



This We Believe.....

Middle Level Education

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Grounded in Research...

- *This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents (Association for Middle Level Education)*
 - *16 Essential Characteristics of Successful Middle Level Schools*
- *Brain Based Learning—Dr. Jill Stamm, Associate Clinical Professor, ASU*
- *Blended Learning—SUSD Elearning Team*
- *Social-Emotional Meta-Analysis—Child Development, 2011*

Grounded in Research...

Keys to Educating Young Adolescents

Culture and Community—Dr. John Balles

***Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment—
Dr. Karen Benson***

***Leadership and Organization—Mr. Chris
Asmussen***

Middle Level Education...the conduit to success!

“..research, practice, and common sense tell us the middle level education is the crucial link in the pre-K-16 curriculum continuum. During these transitional years, students change significantly—physically, emotionally, morally, psychologically, and emotionally. The academic growth and personal development experienced during these important years significantly impact their futures. In the middle grades, the stage will be set for success in high school and beyond, or for disengagement and the likelihood of becoming a high school dropout”.

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Middle School Vision:
Middle school programming
that ensures challenging
academics and readiness by
supporting the
social/emotional growth of the
emerging adolescent.

Culture and Community

Keys to Educating Young Adolescents

- The school environment is inviting, safe, inclusive and supportive of all.
- Every students' academic and personal development is guided by an adult advocate.
- Comprehensive guidance and support services meet the needs of young adolescents.
- Health and Wellness are supported in curricula, school-wide programs, and related policies.
- School activities involve families in the education of their children.
- The school includes community and business partners.

Culture and Community Recommendations

1. Adoption of School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS).
 - Teach school wide behavioral expectations
 - School wide system to recognize positive behavior
 - Use of data based decision making to target interventions
2. Integration of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) into curriculum.
 - Teaching children to recognize and manage emotions and make responsible decisions
 - Appreciating the perspective of others
 - Establishing positive relationships and handling conflict constructively
3. Ongoing Professional Development focused on understanding the uniqueness of the Middle Level Learner, PBIS, and SEL.
4. Community Collaboration to include identification of community resources and incorporation of community partners into school culture and activities.

Curriculum Instruction and Assessment (CIA)

Keys to Educating Young Adolescents

- Educators value young adolescents and are prepared to teach them.
- Students and teachers are engaged in active, purposeful learning.
- Curriculum is challenging, exploratory, integrative, and relative.
- Educators use multiple learning and teaching approaches.
- Varied and ongoing assessments advance learning as well as measure student learning.

CIA Recommendations

1. Curriculum materials (with a focus on writing) for all students -- aligned to the Common Core Standards to support the depth and level of thinking expected within them (i.e. pre-Advanced Placement curriculum, Cambridge Checkpoints)
2. Blended learning in at least one content area (recommendation from Teaching & Learning to begin with social studies for ease of access to timely events and digital media)
3. Increase professional development opportunities that focus on Common Core Standards (CCS), the Partnerships for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) assessment, teaching in blended learning format, and best practices in instruction
4. Work with stakeholders to create a developmentally appropriate grading and Homework policy for middle level learners
5. Embedded collaborative team time for teachers to share instructional practices and analyze data. The findings will be used to design meaningful instruction and differentiated assessments that allow students to demonstrate their understanding of the standards
6. Equitable elective opportunities with a focus on world languages

Leadership & Organization

Keys to Educating Young Adolescents

- A shared vision developed by all stakeholders guides every decision.
- Leaders are committed to and knowledgeable about this age group, educational research, and best practices.
- Leaders demonstrate courage and collaboration.
- Ongoing professional development reflects educational best practices.
- Organizational structures foster purposeful learning and meaningful relationships.
- Meeting the needs of all kids—social, emotional and academic.

Leadership & Organization

Recommendations

1. Organizational Structure—Staff in Pure Houses
 - Common Core Standard integration across subject areas
 - Interdisciplinary and thematic units
 - Student Collaboration—focus on student academic and behavioral supports
 - Advisory, grade level lunches
2. Professional Development (Understanding the Middle Level Learner, PBIS, Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Common Core Standards (CCS), Blended Learning, etc.)
 - Instructional Coach Support
3. Extend professional work day or year (embedded collaborative team time)
4. District Approach to Intervention and Enrichment
 - Supported Studies and enrichment class offerings in or outside of the school day (“responsive hour”)

During the 11/12 SY

- Middle School Visioning as aligned to District and Middle Level Visioning and Goals
- Refinement of Education and Career Action Plans (ECAP) process to include Middle Schools
- Monitoring of “at-risk” students; quarterly communication to parents/guardians per IKE-R
- Alignment of Middle School Planning Guide (MSPG) to High School Planning Guide (HSPG) and refinement of a common Middle School Handbook
- Enhancement of Transition programming—Elementary to Middle and Middle to High School
- Making College Happen

In Summary

The ideal Middle Level environment is.....

- A culture and climate of high expectations and comprehensive supports;
- Taught and guided by teachers that value adolescents and ensure classroom curriculum and teaching strategies that are challenging, exploratory, integrative and relative;
- Structured for success allowing for smaller “team” environments with ongoing, embedded professional development and focus on intervention and remediation.

Next Steps

- Guidance from Governing Board (GB)—prioritization of recommendations
- Refinement of Action Plans based on GB recommendations