To Students and Parents:

I have introduced a new Genius Hour project in Computers this week. This idea originated from the search-engine giant, Google which allows its engineers to spend 20% of their time working on any passion project that they want. The idea is very simple. Allow people to work on something that interests them, and productivity will go up. Google’s policy has worked so well that it has been said that 50% of Google’s projects have been created during this creative time period. Ever heard of Gmail or Google News? These projects were created by passionate developers that blossomed from their 20-time projects.

Another origin of Genius Hour projects came from the book Drive by best-selling author, Daniel Pink. In a blog post, he writes about how the Google-time projects are also used in other corporations.

**Goals of this project:**

* to promote, support, and model creative, innovative thinking and inventiveness
* to allow students an opportunity to discover/investigate one of their passions and reflect on/share their learning with others
* provide students and teachers an opportunity to develop skill sets that are valuable in any learning situation (research, experimentation, collaboration, creativity, problem solving and critical thinking)
* to provide an opportunity for classes to share their Genius and Passion Projects with others
* to provide students with the opportunity to gain an awareness of technology as a tool to help further their own learning

**Brainstorming**

At the beginning of the computers this week, students began brainstorming ideas for a project proposal. Students may work alone or in a small team, no larger than four students. While brainstorming students were encouraged to make the project project―Product Focused. At the end of the project (date still to be determined) I want them to have made something that is a completed product. It could be an event or service to help others in the school or community. It could also be a digital project like a PowerPoint presentation or video. The possibilities are endless and will depend upon what they are passionate about. Please help your child fill out the attached form prior to their next computers class.

**Child Safe Search Engines:**

In order to prevent issues that may arise from student doing their own research online I will be providing students with child safe search engines and websites. Examples are as follows:

[**http://www.kidrex.org/**](http://www.kidrex.org/)

[**http://www.safesearchkids.com/**](http://www.safesearchkids.com/)

[**http://www.onekey.com/**](http://www.onekey.com/)

We have also spent a great deal of time to date talking about digital citizenship and internet safety, so I do not expect that problems will arise from the research portion of this project. If you are aware of any other search engines that you use with your child at home please feel free to share these with me.

If you have any questions or concerns about this project please feel free to email me at chris.tuck@lethsd.ab.ca or check out [www.geniushour.com](http://www.geniushour.com)

Sincerely, Mr. Tuck

**My Genius Hour Planning Sheet**

**What will I be learning about?**

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**What are my ‘driving’ questions?**

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**What materials will be needed?**

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| --- | --- |
| **I can provide** | **I need from school (laptop, paper, etc.)** |
|  |  |
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**What is my plan of action? What steps will I take to be successful?**

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**How will I present this to my class? How could I use technology?**

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**Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**