

Grade Level Meeting Guidelines

1. The grade level chairs are the representative voice for the parents of their grade. They notify their class representatives of the upcoming grade level meetings so they may communicate in a timely fashion to the parents of their class for any agenda items. If a parent brings up a concern or idea that the grade level chair does not feel is valid, it is the chair's obligation to address the issue at the meeting.
2. The format of the grade level meetings is informal and conversational.
3. The Grade Level Meeting is not the venue to discuss individual teachers and/or students. Parents with those concerns should be directed either back to the individual teacher, Ms. Monaco or Ms. Soler.
4. In the interest of covering all grades in a timely fashion, it may be necessary to limit the amount of time used to discuss a particular topic.

Grade Level Meeting December 16, 2009

Summary

I. Kindergarten

- Teachers attending meetings outside the classroom: All teachers attend a monthly grade level meeting, which lasts two hours, and is curriculum and classroom related. In the month of January there are extended faculty meetings until 4:30 pm to avoid pulling the teachers out for the grade level meetings. Kindergarten teachers can be pulled out for CPSE meetings, which are held at the Special Ed. Office in the Mamaroneck High School, so travel time is involved. These CPSE meetings require a general education teacher, so the Kindergarten teachers rotate. Finally, there may be teacher absences due to illness.

II. 1st Grade

- Strictness of aides at lunchtime: When there are two grade levels, there are over 200 children in the lunchroom, which is a very small space. Ms. Monaco and Ms. Soler meet monthly with the aides to talk about what is appropriate for each age and to review procedures, such as clapping, turning lights on and off, or using the microphone to get children's attention. For safety reasons, children need to be able to pay attention to the aides in case of an emergency. Ms. Soler sometimes asks teachers to help her transmit the message to the students that they have to listen to the aides and respect them. Total silence is not the goal in the lunchroom. The requirement is half an hour of lunchtime and half an hour of recess, but older kids can go out quicker if they're finished with lunch. Another important component is crowd control: The aides have

to safely move large numbers of students. Children have to line up after recess, making sure they have their lunch boxes, jackets, etc., and they have to enter the building quietly, with a different mindset, to be ready for the rest of the school day and not disturb ongoing classes. Finally, Ms. Soler models behavior by complimenting students when they behave positively, and holding a couple of kids when they're not behaving, but letting the other children go out to recess.

III. 2nd Grade

- Insights regarding development of 2nd graders throughout the year: Children develop at different rates. We want all students to make progress relative to their own levels. In the back of the report card there is a continuum that describes what is expected in reading. There is a more detailed description in the District's website at www.mamkschools.org, under "Curriculum and Instruction".
- Existence of grade level curriculum: The purple curriculum book has been discontinued. Ms. Monaco strongly encourages parents to visit the District's website at www.mamkschools.org, and look under "Curriculum and Instruction", where there is information by content area and by grade level. Additionally, there is a link to the NYS Learning Standards (just click on "NYS Department of Education").
- Supplementing TERC with traditional math method: Teachers are doing math facts because whatever math program you use, you have to memorize the facts. At the meeting, parents with children at Hommocks agreed that TERC helps children understand math and that our children are prepared.
- Possibility of holding another math game night: Families who couldn't attend the math night were sent the packet of games. Ms. Monaco will consider doing a repeat, but cannot guarantee it will happen.

IV. 3rd Grade

- Strictness of aides at lunchtime: Please see summary under 1st Grade.
- Facilitating assimilation of new students at school: Teachers do an informal pairing up of new students with "veteran" students. Dr. Dara Lepofsky, the school psychologist, holds "newcomers" groups for K-2 and 3-5. Ms. Soler conducts a tour with new families. When new students start at the beginning of the school year it tends to be easier because they're forming a new classroom community with the rest of the students. All newcomers will be given the two PTA Newcomer Liaison names. They can provide information to tap into the events that help the family acclimate.

V. 4th Grade

- Possibility of keeping track of flu cases and notifying exposure to parents: Ms. Eileen Fitzgerald, the school nurse, keeps track of the flu cases that are reported and sends the numbers to Dr. Fried and to Karen Cofino, the District's central nurse, who gathers data for all the schools. It is hard to have confirmed cases of swine flu. There is no exposure notice for flu. If there are alarming trends, the community will be notified.

VI. *5th Grade*
No issues/questions raised.

VII. *Special Education*
No issues/questions raised.