

## September 2024

Dear GCAHS Families,

I am excited to share with you more information about our "Lunch and Learn" framework. The goal of this initiative is to provide students with flexible access to dynamic and differentiated resources, supports, opportunities, and activities. Since its inception, "Lunch and Learn" has fostered a culture of success, and we have seen significant development in "student agency"—that is, students taking increased ownership of their learning.

Through this program, students have actively sought academic support and enrichment, engaged in learning activities beyond the traditional curriculum, and explored health and wellness opportunities. In the second week of school, after a series of class meetings led by our assistant principal Dr. Jennifer and Nemet and myself, we reintroduced students to the expectations and procedures for Lunch and Learn.

As we continue to refine this framework, there are many variables to consider, including programming, supervision, food service, and facilities use. We have worked to instill expectations among the student body through grade-level meetings, individual conversations, and written communication. However, to fully realize the vision for Lunch and Learn, we need to ensure that the administration, faculty, staff, and students uphold a set of non-negotiable expectations. This commitment to "pulling the rope in the same direction" is vital to our success.

Attached to this letter, you will find a document outlining these non-negotiables, along with a brief explanation of each. The attachment also includes sample resources, supports, and activities that students can access during Lunch and Learn. Please note that this initiative is an iterative process that will continue to evolve over time. Additionally, if the non-negotiables are not met, either by individual students or the school community as a whole, we may need to revert to a traditional lunch format with supervised study halls to develop improved strategies for implementation.

We believe that the premise of Lunch and Learn is an excellent framework to foster academic and personal growth. It creates flexible pathways for students to connect with dynamic learning resources and empowers them to develop student agency. Unlike the rigid 30-minute lunch periods of the past, Lunch and Learn offers students the time and opportunity to exercise greater responsibility for their learning.

That said, Lunch and Learn is a significant and empowering opportunity. It requires intentional and thoughtful planning, calculated risk-taking, community-building, and good old-fashioned hard work. I am incredibly proud to work alongside a dedicated faculty and staff who continue to develop this program and provide meaningful resources for our students. While we may not be perfect, we strive for greatness and are committed to supporting and preparing our students for future success.

Lastly, I want to express how privileged I feel to work with your students. I look forward to continuing to collaborate with them, as well as with our faculty and staff, to refine Lunch and Learn into an efficient and powerful educational practice that fosters both academic and personal growth.

Please refer to the attached document for further details regarding Lunch and Learn.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Brendan C. Smith  
Principal

---

### **Attachment: Building a Culture for Lunch and Learn**

Key Terms:

- **Student Agency:** Acting independently rather than being acted upon. This means students take responsibility and ownership of their learning.
- **Name and Need:** A system where students are informed by a teacher to report at a designated time for specific needs (e.g., making up a test, additional instruction, etc.). Failure to report may result in temporary restrictions until the student demonstrates readiness to exercise their agency fully.

*Disclaimer:* Students do not need to be identified by name and need to access support. They should utilize their agency to seek help proactively.

### **Non-Negotiable Expectations:**

1. **Check email daily during Eagle Time:** Students must check their email for any teacher communications related to "Name and Need."
2. **Conduct during Eagle Time:** Teachers will guide, coach, remind, and instill students in checking their email and making a plan for Lunch and Learn.
3. **Respect the building:** Students must act responsibly by cleaning up after themselves, eating in designated areas, and using appropriate language and behavior.
4. **Accept redirection:** Students are expected to listen to and respond positively to teacher and staff redirection.
5. **Be where you are supposed to be:** Students must remain in their designated locations and stay within the building or campus.
6. **Honor Name and Need:** Students must adhere to protocols and demonstrate their ability to report to teachers as required.

### **Sample Lunch and Learn Supports and Activities:**

- Keystone Testng Preparation
- AP Recitation

- Math Lab
- Grade-level support
- Football Supervised Study Hall
- Football weightlifting
- AP Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science, and Physics Labs
- ACE (Academic Coaching & Enrichment)
- Tutoring
- E-Sports
- Open Art Studio and Industrial Technology
- Quiet Study Hall
- Weight Room
- Gynasium Activities
- Music Activities