WBMS Parent Coffee Talk

Fav	vorite Things about WBMS:
•	Community
•	Electives/Dance company/sports
•	Staff
•	Principal Involvement
•	Teachers
•	PTO
•	AP program
Ro	om For Improvement:
•	Teacher screening
•	Safety
•	Academic standards
•	Lack of transparency
•	Kindness
•	Teacher communication with parents
•	Accountability/strictness/more consequences
•	Care of student bathrooms
•	Permission for restroom
•	Control of contents in excessively heavy backpacks
•	Grades not being submitted in a timely manner

Discipline

Questions	Answers
• A parent is concerned with teachers making what they feel to be inappropriate comments in class relating to their religious affiliations. There are additional concerns about the display of LGBTQIA flags and symbols. Is there a hard and fast rule about teachers sharing political/religious/other personal views in the classroom?	Per Board Policy FNAB (Legal), A School mustprovide equal access to students to form non-curricular clubs providing that the meeting is voluntary and is student-initiated; no sponsorship of the meeting by the school (but can have a teacher/staff sponsor/monitor). Teachers should not share their political/religious views with studentsperiod.
• Talked earlier about religion/politics etc., a parent feels that all staff and students should be allowed to display their affiliations	Parents would like a survey be done to assess which classrooms need flags.
 A parent expressed concern about the lack of interdisciplinary studies – especially writing. Is this as a result of covid, and will it change next year? I know SDMC discussed increased writing across the board, is this something that we will see next year? 	Writing across content is something that I am quite passionate about. I'm addressing this next school year by: hired an ELA Teacher Specialist; Re-writing ELAR Scope & Sequence to focus on Balanced Literacy and to allow Reading Intervention to supplement ELAR; Adding other contents to our Library rotations. (*Also see Answer 31)
• From the same parent, a question about the lack of reading. Is there a required reading list for middle school? Where can it be found, and why are the students not reading these novels as a class?	Required Reading List- will need to bring this to SDMC. I think especially for Advanced classes- there should be a required Reading list. Students should be reading novels- for example- 7th grade just read Hidden Figures

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• A parent expressed concern about teachers in classrooms they may not be certified to teach – specifically non-GT certified teachers in a GT classroom. Is there a plan for next year to ensure that each teacher has the correct certification for the classes they are teaching?	There is no specific GT certification but there is GT hours that GT teachers must complete each school year. All West Briar teachers completed this training by the deadline (which is typically end of November.) The teachers who lacked certification this school year, was when a teacher resigned and the teacher had not passed their content certification. But this was not GT.
• Additional parent concern that the GT curriculum in particular is being watered down. They would like assurances that academic standards are being met	GT Curriculum- my focus for next school year will be Project Based Learning and the return of the TPSP project. I'm truly hoping that Power Up will help with this. For example, I've just hired a teacher who has taught AP Seminar this school year and specializes in writing.
• Parents are concerned about teacher turnover. Are the administration actively observing classes in progress to see both teachers in action and student participation/behavior to try to identify issues?	Teacher Turnover- this is a constant concern- especially during this school year. We are actively observing- in fact - Principal Mishlan has visited all West Briar classess this school year. There will be teachers leaving this school year- Principal Mishlan has laid out her expectations and some may decide it's not for them. We have to improve how West Briar helps ALL students, how we maintain regular and consistent feedback (i.e grades- next year in Canvas), and how we communicate with parents. This is a huge focus for next year's PD and one of my non-negotiables. At this time, I have cleared all 22-23 vacancies. Teachers want to work at West Briar and I'm excited about the changes you will see.
No - responses to emails or requests for meetings; Not putting grades in on time; end of cycle failing; 7- Foreign anguage- no response to grading questions?	
• Parents have questioned how work is being graded – some parents feel that as long as work is turned in, students are receiving an A regardless of the standard of work. Others feel there may be some favoritism in the classrooms where grading is concerned as consistency seems to be lacking.	This will be evaluated and assessed for consistency. Protocols will be in place to provide more transparency about grades.
Grading- giving grades for turning in; Favoritism; don't want to write a page- ya, that's fine. Not bringing home graded work; just a number- no description; Inconsistency- across campus; 18? 18 going away- no reason why? Or no explanation?	

