

Parents/Guardians,

Thank you to a great start to the year. We have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know our new students and re-connecting with our returning students. I just love coming to work here. Below is some information we wanted to share as we head into the last part of August.

Parent Leadership Team (PLT) Meeting – Monday, August 28

The first Parent Leadership Team, or PLT, meeting will take place on this night at 6:30pm. All parents who want to be part of the PLT are welcome to attend. The PLT is the leadership group of parents who want to lead and take initiative over endeavors to help our school. If you want to be a parent leader, this is the group for you.

First Day of College Classes – Monday, August 28

This date will be the first day of college classes on the Chattanooga State campus. All of our 11th and 12th grade students will begin their college STEM schedule on this date. All 11th and 12th grade students will also have a copy of their student's schedule to be signed and returned with a parent's approval signature. If you have any questions regarding your student's schedule, please connect with Ms. Millard this week.

Online School Payments and Donations

Please note that online payments and donations can be made through the “Online Payment” link on our school website. Items for online payments include spirit wear, donations to the school, donations to robotics, and school fees. All money collected through this site goes back to items that make our school what it is. Please consider donating to our school through this page. It absolutely benefits the students. The direct url to this online payment page is <https://osp.osmsinc.com/HamiltonTN/BVModules/CategoryTemplates/Detailed%20List%20with%20Properties/Category.aspx?categoryid=DL521>.

Assignments, Grades, Powerschool

Students in 9th and 10th grades are right into their first units. 9th graders are working on leadership and collaboration and 10th graders are working on their digital innovation project with the Hunter Museum of Art. Both grades have also begun using Google Classroom for daily assignments and project work. Students in 11th and 12th grade officially start academic classes on August 28 as their academic schedules match the Chattanooga State calendar. However, they have also begun to use Google Classroom in preparation for their assignment posting. In the next few weeks, we will begin to also add in Powerschool for posting of student grades. When we do, we will send home Powerschool grade access information for parents in 9th grade and new 10th grade students. For returning students, we will let you know the date Powerschool is up and running, and if you need a reminder of your user id and password from last year, connect with Mr. Otero for that information.

GradeCraft

New to STEM this year is a partnership with the University of Michigan in gameful learning. This partnership takes the form of an online grading program named GradeCraft. All science courses in 9th,

10th, and 11th grades will be using GradeCraft in place of Google Classroom and Powerschool. This is a pilot initiative this year as our school is the first in the nation to employ gameful learning in the high school setting. This initiative will mirror what University of Michigan is doing on their campus in Ann Arbor with undergraduate courses throughout their campus.

What is GradeCraft? GradeCraft is a LMS (learning management system) that has been developed with the central focus of the student. On a weekly basis, students will complete tasks towards mastery of learning targets, earn badges (or medals) to show-off their mastery, and be able to watch their grade-progress meter fill up real-time. Students are able to view an entire course, and have the freedom to plan out which assignments they want to complete in order to achieve the grade they ultimately want to earn.

How will this affect my student? Students will have the entire course laid out in front of them at the beginning of the year. This way, they are able to plan out their weeks, are able to know exactly what they will miss in class on days they are absent, and be able to celebrate their learning by earning badges (or medals) for learning targets they have mastered. Every student starts at 0 points for the school year and then completes assignments and course requirements to earn their way to success.

How will this affect me, as a parent/guardian? PowerSchool only provides you with a snapshot picture of what your student's grades look like, but not their learning progression throughout a class. With GradeCraft, you can view your student's progression through a course and quickly determine if they are on schedule, falling behind, or working ahead. Rather than focusing on the negative aspect of "getting poor grades", GradeCraft encourages students to take risks and have no fear of failing, when completing assignments, by not taking away points when a student fails to show mastery. Instead, students earn points for what they accomplish, not for what they do not know.

Thank you for your support!

Dr. Tony Donen
Principal