



September 2016

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Welcome to the 2016-2017 school year as a member of my Sixth Grade Mathematics class. The following information will assist you in having a productive and successful year.

The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program emphasizes intellectual challenge and encourages students to become critical and reflective thinkers by developing communication skills, intercultural understanding, and global awareness. Students demonstrate high levels of engagement, creativity, resourcefulness, and active participation while making connections between subjects and real world issues. Students are to develop knowledge within a subject area but are also to develop an understanding of ideas and the ability to apply these ideas in new concepts and in future learning. Teachers implement a variety of instructional methods so students can discover how they best learn in different situations.

Students will be studying mathematics using the Connected Mathematics Program (CMP3) materials. CMP3 uses an inquiry approach, which means that the students will investigate mathematical ideas within the context of a realistic problem, as opposed to looking only at numbers. Some problems involve real-world applications or unusual situations, while others are purely mathematical. A problem's context provides a vehicle for understanding and remembering the mathematical concepts.

#### **What materials are required for math?**

- Folder: two pockets with prongs
- Graph paper spiral notebook
- Pencils
- Personal pencil sharpener
- Pen: blue or black ink
- Highlighters
- Loose-leaf graph paper
- Colored pencils
- Glue stick
- Flash drive

#### **What textbook is used in the class?**

Students are given a Connected Math Program book for each unit. Students are responsible for keeping the book in good condition and returning it at the end of the unit. The CMP3 textbooks are also accessible online. Students will receive an individual user name and password on a label to place in their agenda book.

#### **What is the interactive notebook?**

Our students are mathematicians. Mathematicians use notebooks and journals to record data, illustrations, charts, graphs, and their thinking. Students can also use their notebook to record their questions and ideas. The interactive notebook is a way to

organize notes and make notes easier to understand. It is a personalized textbook created by each student. It enables students to be creative, independent thinkers and writers. The concept of interactive notebooks originate from instructional strategies such as note taking, concept mapping, and organization of information as well as brain based learning and learning styles. It is a tool to help students' process information, personalize content knowledge, and review information learned in class. Students will use diagrams, pictures, graphic organizers, fill in the blanks, charts, tables, exemplars, and foldables to record information. Students will be given explicit directions for setting up their notebook the first week of school. The Interactive Notebook is to be taken home each night and brought to class every day. Parents should review the notebook regularly to check for neatness, organization, and completeness. If a student is absent, it is their responsibility to update their notebook with the missing work.

### **What will we be learning?**

- Comparing Bits and Pieces (CPB); Ratios, Rational Numbers, and Equivalence
- Let's Be Rational (LBR); Understanding Fraction Operations
- Covering and Surrounding (CS); Two Dimensional Measurements
- Decimal Operations (DO); Computing with Decimals and Percents
- Variables and Patterns (VP); Focus on Algebra
- Data About Us (DAU); Statistics and Data Analysis
- Shapes and Designs (SD); Two Dimensional Geometry

### **How are students assessed?**

The MYP uses worldwide assessment standards that are criterion related. Assessment tasks are designed as an opportunity for students to show achievement and mastery of their individual learning. Assessment tasks are typically open-ended tasks, problem-solving activities, hands on investigations, or reflections. The MYP assessment criteria are used to assess student work. Work may be assessed on one or more of the criteria.

- Criterion A: Knowing and Understanding
- Criterion B: Investigating Patterns
- Criterion C: Communicating
- Criterion D: Applying Mathematics in Real-life Contexts

### **What is the policy for late work?**

Students will receive half credit for any work submitted after the due date during the quarter. Late work must be labeled with the assignment number and original due date. Students who are absent will receive full credit when turning in their missing work. If the student is absent one day, he or she has one day to complete the missing work; if absent two days, two days for make-up, etc. It is the student's responsibility to find out what work they missed and turn in the assignments. Assignments are posted on ManageBac, posted in the grade book, and listed on the classroom calendar within the classroom. All handouts can be found in the crate below the calendar during the quarter.

Absences due to school activities (sports, instrumental, etc.) do not fall under these guidelines. Students missing class due to school activities are expected to get all of the day's assignments **before** leaving for the activity and to turn them in **ON THE DUE DATE**.

It sometimes happens that students who have class in the afternoon begin to miss significant class time during particular sports seasons, etc. It should be noted that while students are not penalized for participating in school activities, there is no substitute for teacher instruction and classroom interaction. Students who begin to miss significant class time due to activities should meet with the teacher to see if additional arrangements need to be made.

### **Are there opportunities for extra credit?**

There will be no opportunities for extra credit. Students should make every effort to complete work and achieve the highest grade possible during the report period.

### **What is ManageBac?**

ManageBac is an interactive portal aligned with the International Baccalaureate Program that enables the school to communicate efficiently with parents and students.

