

# CONNECTIONS

## 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

School District of Manatee County  
Guidance Services

November 2011-2012

Welcome to the Exciting World of Middle School!  
Let the Journey Begin!



What is "Wheel"?

What kind of supplies will I need?

How many kids will be in my class?

Will I still need an "Agenda Planner"?

Will I be changing classes?

How long will my school day be?

Is the dress code the same at every middle school?

What do I do if I'm late to school or if I have to sign out early?

How long do I have for lunch?

Will there be any athletic teams in middle school?

Will I have a lot of books? If I do, where do I put them?

Will there be any after-school activities?

What subjects will I need to take?

What if I get lost?



## PARENTS:

### STRAP ON YOUR SEATBELT FOR THE ROLLER COASTER RIDE!

For children preparing to enter middle school, there are many anxieties and fears to deal with and overcome. Middle schools are typically larger than elementary schools, there are more teachers to deal with (all with their own expectations and personalities), and more and harder schoolwork! It is important that parents tell their child that it is normal to be nervous and that you will help them to adjust to this new experience. Here are some tips that parents can do to help their child through this transition:

Don't be overly anxious yourself about your child going to middle school. He/she will take cues from you and if you express worries, your child will hear you and be even more apprehensive. The message you want to give your child is that you are confident he/she can handle the new situation. Asserting confidence and helpful support will go a long way in helping the transition to middle school.

#### STUDENT SCHEDULE:

- Your child will have 6 or 7 teachers each day. Students will change classes for the different subject areas. Language arts, math, science, and social studies are required of all students in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Often, class sizes are no more than 22 students.
- The core subjects are required every year in middle school and a student must pass these classes to exit middle school. Core subjects not passed must be repeated.
- Students are also required to have regularly scheduled physical education.
- Students will be exposed to exploratory (wheel) classes such as music, art, technology, and other courses (these will vary from school to school.)
- In some middle schools, students are often placed on "teams" which means that the core academic teachers all work together with the same students. This is helpful in planning and working together to meet the individual needs of their students.
- Middle school also involves extracurricular activities. Various clubs and sports programs including cross country, volleyball and basketball may be of interest to your child. Encourage him/her to explore and pursue interests and to develop a time management plan using his/her school planner as a guide.

### **Want your Just Rewards? Be in Renaissance!**

Renaissance is a program that rewards students with excellent academic and conduct grades. Students who qualify for the program are eligible for special activities such as breakfasts, picnics, assemblies and field trips (reward activities may vary from school to school).

#### **Renaissance levels:**

Earn all 1's in conduct and a 2.0-2.9 GPA

GPA of 3.0 to 3.49

GPA of 3.5 to 3.79

GPA of 3.9 to 4.0

Check with your guidance counselor at your school for more information

## ORIENTATION:

- Attend orientation/open houses at the middle school with your child. Taking time to be familiar with the buildings and campus will help decrease anxiety about not knowing where to go and what to expect the first day of school! ASK FOR HELP!!!
- Your middle school may have a course schedule pick-up time before the first day of school. This is a great time to meet teachers and get an early start on needed school supplies.
- Read all material sent home with your child. It is critical to familiarize yourself with the information in the school's handbook. This will help you and your child understand the rules, responsibilities, and procedures of school life.
- Some schools require students to wear uniforms and others do not. For those schools that do not require uniforms, there is a district dress code policy. You can find this in your student handbook and the District Code of Student Conduct.
- Students are required to wear an ID badge. Many schools use these badges for students to purchase lunch, check out library books, etc. You will receive this information at orientation.
- Important school district dates will be announced at orientation and can be helpful in planning family activities. Dates regarding progress reports and report cards will be specified as well. Keeping up with your child's progress in school is the responsibility of every parent.
- Parents will receive information regarding accessing student grades electronically. Parents will be given a password which will be necessary to view grades on-line.

### Typical School Supply List

Each school, and even each teacher, may require different supplies

- Wide Rule notebook paper
- Pencil
- Pens
- Colored Pencils
- A folder with pockets and fasteners for each subject area
- Rulers
- Spiral notebook
- Calculator
- Markers
- Glue Stick
- Erasers
- Kleenex
- 3 Ring Binder



## STUDY HABITS/SKILLS:

- Help your child set up a study place, time and routine at home. Organization is the key to academic success. Most schools provide a student planner in which your child should record his or her assignments for each subject area. This is a way for you and your child to keep up with assignments on a daily basis and to plan for long range projects.
- Most importantly, encourage your child's successes and efforts. Like adults, children are motivated by sincere praise rather than criticism. Not everyone can earn an "A" all the time. It is important to have reasonable expectations and work with your child on setting goals for his/her school progress. Everyone can achieve in his/her own way. Call and schedule a teacher-parent conference if you have concerns about your child's progress.
- Students are also graded on their conduct while in school and at school functions. Parents should discuss the school rules and the tenets of respectful behavior with their student.

