



**NAVO MIDDLE SCHOOL
PARENT GUIDE**

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Middle School Transition

The transition to middle school will be made easier by talking with your student about some of the differences between elementary and middle school.

These are some of the major differences:

- Larger building
- Lockers (combination)
- Class changes
- More teachers
- More student responsibility

It is very helpful for you to discuss the above with your student during the summer and assure him/her that although middle school has differences, he/she will be able to make the transition successfully. Practicing opening combination locks over the summer will make your student more confident that he/she will be able to open his/her locker at school.

We strongly recommend that you encourage your student to handle as many issues as possible on his/her own, as this will strengthen his/her skills in being his/her own advocate. Parents should provide encouragement and guidance but not handle issues for their student. For example, if a student chooses an elective on the course selection sheet, then encourage your student to follow the procedure in place if he/she would like to make a request to change electives. If parents call the counselor and make the request for him/her then self-advocacy skills are not being learned. Self-advocacy is a very important skill for students to start developing in middle school.

Helping Your Student Succeed

Middle school students need their parents to be involved in providing direction, guidance and being supportive of them. The following are areas that parents can give guidance and support to enhance student success.



PARENT RESOURCES

Teacher websites are a good resource for parents to check for tutorial (homework assistance) times, assignments and suggested websites to assist your student in mastering the subject content.

The following have been found to be helpful websites:

www.loveandlogic.com provides parenting information and strategies.

www.parenting.org provides parenting strategies and articles addressing developmental and behavioral issues of toddlers-teens. This is the parenting website associated with Boystown.

www.kidshealth.org provides a positive parenting approach in dealing with the emotions and behavior of children-adolescence.

www.schoolfamily.com provides information on social/emotional issues, homework help for math, writing and reading for preschool-college.

www.education.com provides parent information and academic assistance for all subjects and grade levels.

www.greatschools.org provides parenting strategies for behavior issues, academic assistance for all school subjects for grade levels preschool-college. Learning difficulties are also addressed.

www.patrickjmt.com provides video tutorials in YouTube format for math concepts from Arithmetic-Calculus. The video instructor is a college professor and the videos are free. This website is an excellent site for sixth-high school age students.

www.khanacademy.org provides video tutorials for math (arithmetic-Calculus), science (Biology, Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Physics, Healthcare and Computer Science) and the Humanities.

www.hoodamath.com provides video tutorials for math and is a good site for 4th -7th grade students. It also has math games, worksheets and Math movies.

www.math.com is not in video format but provides written tutorials for all levels of math with examples shown as to how to solve problems with a quiz of 10 questions for each concept taught.

www.stopbullying.gov provides parents with bullying information, the warning signs of bullying, how to bully-proof your child and how to get help.

www.drugfree.org provides parents with prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery information. This is a great website for parents with tips on how to speak to your child about drugs and alcohol.

Technology

Technology is a fascinating thing and has brought many conveniences and benefits to the way people interact, do research and learn. It is recommended that parents educate themselves about the ways technological devices can be used before providing your student with access to such technology. For example, X-box Live can be a fun way to play games with friends but has been found to be used by teens to engage in inappropriate virtual activities. Most social networking sites also have video chat that can be used in an inappropriate way. Photos that your student posts can't be retrieved and continue to exist on others' computers even if deleted from your student's computer. Video gaming addiction is a growing trend with this generation. The high stimuli and adrenaline rush associated with gaming becomes sought after and impacts one's education, job, health and relationships.

Time Management

Time management is an important skill and plays a big part in being successful. Help your student with prioritizing and setting up a balanced schedule. It has been found helpful to have your student monitor what he/she does with his/her time and learn what amount of time is really spent doing nothing that could be used for homework and that would not even impact his social time.

Help your student determine when and where he/she will do homework. Some students need a little down time right after school, while others perform better if homework is done immediately. Listen to your student on what works best for him/her.

*Limit your student's time on electronic devices, such as smartphones, notepads, notebooks, gaming systems and computers. Use time on such devices as positive reinforcement tools to increase behavioral choices you want to see your student making.



Academic Goal Setting Support

When a student sets goals, then he/she is more motivated to achieve that goal. It is recommended that students, with parent guidance, set goals for each course at the beginning of each grading period and reassess the goals at progress report time. It is important that the goal be realistic and appropriate for his/her academic skill level.

Attendance

Attendance is very important and research has shown it to be the leading factor in determining success. When a student is absent from school he/she may miss crucial information and class discussion. He/she may also have to make up tests, labs, quizzes and/or notes. If many days are missed, it can become overwhelming to the student to try and get caught up.

