September, 2016

Dear Parent or Guardian,

My name is Mr. Michael McGuire and I will be teaching your child Sixth Grade Mathematics for the 2016-17 school year. Your child will be learning through the connected mathematics curriculum which is quite challenging. I have outlined important information for you to review with your child so that he/she will be prepared and know the expectations for the school year.

**General Course Overview / Evaluation**

The mathematics courses are designed to build students’ conceptual and skill development in number sense, geometry, measurement, algebra, statistics and probability. A variety of strategies are used to engage the students: whole class lecture, small group activities (pair/share and four square), independent practice, and inquiry-based learning. Students must observe patterns and relationships, conjecture, test, discuss, verbalize and generalize. Students are required to reflect and write about their problem solving methods on a regular basis. Assessment includes mathematical reflections, tests and quizzes, projects, homework, class participation/ assignments and notebook entries. Intercultural awareness is woven into the curriculum as students learn and discuss the history of mathematics, various cultural achievements in the field, and the global economy. All of these aspects are stressed as part of the IBMYP philosophy and are integral to the classroom experience. The following **International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme Assessment Criteria** will be integrated in the assessments listed above:

- **Knowing and Understanding**: Select and apply appropriate mathematics to solve problems in familiar and unfamiliar situations.
- **Investigating Patterns**: Select and apply techniques to find patterns, describe those patterns as general rules and verify or justify that those rules work.
- **Communicating**: Use appropriate mathematics terminology and notation to communicate a complete and logical line of reasoning, moving between different forms as necessary.
- **Applying Mathematics in Real Life Contexts**: Identify important parts of a problem, select appropriate strategies and determine how accurate a solution is and whether or not it makes sense.

Students will be given the Summative Assessment with scoring Rubrics at the beginning of each unit to ensure clear expectations. Students will be required to complete at least one IBMYP project every marking period and will be provided with the Assessment Criteria and Scoring Rubric for the project at the beginning of the specific unit the project pertains to. Your child will also be provided a copy of the IBMYP Sixth Grade Course Outline to reference throughout the school year.

**Grading Weight Percentages**: The percentage breakdown of the overall grade is as follows:

- 10% Homework (4 times a week)
- 25% Assessments: Tests/ Quizzes / Projects / Special Assignments / Benchmark Exams
- 25% Classwork: Problems / Warm-ups / Problem Reflections
- 20% Participation: Accountable Talk / Presentations / Notebooks
- 20% Writing: Unit Projects / Mastery Tasks / Unit Reflections / Vocabulary
Grading Scale:

Grades are weighted according to the type of assignment:

**There will be no extra credit given at any time for any reason!** Students should make every effort to maintain their grades during the report period. According the school board guidelines, 90-100% is an A, 80-89% is a B, 70-79% is a C, and 60-69% is a D. Below 60% is an E.

Procedures and Expectations:
- Students are to follow all posted classroom rules
- All assignments are to be completed neatly and in a timely fashion
- Acceptable behavior is expected to create a learning environment in which all students can learn

Make-up Work:
If a student is absent, he/she is responsible for obtaining any missed assignments. Students are expected to promptly turn in any make-up work immediately. Students will be given the same number of days missed to make up missed assignments due to absences. Late work will result in a drop of one letter grade for every day it is late. There is also a system in place for daily lab sheets/handouts for each day of the week to make obtaining missed work easily.

Math Portfolios:
Your math portfolio will contain examples of homework, class work, projects, all tests and quizzes. You certainly may bring papers home for parent review when they are returned to you, but I ask that you then return the papers to the portfolio. I am often asked to present examples of student work for district review. Parents may come by at any time to review their child’s portfolio. Please stop in the office first to receive a visitor’s pass.

Math Binders:
Your math binder will be an invaluable tool in your success this year. It will contain example problems, step-by-step instructions when necessary and pertinent vocabulary. You should bring your binder home every time you have a homework assignment or test to study for. Frequently, items not clearly explained in your math book will be outlined in your binder. Parents should review the binder regularly to check for neatness, organization, and complete notes. Please keep your math book in your binder to protect it from the wear and tear of your backpack. You will be expected to return your math book in the same condition that it was given to you.

