

Dear Parents of Secondary Students,

Welcome to the 2009-10 school year. Our secondary team is really excited about the year. The team has a lot of great ideas and plans for our classes and school. I would like to highlight a few things to you as we begin this exciting year.

Our secondary team has grown this year in specialization. We are pleased to welcome Joel Masson as our social studies teacher, Abby Douglas as our middle school math and science teacher, Karen Miller as K-12 physical education, health and activities, Suzy-Ruth Xu as our physical education teacher assistant, and Ben Longenecker as our high school science teacher. These additions will greatly add to the success of your child(ren)'s education.

A few job changes or highlights to be aware of for communication purposes:

Jeff Kingma = Secondary Principal and Athletic Director

Erika Carlson = Secondary Lead Teacher

Amanda Rowe = Student Life Coordinator (Odyssey Representative)

Karen Miller = After School Activities Coordinator (busing through main office)

Not only has our staff grown, but so have our classes. We have added a number of new classes this year, including several new AP® classes. We are excited about this growth.

One of our goals throughout the year is to help the students develop good character. There are many ways in which this is implemented throughout the year. Our weekly assemblies focus on a specific trait and ways in which we can practice this trait (examples include but are not limited to: patience, kindness, compassion, humility). Parents are encouraged to reinforce these traits at home also.

The secondary teachers are also looking for opportunities throughout the day in which the students are exhibiting good character. If this occurs, the teacher may give a green slip to the student commending him/her for good behavior. These green slips are based off of our school wide learning goals and can be read about in more detail in the parent/student handbook.

In addition, the secondary team has been revising and improving our discipline system. We ask that you take the opportunity to read the selection from the parent/student handbook about our discipline system. As the year continues, we will continue to work to improve this important area.

WYIS secondary department has developed a 10 minute daily time in which a small group of students (4-8) meet with a teacher. These groups are referred to as advisory groups. During this time, students receive important announcements and information, answer questions, discuss the character trait of the month, receive direction on academic planning, and much more. This year we have also added an advisory group assembly. About 2-3 times per semester, students will use the entire weekly assembly period to meet as an advisory group and discuss topics together. We see this as a valuable time for your child(ren) to receive small group direction and

attention. Feel free to ask your child(ren) who their advisory teacher is and you may talk to their teacher more about this beneficial time.

Another goal we have this year is in the area of supporting our students in organization and time management. In years past this has been an area in need of support. We have worked hard on schedule and class arrangements to make transitions and classes run more smoothly. We have also made some changes to our middle school schedules to assist in transitioning from elementary to middle school. In addition to scheduling changes, we are also working on teacher exit procedures, use of student assignment notebooks and more. We really hope these benefit your child(ren).

One addition to the secondary schedule this year is an activity time. We recognized the benefit of a longer break for our students in which they can move around and relax. Each day students will have about 20 minutes before lunch for this break. We strongly feel this time will benefit not only their overall health, but their academic performance. Weather permitting, students will usually be required to go outside. Intramural and club options are being developed soon. Also, on Wednesdays, students will be able to use this time in the library. As this time develops, more information will follow.

As the year continues, the secondary team will provide information for students and parents through the WYIS website. It will be very important for you, as parents, to read the weekly newsletter and follow links to other areas of the website. As always, your child(ren)'s teachers are available through email and in-person meetings by appointment.

Finally, please look at WYIS's "extracurricular" section of the website for the new after school activities policy, up-to-date information of sports and events.

Thank-you for your commitment to your child(ren)'s education, we look forward to a great year. Please feel free to contact me through email or by appointment through the main office at any time.

Sincerely,

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Jeff Kingma

Secondary Principal