Homework Is a Student Responsibility

Middle school students must be responsible for their assignments, completing them and turning them in on time. Some middle school students want to continue with the elementary school trend of always having a teacher or parent to make sure things are completed and turned in. Middle school students who routinely do not take responsibility for doing homework frustrate their parents. Parents become concerned and start to ask their student, "Did you do your homework?" or "Let me see your homework." The student then perceives the parent as nagging and arguments ensue. In time, without realizing it, the completion of homework has become the parent's problem. Although the parent had good intentions, student growth in the area of responsibility and independence has been hindered. The parent also sends a subliminal message that says, "You can't do this on your own." Begin to look at small failures as learning opportunities rather than character flaws.

It's much more important for your student to learn how to solve problems, think of solutions, and come up with answers to small consequences now, than be incapable of doing so in high school when the stakes are much higher.

Learning Style

It is helpful to know what learning style works best for your student. Most students can learn using all the styles but will learn more proficiently using a specific method. The learning styles are visual, auditory and kinesthetic.

There are free assessments that can be found through an internet search that can help you determine your student's learning style. Information is also available to suggest methods to increase your student's performance through learning style. This is valuable information to share with your student's teacher.

Meetings with School Staff

There are different types of meetings that a parent may be asked to attend. The most common are parent-teacher conferences that are sometimes called when the student is not performing up to expectations in the classroom, either behaviorally and/or academically. Parents may initiate a meeting, as well as school staff. If parents are comfortable doing so, this is also a good time to share information, such as outside assessments, health issues or recent life changes that could be impacting your student's educational performance. Prior to coming to the meeting, it is a good idea to write down what information you want to get from school staff, as well as what you want to share with them. This will avoid remembering something that you forgot to ask or share after you have left the meeting.

Organization

Students who are organized are less frustrated, do better academically and have more time to spend with family, friends and to engage in other activities.

There are many different organization strategies, so your student will need to find one that works for him. An organizational strategy of using one binder (1.5") for core courses with tabbed divisions for each subject followed by tabbed sections for notes, worksheets, tests and quizzes works well. A two-pocket folder for incomplete and complete work for each subject should be included at the front of each section. It is helpful to have the core subjects in the order that the student has them during the day. The agenda and pencil/pen pouch would be added last. Your student will need to keep the binder neat. We suggest moving papers from the binder into a file at home following each 6 weeks.

Parent Recognition

It may not feel like it at times, but parent approval is still very important during the teen years. Recognize your student's extra effort and success; be specific on what he/she did well. General compliments such as "Great job" do not let the student know exactly what was great about it. For example, if you are looking at a written assignment and your student did a great job with the fluency and flow of the story then say that. The compliment then becomes meaningful. Being specific also ensures that you are not going to reinforce things done incorrectly.



Positive Behavior Supports

Students are like all of us. They are either motivated intrinsically (from within) or extrinsically (from without) to accomplish things. When trying to encourage a change in attendance, effort, or behavior try providing an extrinsic motivator or reward. This must be a reward your student would want. For example, your student may earn more time enjoying a favorite video game or socializing with friends. The goal is that, after experiencing success, the motivation will become intrinsic (from within) rather than require an extrinsic reward. It is important that students understand that negative consequences occur when poor decisions and choices are made.

Consequences are more effective when they are reasonable and relate to the behavior choice. For example, if your student is having a hard time getting up and being ready for school on time, then changing the night time routine would be a logical consequence. If the rule was that your student could not talk on the phone, be on computer, or watch TV after 9:45 and he is getting up 15 late every day, then adjust the night time schedule to 9:30 and if not successful then to 9:15.

Progress Reports and Report Cards

Progress reports are sent to parents every 3 weeks and report cards every 6 weeks. The Denton ISD school calendar indicates the end of each 6 week grading period. It is helpful to mark these times on a calendar and/or create an alert for yourself on your Smartphone. Let your student know you are aware that it is progress report time or report card time. Progress reports and report cards are to be signed by parents and returned to the teachers.

*You can see your student's grade on a daily basis by creating an account in Parent Connection, which is available on the Denton ISD website.

School Supplies

Each team of teachers will have a school supply list. Having what is on the list at the beginning of school will assist your student in getting off to a smooth start. Check the school website to see if the supply list for the upcoming year is posted.

Study Area

Establish a study area that is free from distraction and where your student can work. It is not possible to effectively learn and watch TV at the same time. It has been shown that music can be listened to while learning occurs for some students. Some students require a very quiet learning environment.