

Raider Road Map

**Information for Transition to Middle
School**

Table of Contents

Middle School Transition Activities.....	4
Getting Ready for the First Day.....	4
TVMS Schedule.....	5
Bell Schedule Chart.....	5
Arrival and Dismissal Procedures.....	6
Attendance Procedures.....	6
Nurse Procedures.....	6
School Supplies.....	7
Parent Involvement Committee.....	7
Lockers.....	7
Raider Pride Community and Raider Rewards.....	7
Clubs and Activities.....	7
Course Registration.....	8
Grading and Report Cards.....	8
Twin Valley Electronic Grade Book.....	8
Curriculum.....	9
Communication with Teachers.....	9
Gifted Support Services.....	9
Cafeteria Guide.....	9
Physical Education and Health.....	10
Raider Pride.....	10
Guidance Counselors.....	10
Special Education in 5th Grade.....	11
Organizational Skill Development in 5th Grade.....	11



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NOTE: As a result of the Phased Re-Opening Plan, and Safety and Health Restrictions for 2020-2021, some of the items listed in this handbook will be revised, as required. Please refer to the TVMS Website for updates.

Middle School Transition Activities

Much excitement and preparation goes into the acclimation of fourth graders to the middle school. Fourth grade students and their teachers typically visit the middle school in May which allows for an opportunity to see the teachers and to meet the present fifth grade students who are always eager to welcome them. They follow a typical day's schedule, and they meet the principal and counselors. Later, they are escorted by Leo Club ambassadors (student service club members) on a tour of the building and eventually enjoy lunch in our cafeteria.

Course registration forms are provided to all fourth graders during the spring before they enter 5th grade. Parents and students should discuss their course registration as they prepare to make their related arts selections. The middle school guidance counselors are available to help explain the registration process to the students, and assist with course selections.

Parents of fourth graders are invited to the middle school for a parent meeting in August that serves as an important informational event. In August, student schedules will be made available to view through the parent portal. Two weeks prior to the first day of school, parents may bring students to the middle school to "walk" through their schedule and find their rooms. Only the principals will be in the building at that time; however, the parents and students are welcome to look around. Student walk-throughs are not permitted on designated Teacher In-Service Days in August.

Although acclimation to middle school can be an anxious time for students and parents alike, the middle school staff is well equipped to meet your needs and to address your concerns. We are happy to assist in hopes that this will ease your mind.

Getting Ready for the First Day

Students and parents are often anxious and excited about the first day of middle school. It marks the beginning of a period of incredible growth and development in the lives of children as they become more independent and responsible learners. Information and feedback from the staff to both students and parents will occur during this transition. Upon arrival, students are greeted at their busses and escorted to their classrooms where their locker assignment and schedule is provided by their homeroom teacher. There will be numerous opportunities to practice opening their locker during the first few days of school. Teachers and aides will be available in the hallways to assist as needed. During the first week of school, a class meeting is held where the principal encourages the students to make the most of their middle school years. The message encourages them to make new friends, get involved, work hard, and ask for help when needed. Most often students adjust quite quickly to their new routines and are comfortable within a week or two.

At day's end during the first few weeks of school, all students will have assistance during dismissal time and receive extra support with accessing their lockers and finding the location of their assigned bus. Students will be dismissed at 3:15 PM for bus transportation; students awaiting parent pick up will wait in the cafeteria until 3:25 PM for the start of parent pick up. Parents arriving to pick up students should enter the MS campus at the rear of the building, and follow the arrows to pick students up at the cafeteria exit.

TVMS Schedule

Students receive a great deal of support during the first few weeks of school in understanding the schedule at TVMS, which is quite different from the elementary school schedule. The schedule operates on a six day cycle with exciting opportunities in Related Arts.

Fifth grade students have three core blocks with their respective core block teachers. These three core block teachers form a team that plans together and discusses student needs on a regular basis. There are core blocks for Language Arts, Math and Social Studies/Science. Language Arts and Math run the entire year, while Social Studies and Science will be for one-half year. Students have Related Arts every day, the same as “specials” in elementary school. The middle school day has two 39 minute periods for Related Arts. The Related Arts schedule runs on an even day (Days, 2, 4, 6) and odd day (Days 1, 3, 5) cycle. Most Related Arts classes run for a semester with the exception of Health and Physical Education and Band/Chorus/Orchestra which run all year.

