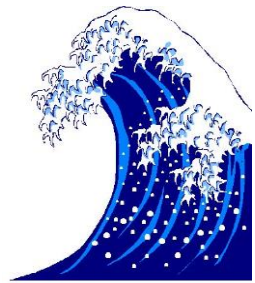


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# Welcome to Bernice Ayer Middle School



January 2023

Nick Stever, Principal

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## Our Commitment to You

**B**ernice Ayer is an amazing middle school and we are sure we can help make your child's three years here a happy, enriching, and stimulating experience. Our sixth grade teachers are experts in their subject areas and realize the importance of helping students make a successful transition from elementary to middle school. Bernice Ayer Middle School is dedicated to academic excellence and student-centered instruction. Our staff is committed to ensuring that all students learn at the highest level.



We strongly believe that the most successful schools work as a community where all members have a key role in the education of our children. Our learning community of students, parents, and teachers, work together to help all students be successful.

This is a great opportunity for you to set the tone for your involvement as a parent for the next three years. Together, we will create a fantastic school where students are happy, learn to their full potential, and receive all the support they need from teachers and parents. Success will be measured in individual student achievements, big and small, seen every day on campus.

## School-wide Goals

**O**ur staff has identified key goals to direct our efforts to provide your child with the best possible learning experience. It is our primary goal to help all students "connect" with the school so that they are challenged academically, comfortable socially, and engaged intellectually and emotionally in the life of the school. This makes for happy and successful students. If students display the right attitude, they will be successful. We teach, monitor, and reward these appropriate behaviors:

- Be Ready.
- Act Respectfully
- Make Good Decisions
- Show Integrity

## The Transition to Middle School

**O**ur staff realizes that sixth grade is a year of transition for our students. We work hard to make this transition a smooth one for students and their families. In the first month of school, we help students adjust to their new environment. We assign an eighth grade mentor to every sixth grade student. This mentor student is a model student and who will support them through the different chapters of the school year. We teach students how to use lockers and provide time for practice. We teach expected behaviors, model them, and recognize students when they are successful.

The most critical element of a successful transition to middle school is for students to display effective work habits when it comes to completing classroom assignments and homework. Our teachers provide students with many opportunities to complete high quality work on time. Teachers record all assignments on the whiteboard. Students are taught to record these assignments in a daily planner. Students have time to begin homework assignments in class and during SWELL. They can make sure that they understand the assignment at that time. Teachers email assignments home using Canvas. If you already have a Canvas account, you do not need to do anything. If you are new

to CUSD you will need to register the first week of school for a Canvas account.

## Parent Portal

Both parents and students **MUST have portal accounts.** Each parent MUST have a Parent Portal account; and each student must have a Student Portal account. To register for these accounts, you will need the Student's Name, Student ID number, and Student Verification passcode. If you do not know your student's Verification passcode, please ask his/her current school. To register, go to [portal.capousd.org](http://portal.capousd.org). Click on "Parent & Student Portal" under "sign in". Click on "Create a New Account" and follow the instructions.

## Core Classes

Sixth grade students take six classes every day: an elective, P.E., and four core classes- math, science, English, and social science. Your child will have up to 4 different teachers for the core classes. Your child will also have a teacher for P.E. and an elective class.

## Daily Schedule

Our school starts at 8:45 a.m. and ends at 3:25 p.m., except for Monday, when students begin at 9:45 a.m. with the late-start schedule. Students are not allowed on campus before 8:20 a.m. daily and not before 9:20 a.m. on Mondays when they will be supervised. The bell schedule will be included in your summer packet.

## Late-Start Monday

Our staff is committed to working as a team to present a consistently high level of education to your child. They need time to do this. Every Monday, teachers meet from 8:30-9:30 a.m. in curriculum collaboration and staff development. Students come to school an hour later than usual, at 9:45 a.m. The school day ends at the regular dismissal time, 3:25 p.m.

