

Letter from the Grade Level Representatives

Dear ECS Families and Faculty,

We wanted to let you know about a collaborative initiative amongst the school administration and Parent Community of ECS - the Grade Representatives Committee. This committee is comprised of school principals and volunteer representatives from each grade level.

The purpose of the Grade Reps program is to *collect trending concerns and feedback from each grade to share with the administration with an eye toward problem solving when needed*. We welcome your questions and concerns and look forward to addressing them during these monthly meetings. Feedback / notes will be shared through the room parents and can also be found online: <http://ecspco.org/volunteer/grade-representatives/>.

If you have a comment or concern to be presented, please feel free to reach out to one of the grade representatives below:

First Name	Last Name	Grade	Email
Wesley	Waldrup	K, 3 and 5	wwaldrup@gmail.com
Maria	Zibert	2,3	mzibert@verizon.net
Julie	Paris	1 and 2	julieparis6@gmail.com
Leslie	Aronson	1	lesliedara@gmail.com
Anat	Talmy	1 and 4	atalmy@gmail.com
Kate	Tunney	1 and 4	Ketunney@gmail.com
Carolyn	Hare	3 and 5	carolynhare@gmail.com
Olivia	Wells	3 and 6	wells.oliviac@gmail.com
Jennifer	Balog	3, 5 and 6	jennifer@6nop.com
Marla	Ferrency	4 and 8	marla@ferrency.com
Sonia	Rathelot	5 and 8	sonia.rathelot@yahoo.com
Stacie	Parente	7	me@stacieleigh.com
Elena	Hilf	8	hilf@verizon.net

Notes from Friday, February 3, 2017

General:

- Baby Cribbs arrived this morning!
- Change format to grade rep meetings to a question and answer format
- Jaleah has office hours; check the Monday Blast for the times to drop in
- Ashley has an open door policy - drop in whenever you need to talk
- Report card comments are “more robust” based on your feedback - coming home today
- MAPs Data showing great gains across the board; especially math
- General feedback from parents: pleased with Eureka math and the work going home with students for Math
- General feedback from parents: Very pleased with how the water situation was handled
- General feedback from parents: The Invention convention was amazing!

Asks from our Administration to the Parent Community:

- Please remind all parents you talk with to sign up for the Monday Blast. This is critical for emergency information as well as for critical data.
- Remind parents/guardians to approach teachers directly when a concern arises. Often teachers are the best folks to give the most accurate, up-to-date, and clear answers to your questions.
- The Math curriculum requires copying needs. Ask your grade level teacher if that copying job could be handed to a parent designee once a week. Coordinate a volunteer effort, if needed.

Q: Where are we with the schoology concerns?

A: This process will begin with meetings with the teams to create consistent practices. We also ensured that all of the technical issues are resolved (with the help of Todd Hoffman). The next part of this work is building consistency and effective deployment with all of our faculty.

Q: All online application this year? Does that exclude a group of people?

A: Our numbers via zipcodes has increased with the all online applications.

Q: What about diversity? What has been going on to address this work?

On the planning days, [Majestic Lane](#) came in to discuss race, equity, and privilege to our entire faculty. Mr. Lane, the deputy chief of neighborhood empowerment for Mayor Peduto, discussed what equity looks like, White privilege discussion, and the opportunity gap. ECS has adjusted some systems within our organization to ensure greater access and equitable opportunity. The Boyce Park Ski trips provided access to all; Dress down days have changed to give all students the ability to dress down (regardless of ability to pay); Discipline practices are continually viewed

with equity lens. PCO spoke about increasing parent diversity attendance at meetings and identifying events which may cost prohibitive to families.

Q: Does ECS plan to have a position on the school funding legislation?

A: We will review the information; we are in favor of fair funding at the state level.

Q: What are the temperature regulations for going outside?

A: We follow the national nurse guidelines for recess in conjunction with Nurse Judy's recommendations. Additionally, we will remind Teachers to make sure hikes are covered as recap in newsletters. Also note there was a "Shout Out" to Megan Gregory for communications and commitment to the Morning Energize Club. ECS will repost the guidelines in the Monday Blast.

Q: Concerns arose about group consequences. Was there an Upper school large group recess taken away as consequence?

A: We have not been able to determine where this occurred. If a parent is concerned about group consequences, please email the lead teacher for the team and the principal directly. Thank you!

Q: Concerns about mud as a deterrent for going outside. How do you make the call about environment conditions? *Upper school concern*

A: Teachers are still encouraged to take students outside. We have provided other areas as suggestions for outdoor experiences.

Q: What is the policy about walking field trip?

A: All walking field trips require a permission slip signed and returned. We will ensure that students do not spend money at the location. After chatting with Ms. Augustine, students do not have permission to purchase these items. It violates our Wellness Policy and brings up many concerns about equity, as discussed in the meeting. On the recent trip, parents were contacted, and a consequence was provided.

Q: Lower to Upper transition. Students start to walk home when they get to upper. Can ECS start a patrol program to support student safety? How? Who? Parents?

A: Look into this with Jaleah. Carolyn Hare would love to help.

Q: Is the ECS Calendar aligned with the PPS?

A: As much as possible, ECS aligns with the PPS calendar. We will generally publish the calendar in March, or as soon as PPS officially publishes their calendar for the following year.

Q: Is there news on the additional K-8 and 9-12 Amendment vote?

A: February 21st will be the vote at the Charter Appeal Board in Harrisburg. A communication to families will follow.

Q: Many families are still waiting for i, Simon photos. What can be done? What will be done for next year?

