

# Middle School Newsblatt

*Innovative education of the whole child through German immersion.*



February 5th

TCGIS Gemeinschaft,

This weekend and upcoming week's frigid temperatures will keep me and my family indoors. I am reminded at this time of year why I love summer so much. As we bundle up and hunker down for another week of Distance Learning, we look forward to welcoming back our 5th graders in the week after next. In addition, we hope that with COVID numbers going down, our 6th through 8th will be coming back to school soon. Stay warm. Stay healthy. Gemeinsam sind wir stark!

Yours in the work,

*~Elizabeth Zehnpfennig, Middle School Dean*

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# Middle School Schedule and Transitioning Update

**5th Grade Parents:** You will receive special communication during the next week with a few reminders and notes for your student/s' reentry to school. Please send any questions to [Info@tcgis.org](mailto:Info@tcgis.org).

Lockers are being prepped for student use. Desks are being labeled and expectations are being revisited. It's like the second first day of school. We are looking forward to greeting our littlest Middle Schoolers.

**6th-8th Grade Parents:** You will notice below that the return for these students depends on COVID numbers. They are trending in the right direction for this to happen. That is great news. Just to reiterate. Minnesota has not changed the guidelines for grades 6-8. We are still following the same metrics to bring students back into Hybrid. Stay tuned! We should know something soon.

	K-2	3-5	6-8
<b>Jan. 25-29</b>	Distance Learning M-T <b>NO Instruction Th-F (Teacher Work Days)</b> Async Instruction: W	Distance Learning M-T <b>NO Instruction Th-F (Teacher Work Days)</b> Async Instruction: W	Distance Learning Async Instruction: W
<b>Feb. 1-5</b>	<b>In person: M, T, Th, F</b> Async Instruction: W	Distance Learning Async Instruction: W	Distance Learning Async Instruction: W
<b>Feb. 8-12</b>	In person: M, T, Th, F Async Instruction: W	Distance Learning Async Instruction: W	Distance Learning Async Instruction: W
<b>Feb. 15-19</b>	Holiday/No School: M, T In person: Th, F Async Instruction: W	Holiday/No School: M, T <b>In person Th-F</b> Async Instruction: W	Holiday/No School: M, T <b>NO Instruction Th-F (Teacher Work Days)</b> Async Instruction: W
<b>Feb. 22-26</b>	In person: M, T, Th, F Async Instruction: W	In person: M, T, Th, F Async Instruction: W	Distance Learning Async Instruction: W
<b>March 1-5</b>	In person: M, T, Th, F Async Instruction: W	In person: M, T, Th, F Async Instruction: W	<b>In person or Hybrid: M, T, Th, Fr (COVID #s pending)</b> Async Instruction: W
<b>March 8-12</b>	In person: M, T Async Instruction: W No School: Th, F	In person: M, T Async Instruction: W No School: Th, F	In person or Hybrid: M, T (COVID #s pending) Async Instruction: W No School: Th, F

# **The State of Subbing in Distance Learning**

We wanted to remind families of students that are in distance learning that we do not provide a substitute teacher for teachers in our online lessons. TCGIS has decided to go this route for several reasons:

- Teachers are preparing asynchronous work for students when the teacher is not able to hold synchronous Zoom classes. Our students' teachers are the best people to create this work.
- Nearly all of our substitute teachers are from Teachers on Call - an agency that provides licensed subs and are English-only speakers..
- Our neighboring districts follow the same guidelines: substitute teachers will come in to support in-person classes, but not distance learning classes.
- The existing Zoom links for teachers require them to open each Zoom meeting. Creating new Zoom links for subs, sending them to 20+ families, and getting everything scheduled with the short notice that happens when teachers get sick is an additional challenge that is also prone to errors and confusion.
- Our teachers do not have the capacity at this time to cover their colleagues' lessons.

Things to keep in mind:

- Teachers notify students and families of an absence as soon as they are able. Middle School students are usually able to follow Google Classroom instructions independently. And if there are questions, an email to the teacher is appropriate while knowing the answer may not be immediate.
- As in most other professions, our teachers are given sick time. This is part of their collective bargaining agreement and because we value their health. It also aligns with our stated Board goal of "attracting and retaining exceptional staff."
- Students are still "getting German" in the lesson. German is reading and writing and listening to recorded voices as well as direct instruction. This would likely not come from a substitute teacher.

## **Looking Ahead**

**Reminders:**

**Class of 2021 Make-Up Capstone Trip Meeting**

Although we are heartbroken about our inability to travel to Germany, visit exchange partners and have our 8th grade Capstone trip, we are excited to announce that we are currently working on a travel opportunity for the class of 2021 and potentially 2020 in the summer of 2022. We invite 8th graders and their families to a meeting to hear the beginnings of this plan. Please join us via Zoom on February 18th at 7:30pm to learn more. **Link and reminder emails will go out at the end of next week!**

## First 7th Grade 2022 Capstone Trip Meeting

Save the Date! The first meeting for the 7th graders' Capstone trip to Germany in 2022 will be held on **March 4th at 7:00pm** via Zoom. Link coming soon to your Email inbox. Note the date change from last week.

## Black History Month Opportunity to Celebrate

### \*\*\*New Information Added Here

To celebrate Black History Month the TCGIS Library is hosting an online Read-In for 4th-8th grade students on **Wednesday, February 24 from 1:45-2:30pm**. The goal of our Read-In is to celebrate the works of African-American and African-German authors while spotlighting the importance of reading from racially-diverse authors.

#### **How it works:**

On February 24 we will be having an online ZOOM event in which students in 4th-8th grade are invited to read *and/or* listen to works from African American or African-German authors. This includes essays, poetry, books, etc.

**Note: This does not include books about racially-diverse characters by white authors.**

\*\*\*\*ALL students in grades 4th-8th grade are welcome to attend, not only those who would like to read. In fact, it is just as essential to listen as it is to present!\*\*\*\*

If you would like to read a text, please send Mary Zimmerman at [mzimmerman@tcgis.org](mailto:mzimmerman@tcgis.org) to sign-up. Please tell me your book, author, and the page numbers you'd like to read (in case someone else would like to share the same book). **I understand it may be difficult to find books in German and therefore English or German is also okay.** While you're not required to say anything after your reading, you are welcome to share why you chose to share this particular passage or book, something about the author, or anything else you feel relevant. Please keep in mind that each sign-up slot is THREE-FOUR minutes in order to include as many readers as possible within our time frame.

### **Join Zoom Meeting**

Meeting ID: 820 3249 0839

Passcode: 237521

## 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](#).**

