

Middle School Newsblatt

Innovative education of the whole child through German immersion.



October 30, 2020

In my Dean message this week, I am simply going to point you in the direction of the other sources of messaging we made around the changes to our staffing this week. There was a wealth of information to digest in yesterday's [Elternbrief](#). It has been a long, hard week for me as the new leader of a talented and dedicated group of teachers. I am forever grateful for my team. It also seems an appropriate time to remind everyone of the importance of his/her/their vote at the local and national level. It really seeps into everything we experience as a community.

~Elizabeth Zehnpfennig, Middle School Dean



November's Middle School Schedule

The Incidence Response Team (IRT) met to evaluate our current learning model based on MDH's Data for [K-12 Schools: 14-day COVID-19 Case Rate by County](#) and our criteria in [TCGIS's Learning Model Transition Plan](#). According to TCGIS's transition plan, our **Middle School will remain in distance learning next week** (Nov. 2nd-6th). Our Elementary School will continue with the planned Hybrid learning. Information concerning support weeks in Middle School will be communicated to families shortly.

Grades:	5	6	7-8
Nov 2-6	Distance Learning	Distance Learning	Distance Learning
Nov 9-13	Distance Learning*	Distance Learning*	Distance Learning*
Nov 16-20	Distance Learning*	Distance Learning*	Distance Learning*
Nov 23-27	No School Conferences PD Thanksgiving	No School Conferences PD Thanksgiving	No School Conferences PD Thanksgiving

Staffing Changes and Schedules

Due to the staffing changes made this week ([see Director Anderson and Board Chair Alkatout's message in the Elternbrief](#)) there are a number of changes to the staffing of our Middle School. On a positive note, and in COVID we take all the silver linings we can find, no schedule times or subject times were changed. The Zoom links, however, have changed for these new changes. So I am including a new group of [Schedules](#) for families. Students will be contacted by teachers and by the Dean of Academic Support, Esther Neum to provide a new Zoom link both in an email and/or via a Google Classroom invite. Parents are always free to email fallplanning2020@tcgis.org on Monday if assistance is needed.

Here are the letters that went out to families about specific changes by grade level:

[5th grade](#)

[6th grade](#)

[7th grade](#)

[8th grade](#)

Screeners and Support Weeks

Our screening team of data experts finished their round of fall screeners and families should have received screener results in their email this week. This was the last piece of the Support Week student selection process to fall into place. Students who qualify for support week will be contacted soon. In addition, we want to provide some context to the screener results.

- Exams are only one piece of data--grades and teacher feedback are also important!
- We meet as a team of experts (teachers, psychologists, and support services professionals) to go through each child whose performance raises concerns.
- When we have identified students who need extra support, we identify their relative areas of weakness and develop them.
- Families of students who will qualify for extra support will receive information soon on how these Tier 2 interventions will be provided.
- These exams were administered virtually for the very first time. There are a lot of variables that contribute to student performance. In the remote environment many variables that would not normally be obstacles in in-person testing become more limiting.

If you have any questions about your specific child/children's screener information, feel free to reach out.

20-21 Capstone Updates

8th Grade Parents Only: Please take a moment to fill out this [Pulse Survey](#) for the upcoming Capstone exchange.



Odds and Ends

Good teaching means using different practices for all kinds of learners. As the world between school and home becomes blurry, I think about all of the parents at home who are helping with their student's education in so many more ways than before. I came across this article and thought I would send it your way. Executing functioning skills play a big part in how we "do school". Many of the systems put in place at school by teachers are being replicated by our teachers in distance learning, but some simply can not. I pass this article on with no strings attached. But I know if I was suddenly asked to perform at home any of the professional jobs that many of you hold, I would want some helpful information. I think focusing on executive functions is a good bang for your buck. If you would like to discuss, my office is always open and I welcome visitors into my virtual office. Email me and we can set something up!

Yours in the work,

Elizabeth

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[Executive Functioning Article](#)