A: Ashley Bergman is [collecting names in the following spreadsheet](#). This was also included in the Monday Blast on 2/6. If the issues are not resolved, ECS will contract with another vendor in 2017-2018.

Q: When a student is in crisis is it common practice to remove the rest of students from the room?

A: Yes, we work hard to preserve the dignity of the child and while also considering the well-being of the children in the room. We continue work with students in a different location, as necessary, and de-escalate student in crisis.

Q: Is it still a mud pit at the lower school?

A: We are working to update the space through the beautification project. We will check in with Katie Lockley to see if any immediate updates are on the horizon.

Q: What is the impact of the math changes?

A: We are seeing benchmarks from our MAPs testing showing growth for the majority of our students. Units will changing over so things coming home may look new as content shifts. If you have specific math questions, parents should contact teachers directly. They are able to provide student data and suggest resources to help.

Q: Can you tell us about the way students respond to questions (5 sentence responses)? Can you tell us a little bit about why this method is used?

A: From our 5th Grade teachers, Ms. Duffy and Mr. Gleason -
"We use five sentences because that is the basic expectation for the length of a paragraph- topic sentence, three supports, and conclusion. Asking students to write a paragraph requires them to not only form a statement/belief/opinion, but to also back it up with evidence. This is a valuable skill not only in writing, but in speaking. The more we do it, the more it becomes second nature for students to explain their reasoning.

The teachers who picked up our last group for middle school (now 7th graders) were very impressed with the writing skills of the group we passed on to them. Students from middle school have consistently talked to me about how writing doesn't seem so bad now because they are used to high expectations we set in 5th grade. Feel free to reach out to us with any questions!"

Q: We received some feedback that work not completed in class is coming home. In some cases, most of the essay/work is completed at home. What is happening to help support completion of tasks in class?

A: Ms. Robison suggested checking in with the teacher or teachers directly about your concerns. If you need to set up a meeting or a phone call about your concerns, this is a great way to connect and build understanding about what is happening in class.

Q: Could paper copies of permission slips be sent via email as well as paper?

A: Great idea! Principals will pass this idea to team leads for that update.

Q: Eighth Grade Health: Is there a curriculum, what is it? Can parents get syllabus? Note:

A Parent has resources, if needed.

A: The ECS Upper School uses the HLC Curriculum for 8th Grade. A link to this resource can be found [here](#).

Q: Feedback about the career/speaker in Cultural Literacy 6th from students made the intent confusing. Can you provide a bit of background on who Mr. Albert is and what types of activities he did with students? Mixed messages are coming home with kids.

A: ECS has partnered with the UcanB Program to provide Career Awareness workshops to the 6th grade class! Every month, UcanB teachers and guest speakers visit the 6th grade students to discuss topics such as Career Interests, Job Projections and Strategies for Success. The UcanB Program began with an 'Odd Jobs' presentation which encouraged students to think outside of the box about the thousands of career options that are available. Students also completed career profiles, and they have had the opportunity to research career options via Department of Labor tools such as O*Net Online. Upcoming UcanB sessions will include College Research, Resume & Job Search, and Introductions to Various Career Fields. For more information about UcanB, please visit www.buildingbridgesforbusiness.org. You can also join the '#UcanB' discussion group on Facebook to learn more about UcanB programs, schools, and speakers.

Q: A few questions came up about 8th Grade Cultural Literacy. How do the kids know they are not being graded on morality or their point of view (especially if it differs from the teachers')? Is there an opportunity to help convey to students and parents that feedback and grades are based on content and ability to articulate their thinking not morality?

A: This is a fantastic and important question that we take very seriously. Our goal with the Issues Discourse is to look at current events from multiple perspectives and shift the focus to discourse rather than debate. Students have opportunities to explore and inhabit perspectives that are both aligned with and opposite of their own through reading and writing. In class, we foster a respectful environment where every perspective is listened to. Grades and feedback are focused on a student's ability to utilize text evidence, express clear positions, and connect those positions to other perspectives. All of this is clearly conveyed via our rubrics and feedback. As we seek to build an empathic society, it is critically important to us that all points of view are represented and that young people grow a capacity to express their views effectively! We invite every parent to check out the persona profiles that students complete, which are designed to engage every student with a variety of perspectives. Please feel free to contact us if you or your child feel that certain perspectives don't have a voice in the classroom.

Consistent Practices and Protocols: Reading/analyzing historical background material, reading/analyzing/hearing a multitude of opinions on an issue, reading, watching, writing and listening from multiple perspectives, embodying and practicing discourse (fishbowl discussions, perspective taking, persona profile creation, improv exercises, etc...)

Example Rubric:

Read and mark up the text, 6-10 word summaries, vocab and write a question and connection.

Posted Today at 11:05 am

Criteria	Grading Scale		
<p>Summarizing/Retelling Key Details Students will retell the central ideas and cite key details/evidence in their own words; discerning between relevant details and inconsequential ones.</p>	<p>3 Excellent</p>	<p>2 Emerging</p>	<p>0 No Evidence</p>
<p>Analyzing Texts (Informational) Students will analyze and describe how key ideas of a text interact by: making inferences, drawing connections, comparing/contrasting ideas, etc.</p>	<p>3 Excellent</p>	<p>2 Emerging</p>	<p>0 No Evidence</p>
<p>Vocabulary Development Students demonstrate the recognition of context clues, use of resources for identification, understanding of roots, spelling, and the visualization of words.</p>	<p>3 Excellent</p>	<p>2 Emerging</p>	<p>0 No Evidence</p>
<p>Work Ethic Students will demonstrate effort towards growth and/or application of project critical skills.</p>	<p>1 On Time</p>		<p>0 Late</p>

Total pts: 10