

GARDEN CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL  
PRINCIPAL-CURRICULUM MEETING  
March 25, 2019

Parent Reps:  
Anna Allsbrook  
Ploumou Scricca  
Frances Mingoia – SEPTA

**AGENDA**

1. How has the health curriculum been updated to meet the new Mental Health Education standards? Will the school send home information about it? Some 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes are practicing “Mindfulness Mondays.” Is this related?

Health curriculum for all grades in our district was revised last year. New topics were included to align with NYS standards, including mental health. Topics such as vaping are included as well since they are a particular concern in our community. The subject matter is taught within the appropriate manner for grade and developmental levels of the students.

Mindfulness is being incorporated into more classrooms as teachers are training in this method to help kids relax and stay focused. All the counselors will be meeting for a seminar run by Ms. Khan to learn more about the benefits of mindfulness. This is not a specific part of the NYS health education, but is in addition to the state mandates.

2. Can you discuss further details about the new Creative Historians elective? Have many students signed up? What is the feedback from the students who worked on the National History Day projects in study skills this year?

This elective will not run this year, due to low enrollment. The projects developed in Mr. Zagari’s study skills class were displayed in the library to give an introduction to what the course will be like; however, the elective forms had already been submitted. Next year, the school plans to give more details to students and parents about the Creative Historians elective. The goal is to give our students who have an interest and enthusiasm for history the opportunity to take part in the National History Day contest.

3. How often do the students use the GCMS library? Are there any assignments specifically developed to teach the students how to use the library and the online resources? Will the new Makerspace be in the library? What are some goals and expectations for the Makerspace?

The GCMS library has been directly impacted by budget cuts for many years. The library was at one time staffed by the librarian, a secretary, and an aide. Currently, there is a part time librarian only. This limits the library to be open only for periods 0,1, 2, 3 and 8. Because of this limitation, library lessons cannot regularly be incorporated into the curriculum since teachers can only take some of their classes and not others. Many teachers do instruct their classes about doing research through the GCMS library website. This issue has been brought up to the superintendent last year and this year as well.

The new Makerspace will be in the library and will be open to 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades during their lunch periods. Students will access it on a signup basis and use things like Osmo bots, Legos, and possibly a 3D printer.

## **SEPTA**

4. With respect to the co-taught classes next year:

- How many are projected for each grade?  
There are two co-taught teams for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade. These will carry over to next year. For the incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade, the numbers are not established yet.
- Size of class?  
Not finalized yet; will update once we know closer to May/June.
- How many self-contained classes?  
One self-contained class for each grade. Additionally, an extra class was created for 6<sup>th</sup> grade based on student needs.
- Will there be small subject based special ed classes similar to the math one this year?  
Changes and accommodations will be made in accordance with the needs of students, such as the math class that was established this year.

5. How much time does the educational consultant give to the MS teachers? Is more planned for next year?

The minimum is 2 hours per week, sometimes as much as 8-10 hours per week as needed.

6. How is the Special Ed teachers meeting with Curriculum Coordinators working out? Any changes in regard to that for next year?

Special Ed teachers working with Curriculum Coordinators has worked very well. They join the department meetings and the curriculum meetings.

7. What types of professional development has the staff been to recently? What is planned for them?

Staff often attend workshops specific to their teams and areas of study, as well as the National Middle School conference recently attended by Ms. Weiner. Some ideas that have come out of faculty meetings and other professional development workshops are: a) relational mapping, gives teachers tools and ideas to create closer relationships with students. Examples include meeting students as they enter class, reaching out to quieter students to get to know them and make them feel more comfortable. b) critical thinking, creating real life scenarios. Example includes a Spanish class assignment to “shop” on a popular Spanish department store website using foreign currency which the students had to calculate using the current exchange rate. Looking ahead, professional development will continue to be based on relevant research that will bring the best practices and ideas to GCMS.