

**Mount Prospect School
General PTO Meeting Minutes
May 24, 2016**

5th Grade Transition Meeting

Presented by: Karen Hudock, WAMS Principal

- **Structure in Middle School prepares students for more lack of structure in High School**
- **Teachers are secondary certified teachers/content specialists**
- **Three teams are formed**
 - **Counselors talk with 5th Grade teachers about each student**
 - **Teams are balanced heterogeneously except for Math**
 - **Teams have 5 teachers:**
 - **Math**
 - **Science**
 - **English**
 - **Language Arts**
 - **Social Studies**
 - **Teacher teams meet every day with Guidance and Assistant Principal**
 - **Teachers also meet with department and any special education teacher that serves their team**
 - **School counselors are in contact with team teachers**
- **A lot of first 12 weeks is giving guidance to students to help them begin to make independent decisions**
- **For Information:**
 - **Friday Folder – Ms. Hudock’s main communication except busing information**
 - **Open House in August – students given schedule and opportunity to walk around school to find classrooms**
 - **Schedules are online**
- **Structure of Day:**
 - **5 academic periods**
 - **4 other periods**
 - **Foreign language**
 - **PE – will change clothes daily beginning 2nd full week of classes**
 - **Cycles – 6 week cycles of mini lessons**
- **Math Placement:**
 - **Modified cluster group with help of spring MAP testing so highest level math students are not placed with weakest level**
 - **Minimizing range in each classroom has effect of increased individual growth**
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- **PARENT QUESTIONS:**
 - **How does Math placement impact HS math choices?**
 - There is no impact
 - At the end of 6th grade, students can qualify for 7th grade Algebra = different track
 - **Should parents be preparing or tutoring students for higher math track?**
 - No, let student follow curriculum
 - Let Middle School be for social/emotional growth, in Ms. Hudock's opinion
 - **Excessive Homework?**
 - Each content area is to limit homework to 20 minutes
 - 5 x 20 = 1 ½ hours
 - If it takes so much more, tell teachers
 - Parents can track amount through Homework Portal plus student agendas
 - BOE has written policy on homework on website
 - **What is the % of students chosen for Algebra?**
 - 478 students in 7th grade and less than 90 students in Algebra
 - **Is homework to be completed on computer or written?**
 - Both
 - Some classes have online textbooks
 - **Afterschool activities?**
 - Limited activities: peer leaders, year book, student council
 - WAMS AO – athletic organization that is parent run
 - “Pay to Play” clubs: forensics & debate were very successful and goal is to add more
 - Ensemble groups and school play
 - Signup will be part of Daily Announcements on home page
 - **Cell phone policy?**
 - Many have phones, in school they must be off and in lockers
 - Internet safety program is offered by township police department
 - **Homework portal updated regularly?**
 - Teachers are required to update
 - Sometimes pace of class requires last minute change in plans
 - **Gym attire for girls?**
 - More lenient than dress code
 - Still no bra straps or midriff showing
 - Shorts can be shorter than regular required wardrobe and v-neck tshirts are permitted
 - **Class size?**
 - Approximately 467
 - Can increase or decrease by 30 students
 - **Twins? Same team with different teachers**
 - **Number of teachers? Several subject teachers on each team in each grade**
 - **School supplies?**
 - Notebook paper, binder, pencils for first day

- Suggest AM/PM binder but use whatever works for your student
- Can go against teacher recommendation
- Make sure backpack fits in locker
- How can parents help child through this immense change?
 - Don't let your child see your anxiety – tell them everything will be great even if you are worried
 - By November, students should be settled in
 - Counselors go in every classroom to talk about their fears
 - The school has trained assistance
 - Don't hesitate to reach out to counselors
- Do teachers set expectations/ show examples?
 - First couple of days – all introduction time
 - How to study, how to take notes (guided note taking)
- Bullying?
 - District policy is written on website
 - There is opportunity for anonymous reporting
 - Most of what happens occurs outside of school day
 - Cafeteria is monitored by 6th grade teachers and Assistant Principal
 - Expectations are taught to students
 - Every month there are Viking morning meetings to discuss character education
- Are there Parent/Teacher conferences?
 - Can always ask for team meeting
 - Can always talk to one teacher about one subject
- What is the G&T program at the Middle School?
 - Currently, there is accelerated math for 7th and 8th grades
 - Also, there is a G&T STEM program during lunch for 6th grade students
- Has school performance ratings dropped in recent years?
 - Depends on which site you are looking at and what is their criteria
 - Currently on “Schools to Watch” list for 2016-2019