



HGMICS Principal Update, 8/21/20

1 message

Howard Gardner MI Charter School <treeanne.mcenery@myhgsd.com>

Fri, Aug 21, 2020 at 5:20 PM

Dear HGMICS Families,

The school building is active with the arrival of our dedicated teaching staff committed to preparing their physical and virtual classrooms for our students' long-awaited return. While not all of our students will be in the building as of August 31, all will be engaged in a learning program aligned with the School's mission and integrated grade-level learning objectives.

First Day of School

The first day of school for the A cohort is on August 31, and the first day of school for the B cohort is September 1. There will be no remote day work assigned for the B cohort on August 31.

Masks

Please note that the School will be updating its Health and Safety Plan to align with the most recent guidance published on August 17th by the PA Department of Education that students must always wear masks during the school day. Our July Health and Safety Plan described how students would not have to wear masks while engaged in an independent activity at their desks; we can no longer offer this option. Teachers will now schedule frequent mask breaks throughout the instructional portion of the day. Students will continue to be permitted to not wear masks during lunch/recess, physical activity, and when outdoors.

Schoolwide Hybrid Program and Instructional Staff

Our kindergarten students will be taught by Arielle May and Sara Wintermute in a co-teaching model. Together they are planning their curriculum so that students receive a day of direct instruction at school with Arielle, followed by a remote day of direct instruction through synchronous sessions with Sara. All-remote students will be overseen and cared for by Sara, and Arielle will engage in their assignments throughout the week. They are also planning times throughout the week where both all remote and at school students can virtually socialize.

Our Primary Pod homeroom teachers, Alyssa Rook, Brienne Barrett, and Kait Hicks, will continue teaching at school, while the School has hired an experienced and certified teacher, Matthew Salerno, to be the lead all remote Primary teacher.

Megan Wolfe will be teaching the K-4 all remote students while Rob Rouse will teach that at school students.

The Intermediate through Senior Pod homeroom teachers will all continue to teach at school. At the same time, three of our certified classroom aides have stepped in to lead remote teaching positions as core academic teachers. Ariana Liples will teach ELA, Alyson Eckler will teach Cultures, and Marci McDermott will teach Mathematics. All three teachers are actively planning and engaged as a team for the Intermediate through Senior Pods. In addition to the three in-house transitions, the School has hired a graduate student from Marywood University, Deena Haroun Mahdavi, whose education degree focuses on middle school science. Deena will be teaching science for the all remote Upper and Senior students.

The 5+ Program is offered to students with an individual education plan or 504 plan. Students eligible for this program are invited to attend school on their remote learning day. This is an opportunity for these students to continue to receive their related services. Students attending school on their remote learning day are still responsible to access and complete their remote assignments as indicated by their teachers. Students are grouped as K-4 and 5-8. Maria Guido will supervise the K-4 students, and Suppi Chandragiri will supervise the 5-8 students.

All remote teachers will share students' schedules during the week of August 24th. Families enrolled in the All Remote Program can expect students' schedules to be rigorous and modeled as the At School Program.

Distribution of Materials & Agreements

- All remote families: the distribution of instructional materials is scheduled for Wednesday, August 26, and Thursday, August 27 between 1:00-3:00 PM.
- At school families: materials will be distributed when your children arrive at school.

All students, regardless of which program they are enrolled in, will receive their own electronic device to access their instructional program. The Kindergarten will receive an Android Tablet, and grades 1-8 will receive a Chromebook including a carrying case and charger. All families are required to sign a School Agreement on the care and responsibility of these devices. In addition, all families will sign a School Materials Agreement as we prepare to send curriculum materials such as textbooks, calculators, novels, etc., home. Both agreements are attached to this email; please review them in preparation for signing them at next week's distribution.

Schoology

The School has updated you about our purchase of the learning management system, Schoology. Schoology replaces Google Classroom, providing both our teachers and students an integrated platform to access their classroom regardless of location. While this is an exciting development for the school, it also requires a step by step process for everyone to gain familiarity with the platform.

Teachers have been engaged in Schoology professional development since mid-July; they are planning to slowly introduce and utilize this learning tool with all students, such as how to navigate their classroom pages, where to find their work, how to watch videos, etc. Minimally, the first two weeks of the school year will be students learning to login to Schoology, find a question of the day, or watch an instructional video, supplemented by instructional materials and learning outside of the virtual classroom.

A Schoology letter from our IT Manager, Michael Abballe, and tutorials for both adults and students are attached to this email.

We are all anticipating the 2020-2021 school year's first day and will continue to diligently plan and be responsive to maintaining accountability with a focus on health and safety.

Sincerely,
TreeAnne McEnergy
Principal