

## **Washington Middle School 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Community Gathering - Minutes**

May 26, 2021

6-7:30pm

Meeting was organized by 6<sup>th</sup> grade family volunteers for other families to provide an opportunity to meet others, share experiences, and to look forward to next year. These notes will be sent to WMS and TAF Admins and the WMS PTSA.

### **Meeting Format/Agenda:**

1. Families invited to introduce themselves.
2. Presenters provided a summary of upcoming dates/events.
3. Provided ways for families to get involved and resources.  
WMS PTSA, BLT, WMS App, school & TAF websites.
4. A series of questions as conversation starters were offered.
  - a. Which class or project has your student enjoyed doing the most this year? and why?
  - b. How did online learning work for your family? What was successful? What was challenging?
  - c. Is there anything that would have made the school year better for you and your student? (aside from no COVID!)
  - d. What is something your student is looking forward to in 7<sup>th</sup> grade when they return to campus?
  - e. Would you be interested in coming to outdoor family meetups in Judkins Park over the summer?

### **Summary of Comments/Feedback:**

5. Families shared what students have enjoyed this year including:
  - a. Science class and projects were the most mentioned. (Insulator project, global warming, etc.)
  - b. Coding/Art/Humanities
  - c. Teachers

6. There were many challenges encountered over the past year of online learning that families identified with the primary issues being overall communication, loss of social interaction/development, excessive screen time, and reduced workload/expectations.
7. It was hard to know where to find information or to revisit something you may have seen/heard of because of the many and scattered sources of information. Something could be on schoology, teams, email, WMS app, PTSA email, House newsletter, Remind, school email, facebook, etc. Requests for more organized communication and a better understanding of where to look for information when needed.
8. Families recognized that the circumstances this year contributed to the reduced workload and content this year, but many expressed concern about the limited reading and writing this year. Some students are reported to have lost ground on skills previously developed.
9. The online math instruction/format is a challenge. Hard to know what the computer wants. Hard for kids to remain engaged and motivated to do online, computer math assignments. The online math platforms have been used for the last couple of years (not just in remote learning) and are not preferred. Live instruction would be better.
10. Work on STEM expo project impacting math class is real. Families have heard teacher state no math this week, instead time to work on projects and some kids are disappointed to not have math.
11. Tech issues continue to be a struggle and frustration for some students – access to enrichment sessions, etc. Some teachers also struggle with technology. Are there resources for them?

NOTE: Link for device and school software issues:

[https://www.seattleschools.org/student\\_portal/technology\\_supports\\_for\\_families/get\\_help](https://www.seattleschools.org/student_portal/technology_supports_for_families/get_help)

12. The question was raised about how involved parents should be? Participants acknowledged that it has been hard to give kids independence with the many schedule changes and the difficulties of knowing what is occurring when and what is needed. Some families are not able to be available during the day as a resource leading to additional challenges.

13. Some families reported that they were unaware there were issues with missing assignments or students' work until the problem had become significant, or students were in danger of failing the quarter. Teachers need to be responsible for communicating when a student is failing or not submitting homework to families WAY BEFORE the failing point is reached.

14. Families can check the Source and Schoology to see student grades and assignments missing throughout the year, and should bring any questions or discrepancies to the teachers' attention. Some families and teachers have reported issues with accessing or using Schoology.

15. Question asked: How do we contact student's teachers because no email or messages at all about what is happening during school or schedules?

16. Question Asked: Are the house models the same or different? Are houses doing the same work? Are houses teaching the same materials?

17. It was noted that house communication has varied by house and is not consistent or aligned.

18. Families and students are looking forward to a return to in person instruction in the fall for much needed socialization and access to other middle school activities.

19. Specific activities that families were looking forward to included: Jazz Band, maker space, sports, lockers, field trips, library, in person group projects.

20. With a return to the classroom, families are hopeful there will be less time spent on Minecraft and YouTube and screens in general. Do students have access to YouTube on school computers? If yes, can that be restricted?

21. Participants expressed the importance of WMS hosting school tours in the fall for 7<sup>th</sup> grade students and families, some of whom have not seen the building. Even students who have returned in-person for hybrid learning have not toured the full school.

22. Wide support for summer meetups. Judkins park proposed for location. Good to have some games, etc. for kids to interact. Send communication through talking points and email if possible.

Meetups Scheduled:

Tues, July 13, 4:30-6:00

Sun, Aug 8, 3-4:30pm

Meet at Judkins park behind the Washington Middle School parking lot. Communication through PTSA  
Email and Talking Points/Text