

Encouraging Connection through Learning and Activities

By Michelle Krell
Assistant Superintendent

Relationships matter! Dr. James Comer says, “No significant learning happens without significant relationships.”

As we begin a new and exciting school year, we know the importance of building strong connections and relationships with students. Our goal is for all students to feel valued, accepted, and motivated to learn. We do this by creating connections through learning and activities.

We have created systems to ensure students have opportunities to adjust to their new learning environment. We build relationships and connections with students so they can feel a sense of belonging and motivation to learn and grow.

At our elementary schools, we hold Before School Interviews where teachers, students, and families meet and learn more about one another and how we can best meet the needs of each of our students. This is a great opportunity to build relationships and create common goals for students. We continue to foster these relationships through open communication and family engagement opportunities throughout the school year.

Our new middle school students participate in WEB – “Where Everybody Belongs.” Trained 8th grade WEB Leaders create a middle school orientation and transition program that welcomes 6th graders and makes them feel comfortable throughout the first year of their middle school experience. WEB leaders act as positive role models and mentors who guide the sixth graders to discover what it takes to be successful in middle school. WEB enhances the school climate and creates a greater sense of connection for the whole school. In addition, our middle school offers clubs and activities for students, giving them an opportunity to explore and build upon their interests.

At our high school, Link Crew is a transition program that pairs junior and senior leaders with incoming 9th grade students. The students initially meet their Link Crews at an exciting and fun-filled Orientation Day and reconnect with them throughout the year. This is a great way for our new students to feel welcomed and valued in their new school. In addition, we encourage students to get involved in clubs, organizations, co- and extracurricular activities. Studies show that students who are involved do better in school and feel a strong sense of belonging and connectedness.

Our ALC (Area Learning Center) promotes a close knit community of learners supported by caring adults. With a strong commitment to our larger community, ALC students do several service projects and learn the importance of volunteering and giving back. By working together, students learn to value and appreciate one another for their unique gifts.

As students enter our school doors, we are excited and energized with all of the new possibilities this school year has to offer. We know that positive connections and intentional actions can motivate a student to achieve great things. We look forward to an exciting and fulfilling school year, where we are Inspiring Excellence, Every Learner, Every Day.