**Middle Observation Information**

Parents, recently Mrs. Valdespino and I were able to attend the middle school in East Lansing as part of our own professional development. We thought it would be beneficial to share these findings with you as we head towards the end of the year. Keep in mind, upcoming middle school events such as the 5th grade visit or the parent information night are still coming in the near future. As part of our visit, we were able to observe the 6th grade teachers teach a variety of subjects that included math, language arts and social studies. Please find below relevant information from the middle school and we will discuss the more specific detail at conferences!

**Important Upcoming Dates**

Middle School Principals Visit Glencairn to Meet Students: April 13th

Middle School Music Field Trip: April 16th

**Course Scheduling**

Students will have 4 core classes (ELA, science, math, and social studies). They will then have two electives (choices). Below is the breakdown of how scheduling will work;

* Two Choices to Make
  + First Choice
    - Students must select one of the following and will have this course for the entire year.
      * Choir
      * Orchestra (String Instruments)
      * Band (Wind and Percussion Instruments)
  + Second Choice
    - Students must select one of the following and will have this course for half of the year while the other half of the year will be Health/Physical Education (required).
      * Computers
      * Design
      * Art
        + Computers and Design are taught by Mr. Voight who was a teacher at Glencairn prior to it becoming a K-5 building.

Students will receive this scheduling information on April 13th when the middle school principals visit. They will then complete their two choices with your support and return their completed form to their 5th grade homeroom teacher by a set date given at the time the principals’ visit.

**Band/Orchestra**

Students who may be interested in band or orchestra will have the opportunity to explore the instruments when we visit the middle school on April 16th to help them with their first elective choice. Some key notes below;

* You will receive a phone call between the middle of May and early June regarding instrument fitting for your child even if they are selecting choir. If you do not receive this call, please contact the middle school and they will gladly provide you the number needed to call for assistance.
* Instrument fitting is provided by Marshall Music as part of their service with East Lansing Public Schools. You do not need to purchase any of the instruments through them if you do not wish to do so.

**Enrichment**

There will be many club and other enrichment opportunities for students outside of the regular classes they attend. These activities can include, but are not limited to, cross country, track, Math Club, STEM, TLC, ELF Club, and many more leadership clubs. If a club is not offered, students are encouraged to express their ideas to Mrs. Martin, the building principal, to try and start the process of forming a new club. Please encourage your children to ask about the many new clubs each year!

**Lunch**

This is a hot topic for many of the incoming students. Below are some of the basic notes regarding lunch;

* Students are not assigned seats or tables based on classes.
  + They can reach out to others and sit wherever they would like.
    - Encourage your child to get to know others.
* There are more choices of hot lunch options which will be communicated to parents.
* With over 850 students in one building, students will have various lunch times.
* Since there is no traditional recess, if the weather is nice, the principals and staff provide recreation time where students can hang outside and play or socialize with their friends.

**Lockers**

This is another hot topic for many students entering middle school. Below are some more notes regarding lockers;

* Assure your child they do get easier through the year in regards to memorizing their locker combination.
* There will be lots of people around to help if your child forgets where their locker is or what their combination is.
  + Teachers will have locker combinations recorded in case a student forgets and their peers cannot assist them.

**Counselors**

All students are assigned a school counselor. These assignments are based on your child’s last name. The two counselors are Mrs. Wallace and Mrs. Christian. If your child has any issues at all, or simply wants to discuss a topic of interest, there is a cookie jar in the office that is utilized for requests to speak with a counselor. All your child has to do is fill out a request slip, place it in the jar, and wait to be called down to the office when a counselor is available.

**Helpful Tips**

Parents were presented with helpful tips from a panel of middle school students. Some of the information below is based off of what the students shared from their experiences. Before even continuing to read, please keep in mind that they started the night with one helpful tip above everything else. They noted the importance of organization. They noted that the more your child works on staying organized, the more successful they will be.

* Students are encouraged to purchase separate binders for each of their subject areas and clearly label them in their lockers on the front and on the side so they can be easily retrieved without a hassle.
* Stay organized
  + Students should actively use their planner.
* Attend the Activity Night on June 2nd with your child, as well as the Back to School Day on August 21st.
* A general supply list is sent out in the summer.
  + More specific supply lists are sent out by teachers the first week of school.
    - It might be beneficial to gather the basic essentials you know your child will need when the general supply list comes out and then gather the more specific items during the first week of school when your child has a better understanding of teacher expectations.
* Students should try new things!

**This is a very supportive learning community, if you ever need to know something, don’t be afraid to ask!**

We hope you find this information helpful and will try to answer any questions you have as we begin the transition process. The middle school is absolutely ready for your child and we believe they will have a wonderful experience there!

Warm Regards,  
  
5th Grade Team