to seasons, moon phases, eclipses, tides and day and night.

[*Objects in the Sky* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/5ESPL.pdf)

Unit 4 - Systems and Survival

Students examine three different “systems” in their lives, classification system, ecosystems, and human body systems. They use the characteristics of organisms to build model ecosystems, classify organisms by physical traits, and research human body systems and how they work together.

[*Systems and Survival* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/5LSPL.pdf)

**Sixth Grade**

Unit 1 - Energetic Connections

Sixth graders deepen their understanding of energy in its multiple forms through investigations into kinetic and potential energy and begin to understand the scientific reasoning that energy is not created or destroyed. Students explore changes in states of matter that mass is conserved during changes in states.

[*Energetic Connections* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/6PSPL.pdf)

Unit 2 - The Planet Rock

The *Planet Rock* unit explores the rock cycle, weathering and glacier movement and leads to a study of soil and a comparison of soil samples.

[*The Planet Rock* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/6ES1PL.pdf)

Unit 3 - Earth: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

Sixth graders gain an understanding of the Earth’s history and future through the study of plate tectonics and major geological events. They build their knowledge from the unit, *Planet Roc*k to include tectonic movement, layers of the Earth, the magnetic properties of the Earth, and how rocks, rock layers, and fossils tell the history of the Earth.

[*Earth: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* Parent Letter](https://www.bcamsc.org/images/stories/6ES2PL.pdf)

Unit 4 - Energy in an Ecosystem

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All K-6 grade Math Students will be learning Engage NY/Eureka Curriculum modules in mathematics that are marked by in-depth focus on fewer topics. They integrate the CCLS, rigorous classroom reasoning, extended classroom time devoted to practice and reflection through extensive problem sets, and high expectations for mastery. The time required to complete a curriculum module will depend on the scope and difficulty of the mathematical content that is the focus of the module (first priority cluster area for a given grade level). For example, the curriculum module relating to Grade 3 multiplication and division introduces initial ideas of multiplication and division in a brief period at the start of the year, continues to develop strategies and problem solving throughout the year, and includes materials to be used throughout the year for helping students reach fluency by the end of the year with single-digit multiplication and related division.

**Connecting the Standards for Mathematical Practice to the Standards for Mathematical Content**

The [Standards for Mathematical Practice](http://www.corestandards.org/Math/Practice) describe ways in which developing student practitioners of the discipline of mathematics increasingly ought to engage with the subject matter as they grow in mathematical maturity and expertise throughout the elementary, middle and high school years. Designers of curricula, assessments, and professional development should all attend to the need to connect the mathematical practices to mathematical content in mathematics instruction.

The Standards for Mathematical Content are a balanced combination of procedure and understanding. Expectations that begin with the word “understand” are often especially good opportunities to connect the practices to the content. Students who lack understanding of a topic may rely on procedures too heavily. Without a flexible base from which to work, they may be less likely to consider analogous problems, represent problems coherently, justify conclusions, apply the mathematics to practical situations, use technology mindfully to work with the mathematics, explain the mathematics accurately to other students, step back for an overview, or deviate from a known procedure to find a shortcut. In short, a lack of understanding effectively prevents a student from engaging in the mathematical practices.

| **Instructional Shifts Demanded by the Common Core Learning Standards in Mathematics** |
| --- |
| Shift 1 | Focus |
| Shift 2 | Coherence |
| Shift 3 | Fluency |
| Shift 4 | Deep Understanding |
| Shift 5 | Application |
| Shift 6 | Dual Intensity |

![C:\Users\dvoss\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\0F52VFGH\MC900431595[1].png]()NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Association) Testing

All Sam Adams Students will be taking the NWEA Test three times a year to measure growth and provide instructional guidance. Staff will provide students & parents with “Test Talks” to support their understanding of the educational successes of each child on this assessment.

* Continuous growth provides opportunity and challenge.
* Collaborative efforts contribute to mutual strength and vitality.
* Investment in local expertise and resources enhances kids' growth.
* Continuing relationships are vital to effectiveness.
* Credibility is built through quality products and responsive service.
* Thoughtful questioning and reflection are critical to creating the future.
* Contributing to the discovery and dissemination of knowledge expands our capacity to improve education.

 Today, 24 million assessments later, we still measure our success against these core beliefs:

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[Assessments](http://www.nwea.org/products-services/computer-based-adaptive-assessments): The flagship, state-aligned computer-based testing system, MAP, is built on 30 years of research and refinement, and adapts to the child in real-time as the test progresses for a pinpoint picture of learning achievement and readiness.
[Classroom Resources](http://www.nwea.org/products-services/classroom-resources): They offer several tools to translate data into lessons targeted to the exact things a student are ready to learn.

Reporting: Data that informs, in timely, actionable reports to help guide decision making at every level.

Stable and Consistent
When students take the adaptive tests, they are presented with test questions at different levels of difficulty, that adjust based on their responses. At the end of a testing sequence, the student receives an overall score, called RIT that indicates the instructional level appropriate for him or her.

NWEA RIT scale offers proven benefits:

* Stability: A RIT score of 148 ten years ago means the
same thing now as it did then.
* Grade-independent: Test items match student performance, not grade level. So two students with a score of 210 are at the same level, even if one is in third grade and the other is in fourth.
* Equal Interval: On the RIT scale, the increments are the same whether it's the difference between 140 and 152 or 200 and 212. This gives educators a clear yardstick for measuring progress.

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 The Sam Adams Staff is thrilled to provide all of the new educational opportunities to our students. We look forward to a rewarding year for all of our Sam Adams School Family!

Dee Voss, Principal