St. Michael's
EPISCOPAL DAY SCHOOL

Dear Parents of Incoming Sixth Graders,

At St. Michael's, we believe that learning is a year-round journey, and we want to ensure our students are well prepared for the exciting challenges of the coming year. To support that goal, **all students entering first through eighth grade are required to complete a summer math and reading program.** The following information outlines the expectations for students entering sixth grade:

Math
Each student will complete a summer math workbook designed to reinforce concepts learned in fifth grade. This workbook will be sent home with your child on the last day of school.

- Please **remove the answer key** from the back of the book and use it to check your child's work throughout the summer.
- **Calculators should not be used**; we encourage students to practice their mental math skills.
- Once completed, the workbook should be **signed by a parent** and returned to your child's homeroom teacher on the **first day of school: Tuesday, September 1**.

Reading
Students are also expected to:

- **Read at least three books over the summer - two books of their choosing as well as the required book, *The Seventh Most Important Thing* by Shelley Pearsall, assigned by Mrs. Trudel-Alusic.**
- *The Seventh Most Important Thing* should be read last, as the class will begin the school year discussing this book.
- Prepare a written response on *The Seventh Most Important Thing*, due to Mrs. Trudel-Alusic by **August 24** by emailing her at jennifertrudel-alusic@smeds.com.
- **Print out a copy of your written response** on *The Seventh Most Important Thing* and bring it on the first day of school.

A suggested reading list and all necessary directions for the written response are attached to this letter and can also be found on our website on the **Summer Homework** page.

Grading and Support

Students who do not submit their completed summer work will receive an **Incomplete** in math and/or literature on their first report card.

We encourage families to establish a regular routine that balances summer fun with time for learning. Starting early and spreading the work out over the summer will make the experience more enjoyable and effective for your child. Waiting until the final weeks of summer can make it harder for students to retain and apply their skills.

If you have any questions about the summer homework requirements, please feel free to contact Mrs. Trudel-Alusic at jennifertrudel-alusic@smeds.com for questions about the reading homework and Mrs. Steiger at marneesteiger@smeds.com for questions about the math homework.

Thank you for your partnership in your child's education. We look forward to welcoming your child to sixth grade in the fall!

Sincerely,

Olivia Keffer
Director of Curriculum and Instruction
St. Michael's Episcopal Day School
a California Independent School
oliviakeffer@smeds.com
916-485-3418

St. Michael's
EPISCOPAL DAY SCHOOL

Summer Reading 2026
Incoming Sixth Grade

Dear Parents,
Students entering sixth grade will read at least three books over the course of the summer, one of which must be the all-class read, which is ***The Seventh Most Important Thing*** **by Shelley Pearsall**. Students are asked to prepare a written response for the all class to read. **See page three for specific details**.

Below are suggested titles for incoming sixth graders. They may select titles not included on this list. Please note that audiobooks are acceptable and count toward summer reading goals.

Fiction Suggestions
The Absolute Value of Mike by Katherine Erskine
Across So Many Seas by Ruth Behar
The Apothecary (Series) by Maile Meloy
The Ascendance Series by Jennifer A. Nielsen
Beyond the Bright Sea by Lauren Wolk
Catherine Called Birdy by Karen Cushman
Counting by 7s by Holly Goldberg Sloan
The Crossover by Kwame Alexander
The Egypt Game by Zilpha Keatley Snyder
The Enola Holmes Mystery Series by Nancy Springer
The Evolution of Calpurnia Tate by Jacqueline Kelly
The First State of Being by Erin Entrada
Holes by Louis Sachar
Kane Chronicles by Rick Riordan
Keeper of Lost Cities Series by Shannon Messenger
The Lions of Little Rock by Kristin Levine
Magnolia Wu Unfolds It All by Chanel Miller
Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIHM by Robert C. O'Brien
Mysterious Benedict Society (Series) by Trenton Lee Stewart
One Big Open Sky by Lesa Cline-Ransome
Recipe for Disaster by Aimee Lucido
Savvy by Ingrid Law
The Season of Styx Malone by Kekia Magoon
The Secret Garden by Frances Hodgson Burnett
Stella by Starlight by Sharon Draper
Two Degrees by Alan Gratz
War Horse by Michael Morpurgo
The War that Saved My Life by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley
Wild Wings by Gill Lewis
The Wrong Way Home by Kate O'Shaughnessy

Nonfiction Suggestions

Awesome Achievers in Technology by Alan Katz

The Boys in the Boat : the True Story of an American Team's Epic Journey to Win Gold at the 1936 Olympics by Daniel James Brown

Primates by Jim Ottaviani & Maris Wicks

The Thrifty Guide to Ancient Greece OR The Thrifty Guide to Ancient Rome by Korwin Briggs

You Can Fly: The Tuskegee Airmen by Carole Boston Weatherford

MIDDLE SCHOOL READING RESPONSE, SUMMER 2026

Incoming Sixth Grade:
Please respond to each of the following comprehension questions about *The Seventh Most Important Thing* by Shelley Pearsall. The response for each question should be a properly formatted paragraph. You must type your responses and use complete sentences as well as text evidence to support your answers. You must type your responses in double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12-point font. Do not submit multiple documents; instead, make sure all four responses are numbered and in the same document. Your answer will be graded based on depth of analysis as well as mechanics, spelling, and grammar.

1. What other characters besides Mr. Hampton make a difference in Arthur's life? How?
2. Mr. Hampton took broken things in Guam after his first vision to create something beautiful
   from them. How is this a bigger life lesson?
3. What are the Seven Most Important Things? When does each one appear in Arthur's life? What else is happening in his life at those moments that might make the objects important for him?
4. Use two of the Seven Most Important Things to make a piece of recycled artwork. Include a written or verbal explanation of how the creation relates to the story, and include a picture of your artwork in your response.

Due Date for Responses: Monday, August 24
Please email a copy of the final draft of your responses to Mrs. Trudel-Alusic at jennifertrudel-alusic@smeds.com by Monday, August 24, and bring a hard copy of your responses to class on the first day of school.