

Proposed Agenda for GC Middle School Curriculum Meeting
February 2023 Minutes

1. Math and English Labs Update
 - a. How is attendance since re-launching this effort?
 - i. Math Lab attendance is strong, double digits for 8th and 7th grades; 6th grade a little less but still very good.
 - ii. English Labs are lower attendance; hard to fill. Going to propose a weekly theme such as “defending a claim”, establishing a voice”, “paragraph structure”, etc. to promote attendance.
**Will be difficult to defend holding English Lab if attendance continues to be so low
2. Google Classroom Standards
 - a. Can we work with technology person (or other) at MS to set 2-4 standards for information flow on Google classroom while maintaining individual teacher flexibility?
 - b. Goal: to have recommendations for April-May implementation
 - i. Committee discussed using the “to do” feature
 - ii. Mr. Samuelsson said MS will make first attempt at setting standards and come back to committee with update
 - iii. Attending teacher reviewed Google guardian for parents to use but committee seems to not want to do this as it’s pretty overwhelming
 - iv. Other technology:
 - v. Discussed having certain math links / tests accessibility so can use resources for benchmarks and midterms (some expire / need access)
 - vi. Recommendation for teachers to emphasize using calculators and not phones
 - vii. MS will re-emphasize additional links/resources mentioned in beginning of year
3. Morning Announcements / News Club
 - a. Note: all positive feedback from students and parents on bell schedule change
 - b. How can the PTA support moving forward the idea of video announcements / a student club / a video catalog of electives/clubs?
 - i. Mr. Samuelsson said they will pilot some concepts before the end of this year and bigger plans for 2023-2024 school year
 - ii. Follow-up: Is there any grant or funding MS can use towards this initiative?
4. Scheduling of tests, especially midterms / benchmarks
 - a. Sufficient notice / time to study

- b. Feedback: Students need more than four days of notice for a midterm that will test everything they have learned since September and at least one weekend should be included in the middle for benchmarks.
 - i. 2 sides to this coin: yes, students need ample time to have the study materials and know timing of tests; ALSO Middle School is an opportunity for students to begin self time management
 - ii. Proposal of “syllabus” given to students at beginning of year or semester that denotes timing of midterms / benchmarks. Middle School to review concept.

- 5. High School Literary Magazine turns 100!!
 - a. Is there a way for the MS/PTA to support this event?
 - i. FYI – later found out HS Literary Magazine turning 95 next year!
 - ii. Very expensive to print but can have a larger online copy. MS proposal of perhaps a “ribbon cutting” for when MS comes out

- 6. Discussion around Kate Schumacher, founder of Don’t Press Send from Parent University
 - a. Possible initiative at MS? Broader PTA?
 - i. Yes, positive message but perhaps not the same every year
 - ii. MS has a comprehensive approach around social media / phone usage. For example, around Unity Day had discussion regarding legal ramifications of bad choices. Look to provide a variety of programs / information.

- 7. From previous meeting: Update on 6th grade club fair
 - i. GCMS is considering a variety of ways to publicize the club offerings in the Fall, including a fair

- 8. Any highlights from MS you'd like us to share with broader community
 - a. Phone usage: discussed critical to limit phone usage (encourage at home)
 - b. Evacuation: discussed phone use during evacuation and agreed that there could have been better communication to families during the evacuation
 - c. NYS Testing moving to all online by 2027-28. Have and will continue to start piloting online testing. 7th grade took Math and ELA NWEA online. Of course, will review data

- 9. Topic for next MS Curriculum Meeting: Transition for 8th graders to 9th graders
 - a. Report card grade requirements for Honors, AP, etc
 - b. Overview of High School course offerings / paths (ie: Math, Sciences, etc)
 - c. Writing: perhaps having an extra assignment for 8th graders that would require the use of English lab to boost attendance