

GARDEN CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL
PRINCIPAL-PTA CURRICULUM MEETING
November 7, 2019

Parent Reps:
Frances Mingoia – SEPTA
Meghan O'Brien
Marissa Padala
Ploumou Scricca

AGENDA NOTES

New items:

1. Summer Assignments/ Grading Breakdowns:

- Is the assessment of summer assignments consistent across clusters in terms of weighting and type?

The Math Department assigns skill review work to all students over the summer. This review work is not graded. Rising seventh and eighth grade foreign language students review their summer coursework in class and the skills are assessed via a vocabulary and a grammar quiz. The English Department assigns work to students in each grade. The sixth graders' work does not count as a grade. The seventh graders choose a book to read over the summer. The reading is discussed in literature groups. Following the class discussions, students write an analytical paragraph that counts as a test grade. Eighth graders participate in a Socratic seminar, worth 25 points, based on their summer assignment. The summer assignments and grading expectations will be reviewed before next summer (June2020).

- Throughout the year, is there consistency with the number of tests, quizzes, graded homework, and projects among the clusters each quarter? Do teachers develop grading systems as a group, and how is weighting determined?

Consistency is standard-driven, in accordance with the NYS Learning Standards. Standards are measured using benchmarks exams (one per quarter) that are developed by each department. Every cluster takes the same or similar benchmark exams to help maintain consistency.

The district is committed to consistency among the benchmarks being used. Professional development is being provided in order to ensure that teachers have a deeper understanding of their grade's curriculum standards as well the standards of the previous and subsequent grades. With this deeper understanding, another goal of the professional development is to provide the opportunity for teachers to collaborate in order to create more consistency among benchmarks. Lastly, the district has established a Literacy Committee that will focus on creating more continuity in the

implementation of the Teacher's College Reading Project, as well as developing a more cohesive literacy continuum in grades K-12.

2. New P/T Conference policy:

The Middle School teachers were concerned about losing another entire day of instruction beyond the designated days in order to meet with all parents. All teachers welcome communication with parents at any time. Parents can always connect with teachers via phone call or scheduled a meeting at any point during the school year if they feel it is necessary.

3. Leave Replacement:

- What is the level of Special Education training and Special Education experience required of teachers serving as leave replacements?

The Interview Committee seeks out highly qualified teachers. Candidates are interviewed and must do a demo lesson. SEPTA reps are a part of the Interview Committee.

Old items:

4. Transition from 5th to 6th:

- What was implemented this year?

In May, the fifth graders visit the Middle School. This visit includes student led tours and lunch in the cafeteria. Meanwhile articulation is happening between the Middle School guidance counselor and the fifth grader teachers. Also, in the spring student leaders meet with the fifth graders to talk about what to expect and answer questions. Finally, the first week of school the rising 6th graders participate in team-building activities. This weeklong commitment to teambuilding was new this year and was well-received by students.

5. Professional Development:

- Has there been any new Professional Development about mental health awareness, or is there anything planned?

At the November 6th Board of Education meeting new state regulations regarding more access to guidance counselor and social workers in schools was addressed. Also, The District has established a Mental Health & Wellness Team. It is made up of guidance counselors, teachers and administrators from each school. In addition, the Middle School participates in *No Place for Hate*, which is run by the Anti-Defamation League. It a free program in which schools are required to implement 3 school-wide

anti-bias and/or anti-bullying prevention activities. Finally, the Middle School celebrated Unity Day. It was a very meaningful experience for teachers and students alike.

6. Homebase/Study Skills:

- Has there been any further talk about restructuring the use of Homebase time? How much is left up to teacher?

There is a Homebase program in place, with curriculum guidelines sent out each week to support the teachers. Teacher's individually enhance the program's goals with discretion. A Homebase Committee is forming with the purpose of reimaging this course for next year

- How has the Study Skills curriculum changed now that it is one semester? Does it still include speech and debate?

An update on the new one-semester Study Skills curriculum will be shared closer to the conclusion of the semester.

As for speech and debate, it is currently offered as an elective to 7th and 8th grade. Also, Mr. Cronin leads a speech and debate club for 6th grade on Thursday afternoons and for 7th and 8th grades on Thursday mornings.