Everything that pertains to 6<sup>th</sup> grade Mathematics is posted on ManageBac such as homework assignments, class work, notes, project pages, rubrics, IBMYP information, apps, and games. This should be your first reference point if you are absent, forgot the assignment, or lost a page.

Students should go the website, <https://obamaacademy.managebac.com/login> and log in using their user names and passwords. All students will be given their access information by the end of September. A mailing label with the information will be placed in the front cover of their agenda book.

### **What is graded?**

All work is graded on a percentage basis, but is weighted according to the type of assignment.

- Assessment 25%
- Classwork 25%
- Homework 10%
- Participation 20%
- Writing 20%

According to school board guidelines, 90-100% is an A, 80-89% is a B, 70-79% is a C, 60-69% is a D, and 59-50% is an E.

Progress reports are mailed home 4  $\frac{1}{2}$  weeks into every quarter. Report cards are handed to the student at the end each nine-week quarter. If you do not receive a progress report, please let me know. Parents can also check their child's progress at any time on the Home Access Center using a parent username and password.

Assignment due dates posted on the grade book may change due to class progress.

The school district will be sending additional information home regarding the Home Access Center.

### **When is homework due?**

Homework is assigned four days a week, Monday through Thursday. It is due the next class day. Homework will be graded in class and then turned in for recording in the gradebook. Students who are present in class and do not have their homework will fill out a pink slip. Pink slips are kept in each student's class folder, which parents may view during conferences or scheduled appointments. Please use the agenda book daily to help manage homework. I will be happy to initial agenda books to verify homework completion or assignments, but it will be the student's responsibility to present the agenda book to me.

If a student is struggling with a homework assignment after 15 minutes of work, allow them to stop working on the task and have a parent or guardian initial the page. Students will receive full credit for the assignment.

### **How is participation assessed?**

Students are to provide a positive contribution during discussions and engage in all learning activities with minimal redirection. Participation includes active engagement in warm-ups, class discussion, small group activities, and investigations. Students will receive 20 points each week for participation.

### **How is writing assessed?**

Warm-ups, reflections, essential question essays, and project essays will be graded using a task specific rubric and an IBMYP assessment rubric. All essays must be written in ink or typed and follow MLA formatting guidelines. Students will receive detailed instructions prior to the first writing assignment.

Academic honesty is an important component of writing in any subject. Plagiarism is not acceptable. If a student takes information from the Internet or any printed resource without a citation, it is considered plagiarism. A written warning will be issued for the first offense and students will be given the chance to redo the assignment. No credit will be given on any subsequent assignments involving plagiarism and a referral will be submitted to the office for additional consequences.

### **What are the classroom expectations?**

It should be self-evident that learning takes place best in an orderly classroom. You must do your part in this regard. Please take care to follow these procedures daily:

- Be respectful of all adults and students.
- Be respectful of all school property and classroom materials. Leave the room clean and orderly.
- Do not eat, drink, or chew gum during class.
- No personal grooming.

- Be prepared daily for class with your math notebook, folder, pencil, agenda book, and homework.
- Students will not be allowed to go to their locker for any reason.
- Report to class on time. Late students will be expected to present a signed agenda book. The school wide tardy policy will be strictly followed. Any student reporting to my class tardy more than four times during one report period will receive a U in citizenship.
- No pencil sharpening during class. There is not a pencil sharpener in my room. It is recommended to have your own personal pencil sharpener.
- Students are dismissed by the teacher, not the bell.
- Complaints or concerns about grades, policies, etc. are handled on an appointment basis. This gives me an opportunity to adequately hear your concerns and handle them appropriately without taking time away from the rest of the class.

When these rules are not followed, the following consequences might be applied in part or whole:

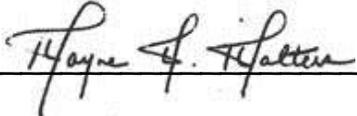
1. Verbal warning and loss of class participation points
2. Parental contact
3. Request conference with parent or guardian
4. Referral to the office

### **What is the best way to contact Mrs. Festa?**

My school voicemail is 412-529-7517. Please leave a message and I will return your call within 24 hours. Students and parents may also contact me via my personal cell phone, **412-780-9238**. I will respond to calls and text messages until 9:00 p.m. If I do not answer, please leave a message and I will return your call as soon as I am able. There is poor reception in my classroom so email is preferred during the school day. My e-mail address is **pfesta1@pghboe.net**. Parents should not hesitate to call, text, or email if they have concerns about their child's progress, work, behavior, or questions about their math class in general. Students may call or text for help with their homework assignments or projects. Conferences are available upon request or at the monthly morning conferences on the first Thursday of every month.

Again, I look forward to a wonderful school year with you.

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Peggy Festa

Approved , Principal