



M.I.T.C.H.

Fox Flyer

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

From the Board Chair	3
PBIS Update	4
PSO News	4
April Calendar	4

Director's Message

MITCH Charter School is rapidly approaching a cross-road – one where we need to make decisions regarding our middle school.

We are faced with an exciting potential opportunity to grow the middle school program, move to a nearby second facility, and focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Agriculture, and Math – aka STEA²M. Notice, we add an A² to the traditional STEM acronym to accommodate the fine arts in our Core Knowledge curriculum and the agriculture focus in our charter.

The decisions made about middle school in the next few months may impact parents with a current middle school student, will influence educational decisions by parents with 3rd, 4th, or 5th graders, and should give long-term shape to school choices for families with younger students.

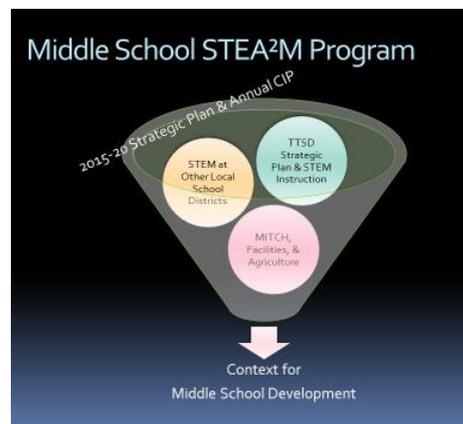
Why are we looking at growing the middle school at this time? There are many aspects to the answer to this question, but the core direction for school improvement proceeds from our *2015-20 Five-Year Strategic Plan*. As a school community, together, we share a vision of excellence which encourages our students to grow through knowledge, to become critical thinkers, and to demonstrate social awareness and understanding.

Between the *Strategic Plan*, which sets a clear path for future growth, honoring our core values while seeking to stretch our reach, and embrace global and technological advances, and our *Annual*

Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP), which details objectives and tactics, we want all of our students – elementary and middle school – to excel and thrive.

What are the other aspects to growing the middle school at this time?

TTSD's STEM Vision. The Tigard Tualatin School District's STEM Vision is to prepare each student for college, career and life in the 21st century through equitable, engaging and integrated real-world STEM learning opportunities and experiences.¹ The District's STEM Goals for grades 6-8 look to integrate STEM instructional characteristics into their core and elective courses, create opportunities to explore STEM careers, and incorporate in- and out-of-school STEM learning experiences, and build community partnerships. One item of interest for MITCH is the District's focus on exploring a "STEM hub/magnet/focus option."²



¹ TTSD STEM Implementation Plan, p.4

² TTSD STEM Implementation Plan, p.7

“For MITCH, successful STEA²M instruction requires physical activities, hands-on tasks, tool-oriented problem solving, and practical solutions.”

STEM at Other Washington County School Districts. Hillsboro, Beaverton, and Sherwood School Districts have taken a substantially different approaches to STEM indicating the diversity of thought on how to best to educate our children for the 21st century:

In 2011, Hillsboro School District began transforming four elementary schools into STEM focus schools with a district-wide option for admission by lottery to these schools. Everyone enrolled in a STEM school participates in the STEM program, and interestingly, the lotteries are specifically designed to promote both gender and racial equity within each school.

In addition to traditional neighborhood middle schools, the Beaverton School District offers interest-based learning option schools. Alongside the well-recognized ACMA (Arts & Communications Magnet Academy) and the International School of Beaverton, there are two STEM-oriented 6-12 grade options: The Rachel Carson School of Environmental Science and the Health Science School.

The STEM, the Video Game Programming, The Hour of Code Clubs and one class in pre-engineering are offered at the Sherwood Middle School.

The charter schools in all three districts do not emphasize STEM:

Hillsboro – Expeditionary learning is the focus as City View Charter.

Beaverton – Language immersion is the focus for both Hope Chinese and Arco Iris Spanish schools.

Sherwood – Sherwood Charter began as an extension of MITCH Charter and continues with the Core Knowledge Sequence emphasis.

MITCH, Facilities, and Agriculture Focus. Our Core Knowledge Sequence is a detailed

outline of specific content in history, language arts, geography, mathematics, science, and the fine arts designed to teach a specific core of shared knowledge that all young people should learn in school to become knowledgeable and contributing members of our society. We teach the CKS in a hands-on, multi-sensory approach at all grade levels, but have been quite successful in the past year with practical problem solving requiring physical activity at the middle school level. These are the very teaching practices identified by the National Research Council and National Science Foundation as effective STEM instruction.

For MITCH, successful STEA²M instruction requires physical activities, hands-on tasks, tool-oriented problem solving, and practical solutions.

One of our strategic goals in the past few years has been to strengthen our elementary program and we’ve approached this in a number of different ways including instituting two-classes at each grade level. Smaller classes with two teachers collaborating to develop robust instruction in our content rich Core Knowledge Sequence has been essential to strengthening our elementary education. But the result of this plan is a facility issue – namely, not enough room for all of our K-8, PE, Art, and Music classes – to say nothing of a Media Library space!

