

# Pojoaque Valley Middle School

**Vera Trujillo**  
Principal  
455-2239

**Pojoaque Valley Schools**  
1574 State Road 502  
Santa Fe, NM 87506

**Mabel Gonzales-Specht**  
7<sup>th</sup> Grade Counselor  
455-2238 Ex. 1604

**Priscilla Cordova**  
Administrative Secretary

**455-2238**

**Robert Garcia**  
8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Counselor/Social Worker  
455-2238 Ex. 1605

**455-2238**

**Connie Garcia**  
Secretary  
455-2238

**Aric Wheeler**  
Discipline Officer  
819-2312



*Kindness Rules !!*

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Welcome to the 2016-2017 school year at Pojoaque Valley Middle School! It is my pleasure to be your child's Math teacher for Eighth Grade. While I am new to Pojoaque, I have many years' experience as a teacher in New York City, New York's Finger Lakes region, and most recently at Turquoise Trail School here in Santa Fe.

I hold degrees in Psychology and Education from Cornell University (AB) and New York University (MA); and Teacher Certification from the States of New York and New Mexico. I also worked as a tradesman and in publishing, philanthropy, and business. This diverse background supports your student's success, because success is often found by looking in different directions.

The math we have planned for this year is useful for your child's whole life! There are dozens of important jobs that require it, and hundreds more where math thinking and practice are called on every day. We will learn to solve problems logically and strategically, how to find patterns, predict what is likely to happen, study the math behind computer design, master the measurement of forms, and more. I can promise your student will not be bored.

In exchange, there are guidelines your student is expected to follow. They not only insure her or his progress; they also create a supportive learning community of mutual respect.

1. Assigned homework is required and due the next day. Late homework is allowed with an excused absence or a reduced grade according to school-wide policy. Our home assignments reinforce and extend the learning experience, and are therefore not optional.
2. Students will own their math textbooks, answering questions and taking notes directly in them. This has many benefits, but they all fail if the book is left at home or misplaced. Students lose ground if they forget their text. A lost text must be replaced at student's expense.
3. We will need to work hard together to accomplish our goals. This requires focused attention and the

elimination of distractions. Hard work is more likely if the students are well rested and nourished. When students distract others, the whole class loses a precious chance to learn and grow.

4. Bring high standards for respecting one another. This includes good listening, thoughtful correction, and a kind-hearted attitude. If I fail to meet this high standard, please let me know. If your student does not meet it chronically, the school will let you know. Otherwise we will manage any problems within the class, as mature citizens.

5. Students must strongly resist intentional disruption of the class and all other discipline infractions. If a student cannot resist, swift and effective consequences will follow. Please read the student handbook together, so you both understand the discipline procedures.

Please keep informed about what, when, and how your child is studying. It is much harder to bring a remedy if we wait until discouragement sets in. If you can actually work WITH your child, you powerfully reinforce math's concepts and practices. If you cannot, please offer encouragement and support.

Feel free to contact me: not only with questions or concerns, but also with advice and insight about what is working.

With respect,

Jonathan Back [jhb@pvs.k12.nm.us](mailto:jhb@pvs.k12.nm.us)