Bell Schedule

Student Sample Schedule

8:15 - 8:30	Arrival/Homeroom	
8:30 – 9:51	Core Block 1	Language Arts (81 mins) Miss Swan Room 307
9:54-11:15	Core Block 2	Social Studies (Semester 1) Science (Semester 2) (81 mins) Mr. Culbert Room 400
11:18-11:48	Lunch	Cafe
11:51-1:12	Core Block 3	Math (81 mins) Mr. Hudy Room 304
1:15 - 1:54	Related Arts	Health and Physical Education (39 mins) Mrs. Moyer GYM
1:57 - 2:36	Related Arts	World Cultures or Tech Ed (39 mins) Mrs. Kochel or Mrs. Bednar Room 121 or 104
2:39 - 3:15	Flex Period	Various Classrooms
3:15	Dismissal	Bus Transportation - to buses Parent Pick Up - cafeteria for 3:25 Pick Up

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Bus Arrival-Busses arrive at 8:15 AM. Busses drop the students off at the lower entrance. Students are greeted at the door by an adult. Students have the opportunity to purchase breakfast every day in the cafeteria and eat in the cafeteria. Students are expected to report to their first block class by 8:30.

Parent Drop-off-Parent drop off should occur at the front entrance by the flagpole. Students must arrive by 8:30 AM. Parents should follow the directional arrows to enter and exit the parking lot.

Late Arrival-Students arriving after 8:30 AM must come into the front office and sign in. In order to be excused for a late arrival, students will need a parent or doctor's note indicating a legitimate reason for the lateness.

Bus Dismissal-Bus dismissal occurs at 3:15 PM. Students go to their lockers and then directly to the lower entrance.

Parent Pick-up-Students can be picked up by parents at 3:25 PM. Parents should enter the rear of the middle school campus off Clymer Hill Rd., and follow the arrows to the pick up location at the cafeteria exit. The parent pick-up line forms along the sidewalk. Parents do not need to come inside if pre-arrangements have been made with their child.

Early Dismissal-Students being picked up before the 3:15 PM dismissal time should bring a signed note from a parent to school and report to the office for an early dismissal pass. Parents must come into the office to sign out their child.

Nurse's Dismissal-Students who are ill must report to the nurse to be assessed for an early dismissal. Students should not text or call parents to pick them up. The nurse will call the parent to pick up a sick child.

Attendance Procedures

Student absences will be excused when a legitimate excuse signed by a parent or guardian is brought to school within three days of the absence. Students should give the excuse note to their Block 1 (Homeroom) teachers. A calling system is used to notify parents of student absences from school. More detailed information is available on the website and in the student handbook.

Nurse Procedures

Students who feel ill should ask their classroom teacher for a pass to the nurse. A pass signed by the nurse must be presented to the teacher upon a student's return to class. No student is allowed to leave the health suite without the nurse's permission. The school nurse will make the necessary arrangements with parents when there is a need for a student to be sent home because of illness or injury. Parents are responsible for the transportation of ill or injured students. If a student has allergies or other health problems, parents should notify the nurse. Students who are ill should not be sent to school to be diagnosed by the school nurse. More detailed information is available on the website and in the student handbook.

School Supplies

An emerging skill for fifth graders is organization of learning materials. Fifth grade teachers work to help students develop organization skills during the beginning of the year, with the goal of gradually transferring that responsibility to the students themselves.

All fifth graders benefit from having a Trapper Keeper binder with a zipper. This binder helps with organization of materials from their various classes. Every student will benefit from having their own supply of pencils, erasers, a highlighter and a pack of post-it notes. Dividers for the binder and colored pocket folders may also be helpful. Each teacher will list additional supplies needed on their website.

Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)

Parents are encouraged to take on an active role. Those who want to be involved at the middle school can join our Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), which typically meets the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 pm in the Library. Check the TVMS Calendar on our website for exact dates and times. They plan exciting activities for our students. Clubs and classrooms are supported through their fundraising efforts. PIC funds Game and Activity Nights for 5th graders several times a year as well as a 5th grade Art Club and Intramurals. Volunteers are always needed to plan and supervise these events.

Lockers

Every student at the middle school is assigned two lockers. One locker is in the hallway by their core block one classroom and the other is in the gym locker room, which may be used for their gym clothes. Students are taught how to open their locker in their homeroom on the first day of school and will have plenty of opportunities to practice it. They should memorize their combinations and have them written down in a safe place for reference.

Parents can help their children to learn the skill of opening their locker by purchasing a combination lock in the summer before middle school starts and practicing the technique with them at home. There is a link on YouTube that will help students to learn this skill.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kmx4WCAj77A>

Raider Pride Community Program and Raider Rewards

Twin Valley Middle School uses a restorative approach to discipline. It is important to TVMS that each student understands how their actions and behaviors impact others in the school community. Using a restorative approach to situations and discipline allows students the opportunity to repair harm and discuss their thoughts, feelings and actions with a trusted adult. In addition, Twin Valley Middle School uses Raider Rewards as a way to recognize students who are demonstrating positive behaviors in school. Students earn rewards for their positive behaviors and can enter weekly and monthly rewards drawings.

