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| **Inside this issue**  **- Organization**  **- Time Management**  **- Communication**  **- Lockers**  **- Peer Pressure**  **- Personal Electronic Devices (PEDs)**  **- Bullying**  **Incorporate these ideas into the classroom.** | **How to use these transition tips**  Middle school transition initiatives have been shown to be a key factor in students’ success in middle school. A great way to support families of fifth grade students is to begin introducing middle school transition topics in the classroom and at home.  **In the classroom:**  Fifth grade teachers can select a transition topic to incorporate into the classroom learning environment.  **For the families:**  The same week/month a teacher incorporates a transition topic into the classroom, they should also send the coordinating transition tip home to the parents/guardians by email, flyer and/or classroom/school newsletter.  Use the electronic version of this document to easily copy and paste the articles. The electronic version of this document can be found at [**www.familyengagement.weebly.com**](http://www.familyengagement.weebly.com)under the Transitions tab**.**  **Send these tips homes to families.** |

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| **Transition Tips for Teachers** |  | **Transition Tips for Families** |
| **Organization** |  | **Organization** |
| In middle school, students will have to adjust to juggling a lot of things at once. They will be held responsible for being on time, turning in assignments and fulfilling requirements for six to seven classes. This can be overwhelming to some students. Now is a good time to start helping students practice becoming more responsible for their work and actions.  **A few ways to prepare 5th grade students for increased responsibility:**   * Assign a long-term project that has due dates along the way to help them plan their time and meet milestones. * Establish firm due dates with consequences for late assignments. * Provide a way for students to monitor their progress and keep up with assignments such as an agenda or project planner. |  | **Organization is Important  in Middle School**  The level of student responsibility increases in middle school as students have to organize assignments and meet requirements of six to seven different classes. Students who are able to stay organized and meet deadlines have proven to be more successful in school.  **Ideas on how parents can help**  These organization ideas will help your child in school—and throughout life.   * Ask your child about assignments they have and the due dates. * Encourage your child to record in a notebook all assignments for each class, the due date and other important information. * Have your child keep all school materials in one spot at home so they’re easier to find—especially in the morning when he or she is getting ready for school. * Encourage your child to keep a neat, organized locker so books, supplies, etc. can be found quickly between classes. |
| **Transition Tips for Teachers** |  | **Transition Tips for Families** |
| **Time Management** |  | **Time Management** |
| As students become more independent, personal time management skills are essential for student achievement. Middle school students are often overwhelmed by the increased number of classes and the expectations for completing work outside of class time. Students with good time management skills are better equipped for the changes they will face in middle school.  **A few ways to prepare 5th grade students to manage their time:**   * Have students begin using their agenda or a notebook to record what they have done each day and any homework assignments. * Have students note their daily routine; starting from the time they wake up to the time they go to bed for an entire week. It will allow them to see how they spend their time. * Have students practice prioritizing. Have a list of tasks related to school work and free time and ask that they list tasks in order of importance. |  | **Time Management in Middle School**  As students transition into middle school, time management skills are even more essential for students to succeed. Students will have six or seven teachers with individual styles and requirements. Most middle school students will have to carry an agenda—which can be a notebook, bound handbook, or spiral book—to assist with organization. In the agenda, parents can find notes about what students covered that day in each class; homework assignments with due dates; project information; school rules/information; and possibly notes from the teacher.  Students with good time management skills are better equipped for the changes they will face in middle and high school and as they transition into higher education.  **Ideas on how parents can help**  A few ways to help prepare students to manage their time:   * Have your child begin using their agenda (if the school uses one) or a notebook to record what they have done each day and any homework assignments and their due dates. * Encourage your child to make a schedule that includes what they do from the time they wake up to the time they go to bed for an entire week. This will allow them to see how they spend their time. |

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| **Transition Tips for Teachers** |  | **Transition Tips for Families** |
| **Communication** |  | **Communication** |
| Keeping the communication lines open is the first step to achieving student success beyond elementary. Going from one teacher to six or seven can be intimidating. To be successful, students need to be able to communicate effectively with each teacher and staff member.  A few ways to prepare 5th grade students to communicate:   * Ask questions and listen closely; discuss feelings about middle school; ask how you can assist; and keep the lines of communication open. * Have students practice communicating through the use of problem solving strategies; listening exercises; Kagan strategies to foster communication; and expressing their feelings. |  | **Communicating with a Pre-Teen**  Keeping the lines of communication open is the first step in making the move to middle school easier. One way to show support is to ask your child to explain how they make a decision. Practicing communication skills at home will help students communicate more effectively with middle school teachers and staff.  **Ideas on how parents can help**   * Ask questions and listen closely. Here are examples of conversation starters:   + How do you feel about school? Why?   + What do you need from me to be successfull?   + What subjects to you like best? Why? * Encourage your child to ask questions; discuss needs with teachers or other adults; and have conversation. |