A **1.5 inch, three ring binder is best to accommodate the necessary materials.**
Classroom Rules:
1. Be prepared to begin class when the tardy bell rings (pencils sharpened, materials out, etc.)
2. Raise your hand before speaking
3. No grooming, applying make-up, etc.
4. No sleeping in class
5. Students may only leave their seat with permission
6. **No food, drinks, gum, or candy**
7. No hats or jackets
8. Students are dismissed by the teacher, not the bell
9. No cell phones visible or powered on they should be turned in, in the morning

Disciplinary Action:
To keep the classroom orderly and without distractions, the following is the format for how violations of rules will be enforced:
1st violation: Name on the dry erase board
2nd violation: Behavior Journal
3rd violation: Behavior Journal / Phone call home
4th violation: Behavior Journal / Phone call home / Office referral

Gifted Students:
Those students designated as gifted will be periodically expected to complete assignments designed to enrich or advance their learning beyond the core curriculum. This will take shape in the form of alternate homework assignments, class work and tests. These are not extra credit but, rather, a part of the child’s comprehensive grade. These assignments have been formulated to meet the gifted child’s IEP and **are not optional** unless a parent specifically requests for their child to opt out. These alternate assignments stress advancement in the areas of critical thinking and problem solving.

Useful Websites:

http://www.aaamath.com - Provides instruction and practice in algorithms for many topics. Also provides several games to practice each algorithm.
http://www.mathgoodies.com/ - Provides instruction and practice in algorithms and vocabulary on a variety of topics
http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/mathsfile/ - Math Files. A website operated by the BBC that includes interactive games that reinforce number, algebra, data, and measurement.
www.webmath.com - Step by step instructions for solving any math problem that you give it. Covers most topics taught in k-9. Very traditional methods are presented in detail. This site is great for parents looking to review a topic.
http://mathforum.org/dr.math/?pass=yes – If you have any questions about anything mathematical, ask Dr. Math. Dr. Math has a HUGE database of answers.
http://www.how-to-study.com/ - This site has information on study skills, test-taking tips, etc.
http://pps.k12.pa.us/ - This is the Pittsburgh Public schools website.
www.aplusmath.com – games, practice, worksheets. Good for basic skills practice (adding subtracting, multiplying, dividing, fractions, decimals, %)
www.coolmath.com – games, practice, “cool stuff” about math. Good for enrichment. If you’re done with your homework and want to find out something new about math, go here.

Study Skills:

Each student is required to keep a math binder as part of their course work here at Pittsburgh Obama 6-12. This binder will contain important information, examples and definitions. Students should refer to their binders when completing homework, studying for tests, or working on projects. Additionally, students should review the notes and information given on a daily basis. Even if there is not a formal homework assignment, students should spend at least 15 minutes per night reviewing their notes and keeping their binders neat and organized. Students should also have mastery of basic multiplication and division facts upon entering the 6th grade (1-12 tables). Students who have not yet memorized these basic facts should spend 15 minutes per night reviewing them until they can recite them without hesitation. Students should also be able to divide multi-digit numbers, have a command of basic fraction knowledge and have experience writing about their mathematical thinking. In all cases, but especially if your child struggles with mathematics, please make every effort to maintain regular contact with your child’s teacher and make every effort to attend the monthly parent conferences on the first Thursday of every month.

Hopefully these rules, expectations, and procedures are easily understood and followed. If there are any questions or concerns about your child’s educational needs, please contact me as soon as possible. I can be reached via e-mail (mmguire3@pghboe.net) or by phone at 412-529-2261. I know that success cannot be achieved unless everyone is involved and there is no doubt, that together, the goals set before your child will be met. Good luck and have a great year!

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Student                                                                                 Parent or Guardian

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Mr. McGuire                                                                             Approved by Mrs. Colbert
Mathematics Teacher                                                                    Director