Has anyone noticed the other elephant in the room when it comes to our facility?

We are a school with an agricultural focus in the middle of a light industrial business-park! With the lease (and eventual development) of the Frontier Garden space, we are well suited in our current location to fulfill this focus in a unique way – and finding a “farm” space in the TTSD boundaries is cost prohibitive.

So, we need more space to continue to provide an excellent education for our

middle school students, but our charter with TTSD caps our enrollment for all of K-8 at 250 students.

There is a prospective facility across 90th Court from our current facility: it is a 12,000 sf warehouse with 2500sf office space. (Our current space is approximately 22,000sf.) The benefits of this space include location, location, location!

Also, given the type of program we want to offer, we can build out educational maker-spaces to accommodate STEA²M instruction. To accomplish this, we must ask TTSD to lift the enrollment cap and we are

scheduled to meet with the Superintendent and the TTSD Board Chair and Vice-Chair to begin these discussions.

We are approaching a cross-road for the middle school. But, I am confident that we can develop a strong STEA²M approach to teaching the Core Knowledge Sequence, that we are in a unique situation to support the District’s STEM middle school goals, and that we can utilize a second facility to offer an education which engages our middle school students to become critical thinkers and to demonstrate social awareness and understanding.

From the Board Chair, Donna Capodacqua

Welcome back from your refreshing, relaxing spring breaks! I bet we are all ready for the home stretch of the school year.

In our quest to renew our charter successfully and complete the action items in our five- year Strategic Plan, the Board will explore branding campaign ideas and possibilities as well as the **2016-17 budget at our bi-annual Saturday work session on April 16, 2016.** As with all of our work sessions, it is open to the public and I invite you to join us from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Symposium Coffee, 12345 SW Main Street in Tigard.

We will also discuss the exciting possibility, and feasibility, of introducing a world-class STEAM program

at the middle school level. STEAM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math. For us, the A is squared because we can add Agriculture! If you joined us at the community meeting on March 30th, you have heard that adding STEAM at the middle school level presents an opportunity to move into a second facility nearby and to expand middle school enrollment.

By the time you read this, I will have sent out the annual parent survey. **Reponses are due by 5 p.m. on April 7, 2016** and results will be presented at the Annual Meeting on May 19, 2016.

Your feedback is important to us in our planning for next school year and beyond, so

please let us know what you think. We are especially interested in your ideas to build volunteerism within the MITCH community.

Finally, I encourage you to sign up for the MITCH 100 Gold Tournament at the Charbonneau Gold Course on June 4th, or to sponsor someone who is participating.

To learn more, join us at the **Tee Off meeting on Monday April 18, 2016 at MITCH.** There will be pizza and socializing from 6:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. followed by a participant information session until 8 p.m. See you there.

All the Best, Donna

“I encourage you to sign up for the MITCH 100 Gold Tournament at Charbonneau Gold Course on June 4th, or to sponsor someone who is participating.”

Ms. Maclean Says...

Can it possibly be April already? We are getting unnervingly close to the end of this school year – 10 weeks left!

For the month of April, our PBIS focus is **Courage**. What we want to accomplish for our students is showing them the many ways we can have courage, and how to recognize it in others. Many teachers have helped to join in this, from having a Vietnam veteran as a guest

speaker, to the wonderful art projects in the hall that speak of courage in the fable of the Lion and the Mouse.

Courage can be simple or something much larger, but we want our kiddos to recognize that it isn't something just for superheroes – it is something that they can demonstrate as they try new things and conquer fears.

Helping our students emotionally develop is so important to us at MITCH, and building courage is a vital piece of that – oftentimes the most important when we are at our lowest.

Thank you for encouraging your children always, for demonstrating Courage in small and large ways, and for helping them find Courage in themselves and others!

Parent Support Organization

I hope that you and your families had a relaxing spring break and have been able to enjoy the beautiful weather that Portland has given us last week.

We are in the final stretch of the school year and that means that June 30th the PSO leadership will change to a new leadership team

for the 2016/2017 school year. This can't happen without your involvement.

We hope you can come to the next PSO meeting April 5th at 6:30 in the Art Commons. Find out what you can do to make the PSO successful again next year.

Our next fundraisers are the Pizzicato night and the

MITCH 100. Please make sure you check the weekly emails for updates.

If you ever have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at president@mitchpso.org

Renea Ostermiller

April Calendar

Here is a summary of what is on the school calendar at date of publishing. It can also be found [clicking here](#).

5 th	PSO Meeting 6:30pm
7 th	MITCH Parent Survey deadline
8 th	School Concert 6:00pm
11 th	School Assembly
12 th	Pizzacato Fundraiser
18 th	MITCH 100 pizza/kickoff meeting 6:30pm
21 st	Board Meeting 6:30pm
22 nd	NO SCHOOL
29 th	Staff vs. Middle School Basketball Game