FOR YOUR PARENTs / GUARDIANs
August, 2012

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Your child has an exciting year ahead in my math class! Things will be a little different than what you (and your child) are used to. I am implementing a teaching model known across the world known as a “flipped classroom” model. Crystal Kirch, a nationally renowned teacher who uses this model, describes the flipped classroom in her video: http://bit.ly/Q21MNQ. Please take a few moments to watch it.

**What is a flipped classroom?**
In short, a “flipped classroom” switches around the traditional order of teaching with the purpose of creating a more in depth and supportive environment in the classroom when the teacher is present and able to help students. It allows for students to receive a more individualized math education where my actual face-to-face time with them is being used effectively. This results in them understanding the content at a higher and deeper level than before. In addition, it challenges students to learn how to take charge of their learning and manage their time, becoming resourceful learners. Lastly, it provides time for more “Higher-Order Thinking” discussion and questioning during class time, helping students to become reflective communicators and to think more deeply about the subject.

**Why are you flipping the class?**
The main reason I’m doing this is to have more time to spend helping your child master the content of the course. This is not always possible if I am giving notes to students during the majority of class time.

**What are the benefits to flipping the class?**
According to teachers/authors Jonathan Bergman and Aaron Sams (Flip Your Classroom, 2012), there are many benefits. Here are several:

- Flipping allows teachers to know their students better
- Flipping helps busy students
- Flipping helps struggling students
- Flipping helps students of all abilities excel
- Flipping increases student-teacher interaction
- Flipping increases student-student interaction

**What does a “flipped classroom” require of you as a parent?**
The “flipped classroom” enables you as a parent to be more involved in your student’s math education. Most parents tend to agree that they do not remember much from their high school math classes and do not feel they can support or help their student at all when they are home doing homework. However, with the “flipped classroom”, there are several very easy ways you can help your student:

1) Provide your student with a quiet place to watch the lecture video (preferably with headphones to limit distractions) each night. If internet access is not available at your house, provide your student with the time to stay before/after school to watch the video in the school library or my classroom.
2) Ask your student questions about what they watched and have them read their summary out loud to you.
3) Read their summary yourself to make sure it sounds complete and makes sense.
4) Read the question they asked and see if they can answer it.
5) Encourage them to take their time while watching the videos, which means they pause, rewind, or re-watch portions of the video when the teaching is going too fast or when students need a minute to make sense of what was taught.
6) Watch the videos with them so you can learn along with them and help them when it comes to doing regular practice at home the night before the test!
What if we don’t have access to a computer / internet?
Please let me know right away so that I can make the appropriate accommodations for your child. I can put the videos on a flash drive or burn them to a CD/DVD.

What does a “flipped classroom” require of your student?

In reality, a “flipped classroom” does not change the fact that students are expected to go home and do “math homework” for 30-45 minutes a night. The only thing that is different is the type of “math homework” that they are doing. Instead of doing mindless practice problems where they can do the problems without really thinking about them, get stuck on the problems or do them incorrectly, or simply not do the problems at all because they think the problems are too difficult, students simply have to watch a video, take notes, and reflect in a summary and question. Students are expected to come prepared to class each day with the background knowledge of each concept, ready to learn it better, deeper, and faster. Students are not expected to have full mastery of the content before they arrive in class, although many students will be at that level.

The “flipped classroom” requires your student to take responsibility for their learning in several ways:

1) Students must plan time to watch the video when they are still fully awake and able to make connections between content. (Before 10pm is highly suggested).
2) Students must take initiative to re-watch videos they need to see again.
3) Students must make sure that if they are absent, that they still watch the required videos and come to class prepared.
4) Students must make sure that they take initiative to communicate with me either online or in person if there are issues with watching the videos. This includes coming and seeing me before school, or during lunch to watch the videos before class begins as often as possible.

What if your student watches the videos every night but still does not understand the content?

Individualized or small group tutoring and support is still available for students before, during, and after the school day. During that time, I can sit down with them and go over more examples and try to explain it in a different way.

Will there be more work to be done at home than for other students?
No. The workload for all students will be similar. Your child will spend approximately 30 minutes each night viewing the math video and completing their WSQ.

What is a WSQ?

It is an organizational component of the Flipped Class where students watch the video and are taking notes; summarize the video in their own words, and ask a question about the video.

Adopted from Crystal Kirch. 2012.

I look forward to working with you and your child throughout the school year. If you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Mr. Dan Muscarella, NBCT, M Ed.
Daniel.Muscarella@lcps.org
I would prefer if you would submit this questionnaire can online at: http://bit.ly/Oz0F5n (This is case sensitive.) You can also return it with your child.

1. Your Name: ____________________________ 2. Child’s Name: ____________________________

3. Course Name: Geometry or Algebra 2 4. Period: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

5. What is a good number to contact you at between 8 am and 4 pm? ____________________________

6. If you are turning this in with your child, then on the back of this sheet, describe any concerns you have or your first impressions after watching the Intro to the Flipped Class video?

7. If you would like to be included in receiving text updates, please follow the instructions on the sheet Getting Started in Math Class provided to your child. To also be included in e-mail updates, please add your e-mail address below:

8. Please check off all of the following that you have completed.

☐ I have read through the Course Guidelines packet and have discussed it with my child. This includes the 5 Rules, getting extra help, as well as test and quiz make-ups in Mr. Muscarella’s classes.
☐ I understand that a graphing calculator is STRONGLY RECOMMENDED for this course.
☐ I have read the Daily Quiz and Flipped Classroom sections with my child.
☐ I have set up Clarity for my child.
☐ I have read the Procedures and Routines sheet.
☐ I have read the article, “Finding the Glory in the Struggle” and have discussed it with my child.
☐ I have read the Mathematics Contract and discussed it with my child.
☐ I will send/e-mail the Million Words or Less assignment, which is below.
☐ I will help my child set up the computer so it is ready (see Getting Started in Math Class sheet) or let the teacher know if we don’t have access to a computer or a regular internet connection.

9. In a Million Words or Less

Yes, you are getting a homework assignment! I found this assignment through doing some research for my National Board certification. The reason behind it is that it takes us a great deal of time to know your child. Some we never really know. This activity gives you a chance to tell me what you think I should know about your scholar. I will read every one of them. I will not share your comments with any other person, unless you tell me in your message that I can.

Your scholar is in for a great math experience this year. The curriculum is rigorous, but very doable. The overshadowing goal of the curriculum is to prepare your scholar for those “Days in May” when he or she takes the math SOL. My central theme is that “We are all in this together.” Every assignment we do, every discussion we have, involves everyone. We are a family.

You can complete this online as well, write your response, or e-mail me. If you chose to e-mail me, please follow the format below.

To: daniel.muscarella@lcps.org,
Subject: Million Words or Less about Kevin Gonzalez, Pd 5 Geometry

Thank you for your time.