To Parents & Guardians,

I am writing this letter to inform you about an exciting project that we will be doing in class during the 4th marking period.

This project is called the 20% Project. Students will be able to use 20% of class time to work on and explore one topic of their choice. Students will also be working on this project at home. The purpose of this project is to inspire creativity in our students. This project allows students to find a passion and have a voice in their own learning path. This project will teach students goal setting, implementing goals, reflecting and redirecting goals and showcasing goals. The 20% Project gives students the opportunity to inspire, create, innovate and collaborate.

One may question why this project is taking place at Middletown South. The answer is that the latest in education is asking us to teach our students to create their own questions, do their own research, and form their own conclusions with their learning. The world is a collaborative, communicative place and it is the world of online tools that has made it this way. Students will be asked to be innovative and create the next tool of the future, so we must teach them how to think on their own without being told what to do. We need to teach them to be autonomous learners.

Google is credited for making the 20% Project what it is today. Google asks its employees to spend 20% of their time at Google to work on project of their choice. This idea is now spreading throughout education and the 20% Project is an expansion of Genius Hour, which is where students search a different topic each week with a few informal presentations at the end of the hour. This project has been conducted in schools worldwide due to the book, *Drive* by Daniel Pink, in which he explains that this project gives students mastery, motivation and autonomy.

With this project, students will be responsible for researching, blogging, collaborating with a mentor, creating a poster for the community pitch and preparing a TED-style presentation. During the 4th marking period, we would love for you to become involved with this project. Please discuss the topic with your child at home and please attend the final presentation. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the project!

Sincerely,

Brittany A. Ackerley

English Teacher