## Home-to-School Communication

We have established many ways for you to communicate with your child's teachers. Each child is provided with a student planner in which all homework is recorded. This is the key organizational tool for students. Students who use this effectively are usually successful in school. Many parents and teachers write notes in this agenda. Parents can call teachers directly at 366-9607 or they may ask the guidance staff to set up a conference with their child's teachers. Unlike elementary school, we

do not have a scheduled parent-teacher conference at the end of a grading period.

Our teachers communicate via e-mail and email homework information using Canvas. Current information is maintained on the school web site at <http://bams.capousd.org> we will also communicate via School Messenger to send you general school information by e-mail. A weekly "Breaker Blast" goes out as a School Messenger. The Blast communicates important information about the upcoming week. An automated phone message goes out to all families from the Principal on an as-needed basis.

## Report Cards and Grades

The middle school year is divided into four nine-week grading periods, or quarters. Therefore, students receive report cards four times per year. In the middle of each grading period, progress reports are generated for students receiving grades of D or F. This is a signal that more attention needs to be paid by the student to his/her work at school. Our teachers post grades on-line on Canvas so that all students can track their progress. Parents can securely check their child's most recent quarter grade/progress report in any class through the Parent Portal at [portal.capousd.org](http://portal.capousd.org).

## Homework

Homework is assigned to reinforce and extend classroom learning. This is often the area in which students struggle when they first come to middle school. It is important that students are in the habit of completing homework accurately and submitting it on time before they reach 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Homework is assigned daily and students are given ample time to check with teachers to be sure that they understand each assignment. A typical sixth grader averages about an hour of homework per night. Of course, there are some students who spend less or more time on homework than this average. Our teachers are very aware that sixth graders have many outside demands on their time after school and that kids need "family time" too.

## Lockers and Backpacks

Sixth grade students are provided with a book locker (some students may be sharing with a partner). Students store all library and text books in this locker. We will try to place your child's locker in an area where only sixth graders have lockers. We will provide instruction on how to open and use the book locker effectively during orientation. The school does not take responsibility for theft or damage to items stored in lockers.

Students will also have a PE locker. This locker is used to store clothes during PE classes. All students are required to wear a PE uniform during PE. Uniforms can be purchased at the summer registration.

Your child's teacher will provide information and guidance about what should be carried in backpacks. We do not wish to overburden your child with a heavy backpack. Lockers are used to store books. Teachers and parents should monitor the weight of backpacks. Some sixth graders need help realizing that they don't have to carry all school supplies in their backpacks at all times. If you feel that your child's backpack is too heavy, call the teacher to work on solutions.

## Lunch

Sixth grade students share the same lunch period with seventh and eighth grade students at BAMS. Students can select from a menu of items at the cafeteria window. Many students bring a brown-bag lunch. During the first week of school when lunch lines are longer than usual as students pour over our menu selections. We make sure that all children get enough time to eat during that first week! Children eat outdoors at the lunch tables. On rainy days, they eat in the multipurpose room. Students may play ball games and participate in sports tournaments at lunch and can check out equipment.

## Seventh and Eighth Graders

Many parents of students new to the sixth grade are anxious about their child's interactions with older students in grades seven and eight. Our staff is aware of this concern and we spend time making sure that our sixth grade students feel comfortable at school. Most sixth grade students interact primarily with other sixth graders. Fortunately, we have established a tradition at BAMS in which older students take pride in being helpful to their younger school mates.

## School Safety

At BAMS we are committed to student safety. We maintain an up-to-date plan that addresses all areas of student safety, from earthquake preparedness to fire drills. We practice fire, earthquake, and lock-down procedures in monthly drills. All visitors to school are required to check in at the front office and are given a pass if they go out on campus.

Three campus supervisors patrol campus during class periods and supervise students at lunch. All administrators supervise lunches and passing periods. A school-wide discipline plan is explained to all students the first week

of school during our annual Wave Day event. High expectations and standards are set for student behavior. Students follow a school dress code. This dress code is printed in the student planner and posted on our website. At BAMS, we are proud of our positive school climate where students are respectful, tolerant, and well behaved.

