The Transition from Elementary School to Middle School

What can Parents do to help the transition at Bernalillo Middle School

Jackson, McKinnon, and Wilson (2006)
Goals/Objectives

- Reduce your level of anxiety about the middle school transition
- Give you information, tools and resources to make the transition successful
- Inform you about transition activities
The Transition to Middle School

• It is normal for your child to be nervous about starting middle school.

• It is also perfectly normal for you to be nervous about your child’s transition to middle school.

• “The transition to middle school may be one of the toughest transitions during childhood, for both parents and kids” (Brown, 2004).
Procedural Concerns

• Getting lost or finding classes
• Finding and opening the locker
• Finding the bathroom
• Not knowing the school rules
• Carrying around all those books
• Going from class to class without being late
• Bringing the right materials to the right class at the right time
• Traveling longer distances to school
• Eating in a larger cafeteria

(Brown, 2004; Elias, 2001)
Procedural Concerns: What You Can Do

• Buy a combination lock before school and have your child spend time trying to open the lock.

• Go to the school two or three days before school starts and get a copy of your child’s schedule. Take a few minutes to walk from room to room with your child.

• Don’t buy backpacks that can store 50 lbs. of materials. Smaller backpacks allow for better organization.

(The elementary to middle school transition: Five helpful hints for parents, n.d.)
Academic Concerns

- Getting good grades
- Competition for grades
- Having more than one teacher
- More homework
- More long-term projects
- Work that is more challenging and requires more effort
- Expectations of teachers in different subject areas
- Basic tasks such as studying, taking notes, and taking tests

(Brown, 2004; Elias, 2001)
Academic Concerns: What You Can Do

• Be the example … Show the importance of education
• Ask your child about their day
• Set aside a quiet space and time for your child to study/complete homework
• Balance school work and play time
• Encourage reading
• Assist your child with their homework and/or check their homework daily
• Set high but reachable expectations for your child
• ENCOURAGEMENT!

(Ford-Coabley, Crenshaw, DelAunter & Isaacs, 2006)
Social/Emotional Concerns

- Bullies and/or being teased
- Making new friends/Finding and connecting with a peer group
- Feeling stupid compared to other kids
- Success in sports
- Popularity
- Being embarrassed by parents in front of other kids
- Puberty (pimples, body changes)
- Changing before and after P.E. in front of other kids
- Having girlfriends and boyfriends
- Having someone to sit with at lunch
- Pressure to smoke, drink alcohol, or take drugs

(Brown, 2004; Elias, 2001)

Jackson, McKinnon, and Wilson (2006)
Social/Emotional Concerns: What You Can Do

- Increase your knowledge of adolescent development
- Be upbeat about what lies ahead
- Recognize their fears
- Offer support
- Hold your child accountable
- Give your child the opportunity to make decisions on his/her own
- Pick your battles
- Give them tools they need to succeed
- Allow them the freedom to make mistakes

(The elementary to middle school transition: Five helpful hints for parents, n.d.; Dean, n.d.)

Jackson, McKinnon, and Wilson (2006)
What Parent’s Can Do at SCHOOL

- Maintain a good working relationship with your child’s teachers
- Visit the school
- Know and understand school rules
- Attend meetings (PTA, conferences, etc.) and child’s activities
- Make sure your child attends school daily
- Volunteer in any way you can
- Make a contract with your child and/or teacher
- If you have raised adolescents, be willing to share advice and information with other parents (Ford-Coabley, Crenshaw, DelAunter & Isaacs, 2006; The elementary to middle school transition: Five helpful hints for parents, n.d.)
What Happens if Parents Get Involved

Decades of research show that when parents are involved students have …

• Higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates
• Better school attendance
• Increased motivation
• Better self-esteem
• Lower rates of suspension
• Decreased use of drugs and alcohol
• Fewer instances of violent behavior
• Greater enrollment rates in post-secondary education

(Ford-Coabley, Crenshaw, DelAunter & Isaacs, 2006)
School’s Role

- Adolescents making the middle school transition need a combination of skill training and social-emotional learning (Elias, 2001)
- The school provides experiences that meet essential needs in these four areas:
  - Contributions (Service learning)
  - Belonging (Peer groups, positive relationships, safe)
  - Talents (Academic and non-academic)
  - Life Skills (Learning about feelings, goal-setting, group work, problem solving and resilience) (Elias, 2001)
School’s Transition Program

- Helps students form a realistic expectation of what middle school will be like
- Provides a positive and successful first impression
- Insures a successful introduction to the middle school experience

(Lorain, n.d.)
Transition Activities

- Curriculum articulation
- Guidance counselors visit elementary schools
- Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- Programs new to entering students will be highlighted during student visitations
- Student orientation
- Open house before the first day of school
- Back-to-school night
- School handbook
- Individual and group counseling
- Classroom guidance lessons
- Parent workshops and groups

(Schumacher, 1998)
Positive Aspects of Transition

- Choosing classes
- Making new friends
- Participating in sports
- Having lockers
- More personal and social freedom
- Changing classes
- Electives
- Greater academic choices

(Akos & Galassi, 2004)
References


Jackson, McKinnon, and Wilson (2006)