

Parent Council Meeting Agenda: For Parents of Students Identified as GT

April 29, 2019 5:30-6:30 PM

Celebrating the diversity that is LCS



Welcome, Introductions, Housekeeping, Review of Mission and Vision

Panel Q & A

Mr. Stephen Kerney- 6th Math Teacher, Harding Middle School

Ms. Jaclyn Fields- 6th Advanced ELA Teacher, Garfield Middle School

Ms. Nora Katzenberger- Parent, Harding Middle School

Panel Questions/Discussion:

1. *What does the daily schedule look like for my child as a 6th grader?*

The first period starts right off the bat, there is no homeroom period. All periods are 42 minutes, except math and ELA which are two periods in length. Sometimes related arts classes are in between those blocks. There are 4 minutes in between each class. No book bags are allowed and students need to carry belonging with them. Most students don't have a study hall as they have 9 periods. If they do both band and choir they don't have a study hall. If they take choir and an instrument, however, they will have a study hall twice a week. Students have 20 minutes for lunch and 20 minutes for recess. Sometimes recess is outside or in the gym or they could go to the study hall room during these 20 minutes. Related arts classes include art, music, STEM, health, gym, band, orchestra, or choir.

Classes are generally in the same hallway or same wing so its not a huge issue. The best thing to do over the summer is to learn combination locks. There is an app that teaches combinations. During orientation week students can go in and practice opening lockers during that week. Students have ID's they wear around their neck. It's helpful to put schedule and locker combination in the back of the ID badge. Schedules are given out at orientation, and IDs are given on the first day of school. Orientation night has upperclassmen who help to lead the students. Students get the lay of the land and logistics like what doors and stairwells to use.

2. *What advanced classes are offered at the middle schools?*

Advanced ELA and Social Studies (a child is usually in both of these together as some of the readings are shared), Advanced Science, and Advanced Math courses.

Advanced math 6/7A is typical, students who are double accelerated usually take Advanced math 7B/8. Algebra 1 and Geometry are also offered for high school credit students' 7th or 8th grade year depending on previous courses.

What can we do over the summer to help prepare students for 7B/8?

Concepts that were previously in Algebra that are now in 8th grade. 7th focuses a lot of negative numbers from 6th grade concepts. Circles and Geometry. 8th goes deeper into Algebra. Help to make sure students can add, subtract, multiply and divide negative numbers. Fluency and computation bring comfort levels to students. Students can continue to use Khan Academy as well.

Courses, in general, require a lot of self-direction rather than the self-contained program. MS is a big change for all students. Academics isn't as much of a problem but all the change together is hard for students.

Katie Greenleaf is a huge resource for building Executive Functioning skills in students.

ProgressBook helps students and parents as you can check in on assignments and homework for students.

3. *How are the social and emotional needs of children met?*

Students are with teachers a lot and teachers build a rapport with students. School counselors are always available for students. Through ELA issues are talked about in the books and open discussions help to normalize how students are feeling. Social-emotional learning is becoming more and more embedded into teaching. Classroom management routines and norms are set to learn social belonging. We want kids to feel safe and that they belong so they can learn better and teacher provide that social and emotional piece. Extracurriculars help to meet that need as well.

One parent suggested that parents lean into school events like encouraging students to go to dances.

Parent networks are helpful to speak with other parents, and students can call other friends for homework.

4. *How do students adjust to going to a larger middle school from a smaller elementary?*

Clubs are available after school to get to know other students. This is sometimes a fresh start for others. Middle school is the welcoming point for a lot of students as there is a lot of time for students to find their people. Even though there is a big difference between 6th and 8th grade students, students generally move within their grade. Students at first think they have no friends and know no one, but teachers play "matchmaker" especially at lunch to help students make friends. Some of the self-contained program students revert back to some of their originally school and neighborhood friends.

5. *My student is quite disorganized, what can they do to be more independent and organized in middle school?*

Homework: some homework is electronic online and some is on paper. A velcro folder is nice for students to keep papers organized in their planners.

ELA- Consistency is key as certain assignments like essays are always online. Students need to get into the groove of what's always online. Garfield has homework pages for the online planner. These are documented each night by the teacher. Students and parents can both access this planner each night. Harding uses tangible planners. Red binders are great for take-home folders as it stands out.

As a parent, you need to be flexible as some kids don't thrive with accordion folders, but others do well with that. Seeing what your student needs is the best idea. Teachers are always on hand to help organize binders. Some teachers will use the Remind App to help give gentle nudges at home. Parents should encourage students to spend five minutes at the end of the day to organize at their locker. Students don't need to rush out of the building, parents will still be there at dismissal.

Color coding folders and spiral notebooks when buying school supplies are helpful. Teachers work with the students to set them up the first week to label things and get organized with materials. School supply lists are posted online. Buy intentionally off the list, but don't label as students will do that at school.

Google Classroom is used and a nice resource to check assignments and long-term projects. Sometimes monitoring online homework at home is helpful as most assignments are online. Some parents use 10-minute check-ins after being online to get students on track.

Disney Circle- connects to the internet and controls your internet and what kids have access to on their devices. This helps to navigate healthy habits online. Screen time limits can also be set.

Math Techbook is online and implemented differently between the building as some teacher give paper-pencil and sometimes its digital assignments for math.

Set up a Google spreadsheet with account passwords so students have that organized and can access that in class rather than spending all their time trying to think of a password.

6. *My child has difficulty organizing his time, especially on long-term projects. What can they do to help the students learn to budget their time and complete projects in parts?*

Coaching time for long-term projects is helpful. This process takes time, especially for gifted students. Executive Functioning skills and strategies help for planning daily vs. long-term assignments and tasks. Encourage students to know that they don't need to rush to get long term projects done first thing, or not waiting until the last minute to finish. Looking at the assignment and piecing it out and setting a time schedule when the assignment is given is useful.

7. *What kinds of supports can/should parents provide for their children to be successful in the elementary-to-middle School transition? How can parents help students develop independence as expectations for students become much more intense?*

As a parent go in the first quarter and do a locker check to see if they are a mess.

As a parent, you know if your child is disorganized and tell the teachers first quarter in case they need some help at school. Some teachers will offer check-ins and check-outs at the end of the day or during lunch to help get student organized.

Other tips for parents include: practicing typing over the summer and some computer skills are helpful; there are many free websites for typing.

Meeting Dates for 2019-2020:

September 23
December 2
February 10
April 27



Mission of Lakewood City Schools Parent Council

Our mission is to create an open, safe and transparent forum in which ideas, questions and global concerns from parents of students identified as gifted and talented and the Department of Teaching learning might be shared.

We envision a group focus on:

1. Creating and maintaining an inclusive school district with a climate of embracing, supporting and serving students- all students including those identified as gifted and talented via awareness and understanding.
2. Establishing a group that is representative of a cross section of Lakewood City School students identified as gifted and talented.
3. Ensuring high expectations for students identified as gifted and talented.

Our charge is to discuss global concerns identified by the group. If you are having concerns with your son or daughter's classroom or provision of services please talk directly with your child's teacher. If you have tried that, to no avail, please connect with the building principal. If the building principal is unable to assist you he/she will direct you to our district's coordinator for Gifted Education. Thank you.