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| **Bullying** |  | **Bullying** |
| Bullying is the number one concern of incoming 6th grade students and their parents. USD 259 Board of Education Policy 1464 defines bullying as any act that causes another person physical or mental harm, fear, intimidation, or a sense of exclusion. By giving students the tools to identify and respond to bullying, they can enter middle school more confidently.  **Ideas to incorporate in the classroom**   * Practice with students ways to report bullying to an adult. * Role-play different scenarios and talk openly about the problem so that students become comfortable responding. * Review the consequences of bullying with students. |  | **Addressing Bullying in Middle School**  Bullying is a major concern for students and parents about middle school. USD 259 takes bullying seriously. USD 259 Board of Education Policy 1464 defines bullying as any act that causes another person physical or mental harm, fear, intimidation, or a sense of exclusion. Bullying is considered a crime and can lead to serious consequences.  **Ideas on how parents can help**   * Please help your child understand the seriousness of being bullied and being a bully. * If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with your child’s middle school teachers, the school counselor, or the principal. |
| **Transition Tips for Teachers** |  | **Transition Tips for Families** |
| **Peer Pressure** |  | **Peer Pressure** |
| Middle school students are constantly bombarded with conflicting messages. Peer pressure is not a bad thing. We are all influenced by our peers, both negatively and positively. It helps to define who we are and how we feel about subjects in our lives. It is how we choose to react to peer pressure that defines who we are as individuals. Are we a leader or a follower? Equipping middle school students with ways to cope with the pressure will increase the chance of them making good choices.  **Ideas to incorporate in the classroom**   * Allow each student to take leadership roles, practicing how to lead using positive measures. * Partner with the school counselor or other individuals to educate students about the dangers of drugs and violence. * Encourage healthy relationships with peers. |  | **Peer Pressure in Middle School**  Peer pressure can be both positive and negative. The difference between positive and negative peer pressure is the outcome.  **Ideas on how parents can help**  This is a great time to begin encouraging your child to make positive choices and encouraging them to do the right thing. Praise positive behaviors and choices. They can develop their leadership skills by taking on roles with greater responsibilities. At times, it might be frustrating, but the more your child practices, the more comfortable he or she will become.  As a family, role play possible difficult situations, like being offered drugs or alcohol, so that your child is equipped to answer. Let them use you as a reason to back out of uncomfortable situations. Let them know you support them. Make no mistake; middle school is socially a tough transition. By planning, preparing, and practicing, your student will be equipped to successfully meet the challenges they could face. |
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| **Personal Electronic Devices (PEDs)** |  | **Personal Electronic Devices (PEDs)** |
| The use of cell phones, iPods, MP3 players and personal game systems are a part of most students’ lives. However, the use of Personal Electronic Devices (PEDs) by pupils during the school day is prohibited (BOE Policy 1464 AIC 11). During the school day, all PEDs must be out of sight and off or the student risks confiscation by school staff. The adherence to the policy varies depending on the school, but students and parents will benefit from knowing their school’s policy before allowing a PED at school.  **Ideas to incorporate in the classroom**   * Discuss the board’s policy. * Have students write persuasive arguments about their views on the fairness. * Have students calculate the percentage of students who agree/disagree. |  | **Personal Electronic Device (PED)  Use in Middle School**  Many middle school students bring a cell phone, iPod or other personal electronic devices (PEDs) to school. PED use is not allowed during the school day at most middle schools. While schools do not prohibit PEDs from being brought to school, there are rules regarding appropriate usage. School officials are authorized to take PEDs if the rules are violated.  **Ideas on how parents can help**  Parents and students should read and understand the school’s policy on PEDs. Identify alternative ways that students can contact you that meet the school’s policy. |
| **Transition Tips for Teachers** |  | **Transition Tips for Families** |
| **Lockers** |  | **Lockers** |
| For many students, middle school is the first time they have been exposed to combination lockers. Fear of forgetting their combination, getting to class on time from their locker and remembering where their locker is located can add a lot of stress to a student. To minimize this stress, many middle schools have created 6th grade hallways where the majority of the 6th grade classes and lockers are located. There is usually a time during 5th grade visitation and the first day of school for 6th graders to become familiar with the lockers in the building.  **Ideas to incorporate in the classroom**   * Have a few combination locks in the classroom that students can practice with. * Have competitions using locks to encourage students to become faster and more confident. * Practice memorizing random locker number combinations. |  | **Middle School Lockers**  Middle school brings many changes in daily routines, one of which is storing backpacks, books and supplies in a locker. This can create anxiety for a new middle school student.  **Ideas on how parents can help**  Help your child become more comfortable with opening a locker by purchasing an inexpensive lock and having them practice memorizing the combination and opening the lock. This idea will help them check one more concern about moving on to middle school off their list. |