

Welcome to the 2026–2027 School Year!



Dear Gilson Middle School Students and Families,

Welcome back! I hope you have enjoyed a wonderful summer and are ready for another exciting year at Gilson Middle School. We are looking forward to welcoming our students back and partnering with families as we continue to provide meaningful learning experiences and help every student grow.

This year brings several exciting opportunities. Seventh and eighth grade students will have two new quarterly courses—**Stream Team** and **Alaska Studies**—along with our continued **Communications** and **Reading** classes. These courses will provide engaging opportunities for students to strengthen academic skills while learning more about our local environment, history, and community.

We're also excited to introduce **Friday Family Day** on the first Flex Friday of each month. Families are invited to join us for a monthly theme, student activities, refreshments, and opportunities to celebrate and share student learning. We hope these gatherings strengthen the partnership between home and school while building an even stronger Gilson community.

This year we will continue emphasizing our school-wide expectations of **Excellence with Honor, Service, and Compassion** while reminding students that **every day counts**. We believe every student can succeed when they are challenged, supported, and encouraged to do their very best.

Please join me in welcoming several outstanding educators to our team. We are excited to welcome back **Mindi Baczuk**, who will be teaching seventh-grade social studies and sewing. We also welcome **Jaime Comer**, who joins our Special Education team after serving at the elementary school, and two new members of the Valdez community: **Ethan Davis**, our sixth- and eighth-grade science teacher, and **Taylor Roller**, who also joins our Special Education department. We are thrilled to have them at Gilson Middle School and hope you'll give them a warm Valdez welcome.

Academically, we will continue our successful reading intervention program while launching a new writing intervention to support student literacy. We are also excited to implement a revised Gifted and Talented program that expands opportunities for students to learn, grow, and challenge themselves.

Thank you for the trust you place in us each day. We are grateful to be part of your child's educational journey and look forward to another fantastic year of learning, growth, and success together.

Have a wonderful start to the school year... **Go Huskies!**

Warmly,

Amanda Tippetts

Principal, Gilson Middle School