

Questions and Answers about Middle School

- **What electives are available for my student?**
 - Each middle school has a wide variety of electives that students may take, including band, choir, art, technology, PE, etc. In some cases a student may have two electives, but there are times when a student needs special education supports that take the place of one or both elective options. These are discussions that can take place during the Transition IEP meeting. Don't be afraid to ask questions!
- **What will special education services look like at the middle school?**
 - In many cases special education services will be delivered differently in middle school than in elementary school. At the middle school setting, students who receive academic support will most likely have a math or reading/language arts class that is taught by a special education teacher. Often times this special education class is above and beyond another math or reading/language arts class on the student's schedule. Because of how these services are structured, there are times where this change will lead to a change in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for a student. In addition, students can continue to receive special education supports from speech language pathologists, school psychologist, occupational therapists and physical therapists, but in some cases the delivery of those services may look different or might be provided on an indirect basis (consulting with teachers) rather than direct service (working with the student directly). Feel free to ask questions at the Transition IEP meeting about how services will be delivered in a new setting!
- **The middle school is so big! How will my student avoid getting lost?**
 - While middle schools do seem much larger than elementary schools, they are organized to be easily navigated by 6th grade students. Your student will be on a "team" in middle school, and the teachers on that team have classrooms very close to one another which will minimize transition time and significantly lessen the chance of getting lost. Additionally, take advantage of the open house night at the middle school and any opportunities that the building has to tour the facilities! This will help your student become more familiar with the layout of the building prior to his or her first day.
- **How many classes will my student have at the middle school?**
 - Both of Fountain-Fort Carson's middle schools currently have 7 periods in a day. 6 periods are academic or elective in nature and one period serves as a homeroom/focus time period in which information can be communicated to students, homework can be finished, grades can be monitored, students can get organized, etc.

- **What do lunch and recess look like at the middle school?**
 - Students in the middle school attend one of two lunch periods, and eat in a cafeteria. Typically students may choose to eat wherever they want to within that area, and in some cases may be able to eat outside as well. Both middle schools offer students the opportunity to go outside during their lunch time as well and many students take advantage of that opportunity to talk to peers, play catch, etc.

- **Is my student allowed to have a cell phone? A musical device? Ear buds? A Skateboard?**
 - At the beginning of the year each student will receive a student handbook. The first several pages of the handbook outline all the student policies, including the dress code, absence policy, electronics, etc. Cell phones are prohibited during school hours and should not be visible. If it is visible, it may be taken away and returned to the parent at a later date. Other electronic devices (ipads, earphones, music players, etc.) should not be brought to school. Bikes, skateboards, and scooters may be used to get to school but should not be used on school property and should be locked up outside during the day.

- **Tell me about extracurricular activities available at the middle school.**
 - There are many opportunities for students to participate in extracurricular activities at the middle school setting which is a great way to meet additional friends and stay connected with school outside of the actual school day. After school options include tutoring, a wide variety of clubs, and sports. Each middle school setting will provide students with information on after-school clubs and activities at the beginning of the year.

- **How will I know how well my student is doing at the middle school?**
 - Students in middle school will receive four report cards each year. On the report card it will indicate whether the student is performing on grade level or below grade level. At the middle school level a GPA will also be calculated, however this number will not follow the student to high school. Transcripts and credits are not utilized in the middle school setting. Teachers and case managers at the middle school level are welcome to talk to you at any time about your student's progress and may be reached by phone or email.

- **Is there a lot of bullying at the middle school?**
 - Creating a safe, inclusive environment is a primary focus for the middle school setting. Although they are not common, acts of teasing and bullying are taken seriously by all staff and are followed up upon by building administration. When appropriate, consequences and/or restitution are

identified for students demonstrating bullying behavior, and victims are provided with ways in which they can help prevent future incidents.

- **How will my student get to and from the middle school?**
 - It is important to ask the middle school about transportation—depending on your address your student will either be able to access general education busing (and will have an assigned bus stop) or will be in a walking zone. Special education transportation decisions are made on a case-by-case basis for 6th grade students based on student safety. These decisions will be made by the IEP team (including you) at the transition IEP meeting.

- **Any additional things I need to know?**
 - The Resource Exchange (TRE) is a local organization that serves children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. If your student falls into one of these categories it is important to put his or her name on their list early to insure supports when he or she transitions out of high school. Services are limited so get on the list early! The phone number for more information is 719.380.1100.