

Middle School Newsblatt

Innovative education of the whole child through German immersion.



January 15th, 2020

On December 16th, Governor Walz announced he and MDE were recommending that schools return to in person learning for elementary schools. I can imagine how difficult it was for him and his team to make this decision. And I understand where their solution came from. Our kids are struggling. Some more than others. We all know that this is not how school was intended to be. TCGIS' Incident Response Team also had a difficult decision to make and ultimately agreed to bring our elementary students back in person. This decision is explained more in depth in the IRT's messaging that went out today. K-2 is preparing now for what feels like the second first day of school.

Where does that leave the middle schoolers? You can see from the IRT's plan and Board Chair Alkatout's message that the plan is to bring the 5th grade A and B cohorts back into the building for in person learning in the third week of February. That means that smaller green and yellow cohorts from Fall would join to be one class. We will continue to work on that plan in the upcoming weeks to be ready for that transition. I ask for patience as we form the best plan for the Middle School. Our scheduling forces have been mostly utilized in bringing back our littlest littles. We know that we need to have a schedule in person that is manageable for students and teachers without leaving our Distance cohorts in an unmanageable one. I will keep you updated with the progress of this transition. We are keeping the whole child in mind and we are dedicated to *innovative education!*

~Elizabeth Zehnpfennig, Middle School Dean



Middle School Schedule and IRT Update

Be sure to read the messaging that came out tonight regarding the IRT decision making process. Board Chair Julie Alkatout, Director of Operations Ashley Weston Miller, Executive Director Ted Anderson and Health Aide Monika Avery give a thorough account of their thought processes.

Jan 4-29	Distance Learning	Distance Learning
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Specialists' schedules for 5th and 6th Graders are changing this week. They are:

Cohort A-Sport	Cohort B-Drama	Cohort C-Art
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7th and 8th grade specialists check [here](#).

Recap of the Week

Despite the still uncertainty of what this year will entail, plans for next year are marching on. We know that high school is around the corner. I, for one, feel energized thinking about that fate for our 8th graders. And our 7th graders are not far behind! Here are something's that happened this week and a few in the near future.

TCGIS 8th Graders Virtual Visit of Paul Central High School

This week two groups of 8th graders visited the German Immersion class of 11th and 12th graders. Each student was given an opportunity to introduce themselves and then sat in on a 25 minute lesson. After the lesson, the students partook in a question and answer session with the high schoolers. It was great to see so much enthusiasm for high school.

Wednesday's High School Panel

On Wednesday of this week many students and families tuned in to the question and answer session with 5 TCGIS alums from Mounds View, Central High, St. Louis Park and Edison in Minneapolis. The evening went well and I appreciated all of the good questions. We will plan on doing another one of these in Spring. It was a last minute add to invite 7th graders and families, and one thing I learned this week is that 7th grade families are eager to learn more about high schools and are also preparing to make that decision. Thanks for advocating for your needs. Happy to accommodate

2021 Capstone Announcement

This week we informed our 8th grade students and their families that the annual Capstone trip to Germany in May/June 2021 will not take place. TCGIS Capstone staff and the Capstone Committee considered many factors over the last few months, but ultimately, vaccination timelines, international travel restrictions, and the possibility for future lockdowns in Germany helped make this very hard decision. The 20/21 Virtual Exchange will continue during the school year, and we are exploring an Alumni Trip to Germany in June 2022 for the Classes of 2020 and 2021 whose Capstone trips were cancelled due to Covid-19. Stay tuned for more information. Our hearts go out to the 8th graders in this difficult time.

Looking Ahead

7th Grade Capstone Trip Meeting

Save the Date! The first meeting for the 7th graders' Capstone trip to Germany in 2022 will be held on **February 18th at 7:30pm** via Zoom. Link coming soon to your Email inbox.

7th Grade Math Scores Presentation

In November, Dr. Jessie Kember and I presented to the Parent Council on the state of Math in the 7th grade. We dove into the data and explained where we thought this class has landed in their math achievement. The presentation helped to increase confidence among the council members that Math is on the right track here at TCGIMS and additionally, helped the lay person have a stronger understanding of the data and screener results.

Dr. Kember and I would like to offer this presentation for all 7th Grade families on:

February 23rd at 7pm via Zoom. Here is the [link](#).

SPPS Central High School Virtual Open House

Families have asked for a Central panel of students for our 7th and 8th graders who are deciding on a school. I am working on that and will let you know a date in the future. For now, SPPS will have Virtual Open House for Central High, the home of our 9-12 German Immersion track on:

February 4th, from 5-7pm.

There will be an additional special meeting for TCGIS parents on one end of this time slot that is yet to be determined. During the main sessions, parents and students can meet with school admin and teachers. During our special session, parents can ask specific questions. As a reminder, TCGIS 8th graders get preferential enrollment. I am told that enrollments are due around March 5th. You can monitor the [Central High School](#) website for more information and Zoom Links. I checked yesterday and it is not there yet. I'll keep you all posted.