## IMPORTANT! IMPORTANT! IMPORTANT!

It is vital to the academic success of students that they are in attendance each day. If a student must be absent, parents should call the attendance office at the school. If the absence will be for an extended period of time, the parent should request any work that will be missed.

Students must report to the attendance office if they arrive to school late.

If students need to leave early, they must be signed out by a parent or guardian through the attendance office.

### PARENT/CHILD RELATIONSHIP:

- Be patient, be kind and understand that your child is now at the age where he/she is dealing with a lot of changes – physically, socially and emotionally. Peer relationships become a focus for students of this age and navigating the social realm is often a bumpy ride for everyone!
- Get to know your child's friends, teach your child the values of respect and fairness, and most importantly, be a good role model.
- Help your child to have a positive sense of self. Peer pressure can be both positive and negative and your child needs to know how to deal with negative situations. Make it clear that they can always come to you with an issue. Contact the administration and/or the guidance office if you need their help with your child.
- All schools have a school safety plan and procedures, including bullying and sexual harassment. Encourage your child to follow these procedures. Talk with your child about these very important issues.
- **BE INVOLVED!** Attend PTSO/SAC meetings at the school. The more involved you are in the school, the better you will be informed of school life and the more help you can offer your child.

### Here are some discussion questions your student might bring up with you.

Making the jump from elementary school to middle school can be scary at first, and you probably have lots of questions you want answered. Many others have been through this transition before (parents, siblings), so they can help if you need to talk about it. These questions will give you valuable insight.

- ◆ How will I find time to get all my homework and studying done?
- ◆ What kinds of new responsibilities will I have now that I'm in middle school?
- ◆ Will teachers expect a lot more out of students now?
- ◆ Can I get involved with school teams and clubs, even if it means staying at school longer?
- ◆ Will P.E. class be tougher in middle school?

## FLORIDA STATUTE

Section 1003.4156, Florida Statutes provides general requirements for promotion from middle school to high school. Students are required to complete:

- **Three (3) middle school or higher courses in Language Arts. These courses shall emphasize literature, composition, and technical text.**
- **Three (3) middle school or higher courses in mathematics.**
- **Three (3) middle school or higher courses in social studies, one semester of which must include the study of state and federal government and civics education.**
- **Three (3) middle school or higher courses in science.**
- **One (1) course in career and educational planning to be completed in seventh or eighth grade.**
- **Completion of an Electronic Personalized Education Plan (ePEP).**

### **Career and Educational Planning Course (ePEP)**

Each student will be enrolled in a career and educational planning course in seventh or eighth grade. The course must include: career exploration and a personalized career and educational plan. This plan will allow each student to:

- chart his/her courses for high school,
- set short and long term goals,
- recording personal assessments such as interests, values, skills, aptitudes, and career options, and
- plan for post-secondary education.

The plan must be signed by the student, the student's parent, and the student's guidance counselor or academic advisor, and should serve as a portfolio of information that students can update as they continue their education and the career decision making process.

**A COMPLETED ePEP IS A PROMOTION REQUIREMENT !**



## TAKE STOCK IN CHILDREN

Take Stock in Children (TSIC) is a powerful and proven life-changing program that provides hope and the promise of a better future for Florida's students. It is designed to impact the major elements of a young child's life: family, school and community, beginning as early as the sixth grade.

## AVID

Advanced Via Individual Determination (AVID) is a program that targets students in the academic middle, with the goal of post-secondary education admission and success, and provides them support while encouraging them to embark on a more rigorous curriculum. The mission of AVID is to develop and foster a culture of college readiness for all students. Students will be enrolled in the AVID elective course, where they will learn about post-secondary options and the necessary path one must travel to be a viable candidate for such for such educational opportunities. The students will set personal and educational goals to meet that challenge. The AVID elective will provide academic support in the form of new strategies for deeper learning and regular tutoring that is based on an inquiry model. Students will also have an opportunity for affective and social growth and team building activities.

## International Baccalaureate Programme

Louise R. Johnson Middle School offers the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme, which is specifically designed for students during the adolescent stages and provides them a challenging curriculum, including a foreign language each year. Eight subjects – Math, Science, Humanities, Language Arts, Physical Education, Art, Technology, and a Foreign Language (Spanish, French, or Chinese) are required each year. IB learners strive to be inquirers, thinkers, communicators, risk-takers, knowledgeable, principled, open-minded, caring, balanced, and reflective. These ten principles are known as the Learner Profile, which is the basis of preparing students for life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

For more information regarding the IB programme, please call Johnson Middle School at 741-3344.

