



Middle School Newsblatt

Innovative education of the whole child through German immersion. .



September 11, 2020

Welcome back to our returning families, and welcome to our new 5th graders and new families to what is going to undoubtedly be an interesting year for everyone!

The middle school staff has been very busy over the last few weeks preparing for the new school year and we are all excited to have students back in our classrooms - both in person and virtually - this week. While we are working on a new method of teaching in this distance model, we are realizing we also need a new way to communicate. I would like to start a new tradition of a Middle School periodical. This *Newsblatt* will serve as a house for Middle School specific information. A lot of information goes out at the start of a new school year, so please take the time to read through the following Middle School update.

Do not hesitate to email the coordinators or the dean if you have additional questions.

~Your Middle School Team



Meet our Team!

Elizabeth Zehnpfennig-Middle School Dean

Hallo Familien! I have received such a warm welcome to my first school year at TCGIS as the Middle School Dean. Thank you all for that. I am excited to transition to a career in administration after teaching for 21 years! I have told all in the last few weeks who have asked how I am liking this new school that I feel like I am finally with my people! I was an island German teacher for so long that to be surrounded by a group that supports so intently what I have spent my professional career doing is exhilarating. I look forward to streamlining 5-8 practices and strengthening curriculum and programming with my middle school team.

Beate Simon - K-8 Dean of German Immersion

Hallo! I am the Dean of German Immersion this year but still will be teaching German and Unterstützungsdeutsch in middle school and coordinating the DSD I exams in spring. This is my 6th year at TCGIS. Over the past years I have already worked on several projects to enhance our German immersion practices and will continue to do so. This year our focus will be how to teach German and achieve German language goals during hybrid and distance learning and also give opportunities to parents to support their students.

Esther Neu - K-8 Dean of Student Services

Guten Tag! I started out at TCGIS in 2015 as a Technology Teacher and Integrationist and am happy to be in a new role as Dean of Student Services this year. What I love about TCGIS is how strongly we prioritize educating the *whole* child. Fun fact: the cohort I student-taught in Kindergarten is now in 6th grade! I am excited for another school year at TCGIS!

Rachael Schlee - Middle School Coordinator

Greetings! I am a 5th and 6th grade English teacher at TCGIS. This is my fourth year working at the school, and my 8th year teaching overall. One thing I love about TCGIS is the enthusiasm for learning that both students and parents bring into the classroom. This is my second year as a coordinator in the middle school and I am looking forward to working with staff, students and parents to make this a great school year!

Kevin Eberhard - Middle School Coordinator

Hello! I am a German teacher in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade at TCGIS, and this is my third year working at the school. I enjoy working at TCGIS because of how welcoming the community here is at TCGIS. I am excited about my new extra role as a coordinator this year, and I want to play my part in making this a great school year for staff, students, and families.

Transition to Distance Learning

Schedules:

After an exciting week of in-person learning at school, Middle School is transitioning to the Distance Learning Schedule beginning on Monday. Except for Wednesdays, students will have three synchronous classes, Advisory and Lernzeit each day. Students have each class, for example Math, synchronously twice a week (either Mondays and Thursdays or Tuesdays and Fridays). On Wednesdays, students will work asynchronously on assignments given by teachers on Google Classroom. Zoom links for classes are on the page of your schedule document labeled **Distance Learning**.

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[Video Explanation of Schedules](#)

Accessing Student Schedules in Powerschool:

Schedules are also accessible now in Powerschool. For a video tutorial, watch this:

[PowerSchool Tutorial](#)

7th/8th graders: We are receiving questions about electives and most questions can be answered in Powerschool. The name of the specialist in the column marked E1 is the course for the next 5 weeks. Students will then switch to the column marked E2.

Teacher Office Hours:

During Distance Learning, students will have the opportunity to see their teachers for office hours every day to ensure that all students receive the support they need. On all days - except for Wednesdays - teachers will be available in the afternoons from 2:30-3:30 for drop-ins and appointments. On Wednesdays, teacher office hours will be in the morning from 7:30-9:00. Students may either email teachers for appointments or drop in to ask questions and receive individual support. These office hours can be accessed via Zoom links, which are the same ones teachers use for their regular lessons, and these links can be found in Google Classroom under "Classwork" and "Class schedule." Parents are welcome to be a part of office hours, especially at the beginning of the school year and if there are more serious concerns. Our goal for the year, however, is that students will learn to advocate for themselves if they need help and know where to go to receive support.

Advisory and Lernzeit:

During the 20-21 School Year, Advisory will focus on student's social emotional learning, personalized check-ins and community building. On Mondays, we will focus on checking in to see how students are feeling and offer activities to understand how to grow emotionally. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, teachers will be able to check in with students one on one to make sure they are keeping track of school work. On Fridays, we will play games and strengthen our community within our own advisories. Advisories will *not* meet on Wednesdays.

During Lernzeit, students will have time to work on any schoolwork or homework that they need to complete. During part of this time, students will be able to connect with teachers in office hours. Eventually students who are identified by staff as needing a little extra help will be paired with staff members who can provide additional one on one help and support.

Attendance:

We are required to take attendance as usual, and as mandated by the state. On

Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays Middle School attendance will be taken during each synchronous class period by the teacher. Those not attending synchronously are considered “absent.” On our asynchronous Wednesdays, attendance is based on completion of work, a Google Form to be filled out by students, and a variety of interactions with a teacher in Google Classroom.

Odds and Ends

Middle School BUSING FAMILIES ONLY: Important Change:

In order to streamline the dismissal process for bus dismissal, we are going to ask that **all middle school students who take a BUS HOME from school designate the bus in PikmyKid each day that they are in the building for school.**

If you need assistance setting up PikmyKid or learning how to choose the bus, please email info@tcgis.org or call the office at 651-492-7106 so we can help!

Chromebooks 1:1 Devices:

If families are experiencing tech problems with Chromebooks, we are including the form for tech support here: [Form for Tech Support](#)

Looking Ahead...

Parent Information Night is September 30th from 6:30pm-8:00pm. More information coming soon.