Clubs and Activities

Fifth grade students will have various club and activity opportunities throughout the year. Our PIC sponsors an Art Club, Intramurals, and other social activities. Information will be on the website as these activities become available. Fifth graders can also participate in the 5/6 Running Club, and Math Counts club but are ineligible to compete regionally until sixth grade.

Course Registration

Course registration information is sent home with students during the Spring Semester, prior to entering 5th grade. Parents and students should look over the registration form, fill it in completely and return it to their elementary teacher. Middle school guidance counselors are available to help students to understand course registration. All fifth graders are required to take Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Health and Physical Education, World Cultures, and some form of Music. Students may also have the option to take an elective Related Arts course in Science, Technology Education, Art, Chorus, Orchestra or Band.

Grading and Report Cards

The same 4 point grading scale is used at the elementary and middle schools. Students' assignments and assessments (tests and quizzes) are scored using the following rubric. (The rubric is written in kid friendly terminology):

4 = Wow, you are performing ABOVE content area standards. Your work includes concepts, skills, and strategies above and beyond the expectations and/or not taught in class. (*A 4 is an ABOVE standards grade. It does not equal an A*).

3 = Great job, you are right where you need to be! Your work shows that you understand 5th grade concepts. (*A 3 is a great grade. It is where we expect most students to perform.*)

2 = Almost there, keep trying! Your work shows that you understand SOME of what was taught in class. You understand some 5th grade concepts. You still need help from your teacher.

1 = You are beginning to understand 5th grade concepts. You need to work very closely with your teacher to complete assignments.

I = Incomplete or Insufficient Evidence – The student has incomplete assignments or there is insufficient evidence of achieving the reported standard.

In addition to the curriculum based grades, students receive scores on Learning Behaviors. The Learning Behaviors that are assessed are:

- Completes assignments/homework on time.
- Is prepared and organized for learning.
- Respects others and property.
- Works collaboratively with others.

Twin Valley Electronic Grade Book

Throughout the school year, parents will be able to check their child's progress in all of their classes. Student's grades in all of their classes, including related arts are viewable for the marking period as they are entered by the teacher. Report cards are posted quarterly.

At the beginning of the school year, parents will receive a username and password for the Parent Portal and the electronic grade book. When you receive your password, you will also receive directions to

navigate the program. You will be able to find the electronic grade book by visiting www.tvsd.org . There you can check your child's grades.

Curriculum

The curriculum at the middle school is a continuation of the concepts, skills, and standards learned in the elementary centers. The EveryDay Math program continues throughout the fifth grade. All incoming students benefit from working on their basic math facts throughout the summer before fifth grade to secure these skills. In Language Arts they continue to further develop their reading and writing skills. We recommend that students read for 30 minutes a day throughout the summer and during the school year. Students will use a writer's notebook for developing their writing skills throughout the school year. Fifth grade science is an inquiry based curriculum that includes working in labs with science kits, much like the elementary program. Our social studies curriculum explores concepts in the topic areas of the Explorers, Colonial Life, the American Revolution, Westward Expansion, and the Civil War.

Communication with Teachers

Each teacher has a webpage that you can find by clicking on the 'Teacher Pages' link on the Twin Valley Middle School Homepage. Students must login to the teacher page using their network password. Teacher webpages are updated frequently and may include school events, content being taught, due dates, contact information, and more. In addition to the teacher's webpage, each teacher has an email address. This is the preferred way to contact the teacher; however, a phone call can be made to the Middle School office and the teacher will return the call within 24 hours.

Gifted Support Services

The middle school gifted support services are designed to foster higher level thinking skills and creativity in a small group or whole group setting. At the middle school, eligible students work with the gifted support teacher and classroom teachers to meet individual needs as articulated in their GIEPs. The goals may be addressed in a variety of ways. Options include differentiated instruction in the regular classroom, the provision of alternate assignments, self-directed projects to enrich the curriculum, participation in small-group, topical seminars, accelerated learning opportunities, and participation in specialized events such as academic competitions and field trips. The middle school offers a Gifted Seminar each semester for all gifted students. Students are encouraged to take this class for both semesters, but may choose to enroll in only one semester, or choose to opt out altogether. In the Gifted Seminars the gifted students will experience learning environments that help them develop the following traits and skills: innovation, exploration, self-monitoring, creativity, planning, and decision making.