## WHAT CAN PARENTS DO TO HELP?

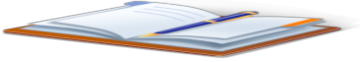
- ✓ Stay in touch with teachers
- ✓ **Volunteer at your child's school**
- ✓ Ask questions about work completed during the school day
- ✓ Know dates for progress reports
- ✓ Know dates for report cards
- ✓ Ask to see progress reports and report cards
- ✓ Have your child at school on time every day
- ✓ Be involved in school related activities
- ✓ Set high expectations with your child
- ✓ **Contact your child's teacher**
- ✓ Contact the school guidance counselor
- ✓ **Check your child's backpack**
- ✓ **Check your child's agenda**
- ✓ Use FOCUS, the district on-line grading system, to **stay current on your student's progress**

## Parents of the Class of 2019

**Your student's march across the graduation stage is not as far away as you think. As you look to the future and start making plans, here are some things to consider.**

- ✓ Students must meet specific criteria to graduate from high school. Current legislation requires that:
  - Students must successfully complete 24 credits to graduate. Some of those credits are in specific academic and elective areas.
  - Students are required to complete 1 online course.
  - Students must maintain a 2.0 grade point average (GPA).
  - Students must pass all required State Assessments.
  
- ✓ The choices a student makes in middle school will affect his or her path after high school.
  - Colleges and universities base acceptance on grade point average, rigor of curriculum and extra-curricular activities.
  - Participation in career academies will help foster college and career readiness.
  - Students can participate in dual enrollment with MTI and SCF in high school if they are on track for graduation for no or limited cost to the student.
  - Students can earn a college scholarship from the state of Florida that will help with college tuition. See [www.facts.org](http://www.facts.org) for information on the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship.
  
- ✓ There are things you can do now to get ready for the future.
  - Students can take high school courses in middle school, typically in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - Consider taking advanced courses in middle school. This could lead to more rigorous courses in high school.
  - Students should develop good study habits and set long term goals.
  - Parents can become an active part of the learning process by supporting their student's educational goals.
  - Parents can stay informed by visiting [www.facts.org](http://www.facts.org), [www.fldoe.org](http://www.fldoe.org) and their students' school's website.
  - Participate in extra-curricular activities during middle school and high school.





## Let's Get Organized

### \*Cornell Notes\*

Some students will be doing notes for the first time. Teachers provide hints and outlines to help you begin to learn this very important skill. Some times the teacher will write a list on the overhead or board:

1. Causes of the war
  - A.
  - B.

This is an outline. The teacher has given a hint that he or she will be using an outline to talk about the topic for today.

Other times the teacher will just say something like, "There are three main causes for this." This lets you know that there will be a list or an outline of three things.

Sometimes the teacher will provide partial notes that the student is expected to fill in. As things are discussed in class, the student should fill in the missing words.

Note-taking does not mean one has to write every word a teacher says. One can shorten your sentences and words as long as the meaning is not lost. Learn to use abbreviations like *WH* for world history or *pres.* For president.

A book bag or backpack is useful for carrying notebooks and other supplies. Usually you will not need to carry books. They can go home and stay there so they are always available for assignments.

Speaking of assignments, keep track of assignments and when they are due. Each middle school uses some kind of agenda book. This book can be used to write down when there will be a test, when an assignment is due, even when there is no school. Parents should check agenda every night at home. If you are having trouble keeping up with assignments, your teacher and your parents may sign the agenda every day.

### Study or Homework?

Are they the same thing? Assignments or home work are activities your teacher gives you to practice what was done in the class. Studying is your way of remembering information that is going to be on a test. Think of studying as **preparing for a test.**

When you study, you **reread** or **review** material you have read before. Rereading is faster than reading the first time and you are looking for key phrases or words. Often those words are underlined or in **bold** or *italic* print.

After reviewing, you can **self-test** – cover up a section and see if you remember it. If you are learning vocabulary words, try making flash cards with the word on one side and the definition on the other side.

An adult or older brother or sister can help you **practice test** by asking you questions from your book, homework and worksheets. They don't have to be an expert in the subject, because you are giving them the information they need.

Preparing for a test should be done several times – remember your agenda. If the teacher says on Monday there will be a test on Friday, you can spend a few minutes each night **rereading, reviewing, self-testing and practice testing.** If you do this for 15-20 minutes each night, you will have an hour or more of studying done. That sure beats spending an hour the night before the test.