• What has been done to reduce fighting and disciplinary issues? This has been a big concern for a lot of parents this year – what are the plans for next year to reduce the same? Parents feel conversations about discipline are being shut down to create a false sense of security.	We are changing the administrative framework next school year to add 3 School Counselors - one in each grade level (in addition to our Social Worker). We are also adding an Advisory period with written SEL Curriculum that will be mandatory for all students and teachers. These classes will serve as a homebase where students should feel comfortable to share and learn together. I am sorry that you feel discipline questions are not being heard as this is not the intent. The truth is this: We have to recommend a student to DAEP when it's warranted and it does get rejected because there have not been enough interventions. That being said- Suspension is not effective. It simply provides the student(s) and staff a temporary break. We will continue with PBIS and CHAMPS and allow our School Counselors to drive restorative conversations with the hope that West Briar can be a restorative campus in future school years. We are also bringing back positive incentive programs- including Student of the Month and a Grizzly Card program that offers students tiered rewards based on qualifications (grades, behavior, attendance).
Will lockers be assigned next year, and will open seating resume in the cafeteria?	We plan to use lockers next school year- with scheduled locker breaks- in the AM and in the PM to avoid wasted time at lockers. Open seating in cafeteria- yes!
Parents are asking why the curriculum is not being shared with parents for each subject.	I've not been at a middle school that shared it's curriculum with parents, however Canvas will be updated regularly next school year. This will include the week's lesson plans and assignmnets- for all teachers. Also- Math curriciulum will be changing next school year to Carnegie Math. Leaders will go to training this summer to fully impelment in the Fall. West Briar will be assigned a Carnegie trainer to help throughout the year.
In the same vein, strong concerns about the education process being secretive – no curriculum shared, homework not being assigned consistently. Graded work not brought home.	I will look into graded work not being brought home- it's not been our intention to be secretive. I think updated Canvas pages will help with the transparency you're looking for.
• Can you discuss the teacher hiring process? In particular, what are the requirements for new WBMS teachers? How do you plan to address the issue of teacher retention? What does the West Briar faculty look like for next year?	West Briar's hiring proccess includes an interview committee for all positions after the candidate has passed Human Resources screening. The committee is typically made up of a fellow content teacher/department chair, an administrator, and the Principal. Principal meets every candidate and makes final decision. West Briar faculty is going to be amazing next school year- there will be changes.

 Concerns about the cleanliness and safety of the student bathrooms – will HISD replace broken stalls, soap/paper dispensers and restock missing supplies? 	Bathrooms are a huge concern and I am absolutely open to suggestions. Unfortunately, the dsitrict changed it's custodial contractor and therefore, we've been short custodians throughout this school Year. Ms. Day and Mr. Chacon have been virtually on their own for a large portion of the year. Work orders take way too long and we typically end up doing the work ourselves or finding someone off contract to do it. (water fountain example) HISD will replace these fixtures, however many have been replaced only to be damaged shortly after. We have instituted sign-out sheets so teachers know who is out, but oftentimes it is very difficult to find the culprit(s). We will continue to look into this issue. Another suggestion has been to hire hall monitors- and we will try to do this.
• A parent has expressed concerns about the demeanor of the staff, in particular the Deans towards the students – there is a lot of yelling, and students often feel as though they are in trouble for asking questions about schedule changes or dress code. How can parents help their students to advocate for themselves in order to be received by in a positive way?	I am sorry that this has been your student's experience. I plan to send out an EOY survey for parents and students and Dean relationships will be included. Please encourage your student to advocate for themselves- with anyone they are comfortable with. It can also be a teacher who can coach the student and/or address the Dean themselves. This will be addressed with the Administrative team.
• Concerns have been raised about the theater program and the content of the productions. What is the process for having the desired production approved – who screens the scripts etc? Another concern that students are watching too many movies in theater class.	Theatre productions are reviewed by the principal for approval. The fall production was discussed in advance and an agreed upon script was presented. I was not aware of movies being shown in theater, but will absolutely address this.
Example: Legally Blonde- innappropriate language & content. Productions are innappropriate	
• Why is there no athletics for 7 th grade, specifically basketball?	Only football players are in athletics for the full year. There is an actual off season for them once their season is over. Students who make the 8th grade baseball team will also have athletics. Since Coach Christopolous is with the football team in the fall, he cannot work with kdis not on the football team at the same time. If a student makes the 8th grade team then they will be moved into athletics to practice starting the Spring semester.
Will there be a swim team again next year?	Yes- there will be a swim team. I'm working on finding a coach as we hire.
Suggestions for Improvement	Pachancac

Suggestions for Improvement	Responses
Expel students who fight or curse	Must follow the HISD Code of Conduct
Can students repeatedly misbehaving be evaluated?	Yes- IAT process
Students could benefit from more counseling, especially relating to violence	Adding School Counselors
Meditation/relaxation techniques being taught	Advocacy curriculum
Previous years, "circle time" on Wednesday morning with advocacy – encouraged positive relationships	
between teachers/students, and encouraged open dialogue	
Could a student garden be established?	Yes!
• Can the gym be opened earlier in the morning for students to exercise before school? Release of endorphins	
from exercise could have a positive impact	Yes- next year will most likely be outside before school; now- we delay entry into the morning
Can any classes take place outside from time to time?	
Homework should be assigned more consistently, graded work sent home, and grades submitted to	
powerschool in a shorter timeframe	

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•	Ensure teachers have the correct certification for the classes they are teaching		
•	Play music during the passing period between classes – was done in previous years – students reacted well –		
created a more positive environment			
•	Freshen up the campus, but especially the student bathrooms		
•	Encourage more positive open communication and kindness, and less yelling from staff.	In particular - the Deans	
•	Make athletics teams available for all grades		
•	Teacher screening should be more stringent when hiring		
•	Make SDMC meetings open to all parents wishing to attend		
Но	nor Society Sponsor- No Honor Society in the last few years		
Aw	ard Ceremony- why not having ?		