In partnership with the Orange County Sheriff's Department, Bernice Ayer **hotline** for students, staff, and parents who may have information regarding student safety, vandalism, bullying, or other suspicious activity. **The number to Say Something is 1-844-5-Saynow** or web address is [www.saysomething.net](http://www.saysomething.net) Students are encouraged to Say Something before or after school hours. If a student wishes to report during the school day, then he/she is encouraged to come directly to the office. We encourage community use of this program to keep BAMS the safe, great place that it is.

## Curriculum

Bernice Ayer Middle School presents a rigorous curriculum to students based on Content Standards. Our instruction is child-centered in that we focus on strategies that help individual children to learn to their best potential. Our teachers work together in grade level and subject area teams to plan the best possible curriculum and learning activities for the students. Teachers meet regularly to discuss and implement effective learning strategies. Your child's teacher will present important information about curriculum and learning at Back-to-School Night in September.



## Support Staff

A Guidance Tech works with teachers, parents, and students to monitor student progress. Mrs. Broadhead monitors grades, works on class schedules, and notifies administrators of potential concerns. She meets with all students who struggle with grades to provide advice and motivation.

Ms. Soboleski & Mrs. Ederaine are our assistant principals. They have many administrative duties but their main job is to work with students to make sure that they feel safe at school. The Assistant Principal also handles discipline issues and makes sure students get to class on time. Our administrators are committed to working with parents to help students display good behavior at school.

We also have a two full time counselors and a school psychologist on campus to help students with academic, social, and emotional issues. Parents are an important part of this process. A school librarian is on campus every day to help students with reference questions and computer access in the library. Our custodian keeps the campus clean for our students during the school day. Our community liaison works with our Spanish speaking families offering student support services.

## **SWELL Time**

**SWELL** time is an opportunity for students to receive extra help if they need it (re-teaching, re-take a test, make-up missed assignments; bring up a failing grade, etc.). **SWELL** is also an opportunity for students to participate in an activity of their choice if they don't need extra help. Students **MUST** have a planner and bring it to school every day. Students who need extra help will have their planner's stamped by their teacher. The student is required to attend the class they are stamped for during **SWELL** time. If they have multiple stamps they will attend the class that is assigned priority, which is determined by the day of the week (Monday = Social Science, Tuesday = Math etc.). If the stamp is not a priority day, they will attend the class they need the most support.

## **Small School Feeling**

**O**ur teachers and staff work hard to create a "small school" feeling for our students by staying in close contact with parents about student progress. Our teachers also make every effort to connect with their students so that each child has an adult advocate on campus, somebody they can trust. Sixth grade teachers work in teams with the same groups of students to share ideas and strategies to help their students succeed. The student government class, Associated Student Body (ASB), hosts many activities to help students mix and get to know each other. The Peer Assistance Leadership class (PAL) hosts special luncheons to help new students make new friends.

## **PTSA**

**W**e invite all of you to join our Parent Teacher Student Association. The PTSA is a wonderful way to get involved at your child's school. Our school depends upon parent volunteers for a multitude of programs: Reflections, dances, field trips, the Copy Mom Program, the Recycling Program, classroom support, etc. We want our school to have an atmosphere where parents are expected and welcome to help at school.

## **Forster Ranch Educational Foundation**

**T**he Forster Ranch Education Foundation was created by parents of students at Truman Benedict and Bernice Ayer Middle School. It is a volunteer-led, non-profit organization which is dedicated to providing financial support for educational excellence and enrichment programs for our K-8 students. We are here to set new standards of advancement in education and to expand the education opportunities available to students of Truman Benedict and Bernice Ayer Middle School.

## **Quick Facts about Bernice Ayer Middle School**

- 3 feeder elementary schools (Truman Benedict, Las Palmas, Lobo)
- Approximately 850 students
- 44 teachers
- 1 Principal
- 2 Assistant Principal
- 6 campus supervisors
- 1 guidance tech
- 2 counselors
- 1 health assistant, 4 office staff
- 1 Community Liaison
- 1 Chrome book per student
- Library with fulltime Librarian

## **Phone Number and Web Site**

**I**f you have any questions or concerns, please contact us at (949) 366-9607.

For additional information and dates regarding the 2023-2024 school year, please visit our Web Site at:

[www.bams.capousd.org](http://www.bams.capousd.org)

