

# Middle School Newsblatt

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



September 25, 2020

One of the many things I love about working at Twin Cities German Immersion school is that the values are not just a tagline on a website. I see them every day in the work that is done by our community. To remind you they are: **Curiosity, Kindness, Challenge and Support, Community and Intercultural Engagement.** I'm trying to keep them in my mind as we approach this school year. **Kindness** took center stage this week at the Middle School. In conversations with parents and teachers, the honeymoon of a new school year is over. The real work has begun. I saw teachers dive in with the kindness needed to meet kids where they are. We must continue to be kind to our young learners as they navigate through this strange year. Be kind to yourselves this weekend. Enjoy this summerlike weather.

*~Elizabeth Zehnpfennig, Middle School Dean*





## Middle School Family Information Night

### Family Information Night

**Please join us next Wednesday, September 30th from 6:30 to 8:00 pm.**

Middle School Families will be able to join teachers from 6:30 to 8:00 on September 30th for a Family information Night. We will begin with the Middle School procedures and norms that we have developed to streamline the year as well as a welcome from the Director and Dean. Families will then follow students schedules and see all 6 blocks of teachers. Zoom links and official Schedules will be in email in boxes and sent via Constant Communication by Tuesday, September 29th.

Parents and guardians will join a Zoom meeting with the families of all the students in that classes' cohort. The teachers that your child has will come in on an every 10 minute schedule to talk about the specifics with their class and highlight units of study. There will be time for specific questions for each teacher. I will also have office hours for a portion of the night if you would like to stop in and ask a question or introduce yourself.

Here are the Links to Join in with your child's teachers.

*Note: Parent Overview Maps are almost finished and will be released later this fall after a trip to a School Board meeting. COVID-19 through a wrench into their arrival time for this night. They are also not official for this year, due to Spring Crisis Learning affecting where we are in our Scope and Sequences.*

# Challenges of Distance Learning

As we finish the second full week of Distance Learning and prepare for a third before our next Connection week, we are all learning how to make the best of our instructional days. Here are some thoughts:

## **Multitasking While Synchronously Learning**

I know that managing learners at home during Distance Learning and during Hybrid asynchronous learning is difficult. My family is doing this as well! Our teachers are now trying to keep students engaged while not being in the same space. This is one of the many challenges that we as educators and families need to work on together. We are worried that too many students are gaming or doing other online things while the instruction is happening. There is a blurry line here between school and home and our young learners need the adults to guide them down the right path. Smart phones, Youtube and gaming would not be allowed in the classroom if we were in school, and we still are not allowing them in our lessons. If TCGIS students are using school issued devices, the school can help keep an eye on what they are using their devices for. We can not support parents as easily when students use their own devices. If your child's device is not working, please use the [Help Desk Ticket](#).

## **Zoom Fatigue**

TCGIS chose this model of learning because of a strong belief in the social interaction and solid teacher instruction that can happen in a synchronous virtual classroom. However, we are aware of the challenges that this model will present. We are up against camera anxiety, Zoom fatigue, and general inability to sit still. Please give your child grace and expect some days to be easier than others. We're all hearing the importance of building in movement in the day. Our teachers are working in Jumping Jacks, Go Noodle, Scavenger Hunts and Brain Breaks in the middle of Zoom lessons. Consider your families' ability to do a walk mid day. I recommend having a device free work area--other than the TCGIS issued Chromebook. Instead try to set up a fidget basket or invest in some good lollipops and chewing gum. Practice the TCGIS value of challenge and support. Our students have challenges that we never expected until the pandemic hit. Let's give them as much support as we can.