You will have some homework almost every night. It is best to get into a habit of doing it at the same time – right after school or right after dinner. Set a schedule and keep it. You may have activities such as soccer, dance lessons, swim team, etc. Remember to set a time for homework and for studying. If you have a busy schedule, then you need to plan and use your time well. Ask your parents to help you set up a schedule. Write down your schedule and stick to it!

You can have a fun and successful three years in middle school. During that time, develop the habits and skills you need for a successful high school experience.

# EXCELLENT WEBSITES FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL INFORMATION

<http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/school/middleschool>  
<http://parentingteens.about.com/middleschool/rhi/a/middleschool>

<http://www.childtrends.org/>  
<http://www.kidskonnnect.com/>

(Site for kids, parents and teachers with topics listed in alphabetical order)

<http://www.familyfirst.net/>

(Place for families to find info on marriage, parenting, fatherhood and family life)

<http://www.freevibe.com/>

(An interactive and informational website about drugs especially designed for teens)

<http://www.naccrra.net/>

(Website provides a director for parents seeking child care, child care professionals and child care advocates)

<http://www.talkingwithkids.org/>

(Tips to help encourage parents to talk with children earlier and more often about tough issues like sex, HIV/AIDS, violence, alcohol and drug abuse)

## Middle School Websites:

**Braden River MS—**

<http://www.schools.manatee.k12.fl.us/652BRMWEB/brmsweb/>

**Buffalo Creek MS--**

<http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/sites/middleschool/buffalocreek/>

**Haile MS--**

<http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/sites/middleschool/haile/index.html>

**Harlee MS--**

<http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/sites/middleschool/harlee/Site/Home.html>

**Johnson MS— “100% School Choice-International Baccalaureate Program”**

<http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/sites/middleschool/johnson/jms%20web/home%20page/index1.html>

**King MS--**<http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/sites/middleschool/king/>

**Lee MS--**<http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/sites/middleschool/lee/index.html>

**Lincoln MS--**

<http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/sites/middleschool/lincoln/index.htm>

**Nolan MS--**

<http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/sites/middleschool/nolan/index.html>

**Sugg MS--**<http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/sites/middleschool/sugg/>

### **School Hours:**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday,  
Friday 9:15 am-3:55 pm  
Wednesday 9:15 am-2:10 pm

30 minutes for lunch.

### **BE AWARE:**

Students involved in interscholastic sports must maintain a 2.0 GPA and have no more than one 4 in conduct.

### **CAUTION:**

Parents, your student's schedule may change after school begins.

## Student Recap....



1. Each school and even each teacher may require different supplies. I will receive a \_\_\_\_\_ from my school. (page 3)
2. Students will change classes and have \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ teachers to each day. (Page 2)
3. School begins at \_\_\_\_\_ AM and dismisses at \_\_\_\_\_ PM. (Page 9)
4. Middle school also involves \_\_\_\_\_ activities. Various \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ programs may be of interest to your child. (Page 2)
5. Most schools provide a \_\_\_\_\_ in which your child should record his or her \_\_\_\_\_ for each subject area. (Page 3)
6. \_\_\_\_\_, math, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ are required of all students in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. (Page 2)
7. I will have \_\_\_\_\_ minutes to eat my lunch. (Page 9)
8. Students will be exposed to exploratory (wheel) classes such as \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and other courses. (Page 2)
9. Attend with your child orientation/open houses at the middle school. Taking time to be \_\_\_\_\_ with the buildings and campus will help decrease anxiety about not knowing where to go and what to expect the \_\_\_\_\_! (Page 3)
10. Some schools require student to wear \_\_\_\_\_ and others do not. (Page 3)
11. Students are required to wear an \_\_\_\_\_. Many schools use these badges for student to \_\_\_\_\_ lunch, check out \_\_\_\_\_, etc. (Page 3)
12. Students must report to the \_\_\_\_\_ if they arrive to school late. If students need to leave early, they must be signed out by a \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ through the attendance office. (Page 4)

## School Choice

**School choice is available for middle school students. Visit the schools' websites to gain information on the programs and opportunities offered at each school to be sure you find the right fit for your students.**

Be sure to check the School District of Manatee County website for policies, necessary applications, and deadline information on the school choice program.

### SCHOOL BOARD OF MANATEE COUNTY

Robert Gause, Chairman  
Harry E. Kinnan, Vice-Chairman  
Barbara Harvey  
Karen Carpenter  
Julie B. Aranibar

Tim McGonegal, Superintendent

### CONNECTIONS

Provided by: Manatee County Schools

#### Special Thanks to:

Judy Rikard and Jennifer Bell, Johnson Middle School  
Barbra Duke, Braden River Elementary School

Shirley Hurley, Coordinator of Guidance Services  
Wendy Loge, Administrative Assistant