Cafeteria Guide for 5th Graders

Highlights

- Scatter System – This system allows for the student to have a variety of choices. The student is advised to visit the different food stations to see what the selections are for that day **before** making their decision. Once a student picks up a selection they must pay for that item. The menu should be viewed as a guide.
- Additionally, other items are offered a la carte or as snacks which are not included in the meal. The a la carte items are items that the student may purchase separately or as a second portion.

The snacks are offered to the student after they have come through the food court and have had time to consume their lunch. These too are an additional cost.

- Students will continue to use their student number to access available cafeteria funds, when checking out with the cashier.
- Our primary goal is to meet the students’ dietary needs. Additionally, our goal of encouraging responsibility is managed by keeping the student informed of their balance as it gets low or goes negative.

Physical Education and Health

In middle school, students start to change for PE for hygiene and safety reasons. Every student in the building will receive a combination locker for storage of their personal belongings. The curriculum is participation-based with moderate to vigorous activity expected. Each student should be dressed for ease of physical movement with sneakers, t-shirt and shorts and/or sweatpants.

Health Curriculum for 5th graders includes:

- Personal and Social Skills - communication
- Healthy Heart
- Puberty – Personal Hygiene, Physical Changes and Basic Reproductive System information only.

Raider Pride

Raider Pride is a school-wide student advocacy program. The goal of the Raider Pride program is to build community among the students and teachers and to create a climate where students feel they belong and are heard. Students meet in small groups of about 15 students that are facilitated by an adult and a student representative. The student representatives guide discussions and activities covering a wide variety of topics that range from friendship to communication to bullying. Raider Pride groups meet about every two weeks during our Flex Period, where students and teachers play games, participate in team building activities, and enjoy a celebration time as a group. Students have opportunities to develop leadership skills in their Raider Pride groups.

Guidance Counselors

The middle school counselors’ caseloads are determined by the student’s last name. The counselors “follow” their students for the entirety of middle school, giving an opportunity to develop a trusting relationship with them throughout their time at TVMS. You may call the guidance office or email the counselors directly. If you desire to meet in person, a mutually agreed upon time will be scheduled by the counselor. Your child may also ask for an appointment in person or by leaving a message at the front office. Your child may talk with one of their teachers who will email the counselors to inform them that a meeting has been requested.

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H-N	Mrs. Monica Hartey, mhartey@tvsd.org
O-Z	Mrs. Rebecca Howell, rhowell@tvsd.org

Special Education in 5th Grade

Learning Support at the Middle School is delivered in an inclusive environment. Students with IEPs are assigned a Learning Support Teacher in fifth grade and that teacher will serve as their case manager for the year. The Learning Support teachers will contact parents of IEP students to introduce themselves through a letter or a phone call at the beginning of the school year. They will communicate with the teachers of their students to relate the learning goals and to check on student progress towards those goals. The principal and learning support teachers meet with the fourth grade teachers in the spring before fifth grade to discuss student needs for support at the middle school. Here are some other important details about our Special Education program:

- Co-teaching (Learning Support teacher and Language Arts or Math teacher)
- Instructional Aides may support in Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science classrooms
- Learning Support teachers collaborate with the general education classroom teachers to ensure the success of each student
- IEPs are available to team of teachers that work with students
- Learning Support teachers serve as case managers and will facilitate all IEP meetings
- Learning Support teachers are available for individual student, parent and teacher consultation on a regular basis
- Learning Support teachers will guide and support students to ensure smooth transition from fourth to fifth grade

Organizational Skill Development in 5th Grade

With advancement to middle school comes the need for students to further develop their organizational skills in order to become independent and self-reliant students. Maintaining a working notebook, preparing for assessments, managing assignments, and meeting deadlines for class work are important skills. Our teachers work with students to help them learn to use and maintain an assignment book, adhere to a schedule, and to use information organizers or outlines to establish a logical work sequence. The students and teachers work collaboratively towards organizational goals. Some important steps are outlined below:

- Teachers assist students with organization skills from the beginning of the year with the goal of teaching them to independently organize themselves and their materials
- Teachers help students to record assignments in an electronic Google Calendar, until it gradually becomes the student responsibility to independently record the assignments
- Students are encouraged to keep belongings organized in their lockers and binder.
- Students are reminded of the necessary class materials needed as this information is posted in particular classrooms to support responsibility and instill independence.
- There is steady and reliable teacher support of students with a gradual release in assisting students with organizational skills in order to smooth the fourth to fifth grade transition
- It is helpful when parents make it a daily routine to check assignments with their students, and carry over the school expectation of independence to the home.

Welcome to TVMS!