

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

October 14, 2009

Summary

I. Kindergarten

- Consistency of teachers' active websites: Last year each grade level and department created a web page. This year those pages will be updated regularly. A class page is purely voluntary.
- Spilling of 1st/2nd grade playground chips onto Murray Ave.'s sidewalk: Ms. Monaco will e-mail Buildings and Grounds to alert them of the situation and have them correct it.
- Children and parents congestion in the hallway: In the afternoons, congestion has been eliminated by parents now meeting the kids outside. Strollers have not been an issue since Murray shifted dismissal procedures. In the mornings, Safety Patrol and aides monitor the hallways. The congestion will naturally dissipate as students get more used to the morning routine, and as some children arrive earlier for orchestra, band, or chorus. In the meanwhile, Ms. Soler will talk to the aides to facilitate alleviating the congestion.

II. 1st Grade

- Use of reward systems in class: Any reward system should acknowledge positive behavior so as not to draw attention to negative behavior. At some point, children internalize the good behavior, so reward systems do not occur as much in the older grades. There are classroom procedures, but there may be individual behavioral plans for children with behavioral issues. Teachers have the discretion to use the method they think is most appropriate for the class.

- Availability of literature on the curriculum of each content area: Annie Ward, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, is working on the district page for curriculum at www.mamkschools.org. Currently, there is a lot of detailed information on Literacy and Math. There is also information on Social Studies and Science. Murray’s specialists developed their own web pages last year. Additionally, Murray will continue to offer parent workshops. Topics will include Family Math Nights, Words Their Way (new word study program in grades 1, 2, and 3), and an informational meeting on the NYS assessments. Additional topics are being considered.

III. *2nd Grade*

- Receiving feedback about playground activities: Aides go out with the kids to recess and circulate making sure kids are engaged and playing well. Kids are free to choose their activity. Playground time tends to be unstructured except when Paul and Austin from the Rye Y come in. They come on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays to organize games by teaching rules and engaging children. Student participation is optional. Aides are encouraged to guide children to follow the rules they learned from the Y facilitators. The Phys Ed teachers also teach rules to reinforce the concepts.
- Possibility of having a parent volunteer help organize playground games: It is wonderful that parents want to help; however, there are difficulties around it, including confidentiality issues, discipline issues, and conflict between parents. The District policy across the four Elementary schools is not to have parent volunteers on the playground.
- Consistency of reading homework and bringing home a book each night: The homework handbook is on the Murray web page, under “Archives”. It delineates the number of minutes children in each grade should be reading at home. Children can bring home books from the classroom library and the school library.

IV. *3rd Grade*

- Information about state tests: The dates are as follows:

Grade	ELA	Math
3rd	April 26 and 27 (Mon. & Tues.)	May 5 and 6 (Wed. & Thurs.)
4th	April 26, 27, and 28 (Mon. to Wed.)	May 5, 6, and 7 (Wed. to Fri.)
5th	April 27 and 28 (Tues. & Wed.)	May 6 and 7 (Thurs. & Fri.)

- Odd years have “skinny” tests, and even years have longer tests.
- In February there will be a parent informational meeting on the NYS assessments.
- Good teaching leads to good test results.
- Children do test prep in school to become familiar with the testing experience.
- Use of reward systems in class: Please see summary under 1st Grade.
- Questions about the TERC Math Program: The Math Coach will come to Murray to do a parent workshop. Ms. Monaco encourages parents to use the book that went home to do the homework. If it is too complicated, parents should talk to the teacher.
- Arrangement of desks in clusters: This arrangement fosters the group work and collaboration that constantly happens in the classroom. The teacher is a facilitator,

always moving and shifting. Students usually sit down on the rug for instruction. When using the document camera, teachers make sure the kids are all facing the right way.

V. *4th Grade*

- Allowing use of scooters as alternative to driving: Scooters can be used if children are accompanied by an adult who makes sure they're using the scooter appropriately. The district policy is that there are no scooters or skate boards allowed on school ground, as indicated in signage around school. There is a safety issue of riding on the streets and keeping the scooters in the cubbies. Bikes are encouraged: a new bike rack will be placed soon.

VI. *5th Grade*

- Use of microphone during class even though there are no hearing impaired children: Not only hearing impaired children require a microphone, as the amplification system filters out the background noise and makes it easier to concentrate. Research shows that it helps everybody.

VII. *Special Education*

- Co-teaching classes: There is one full co-teaching class in 5th grade (the Special Ed teacher is in the classroom full day every day, in addition to the Regular Ed teacher), and in 4th and 3rd grades there is a modified co-teaching class in each grade (the Special Ed teacher is in the classroom for a half day every day, in addition to the Regular Ed teacher). There are no co-teaching classes in K through 2nd grade.