

Transitional Stair Steps from Grades 5 - 8

5th	6th	7th	8th
Day one - in advisory all day	>>	Day one - begin in advisory-modified schedule	>>
Advisory lists posted online	>>	Schedules arrive in the mail	>>
Friday Folders	>>	No Friday Folders	>>
Team Conferences; Open team meetings	>>	>>	>>
Stay together as a class but change classes	Mix for classes	Increased cross teaming due to increased number of math courses and electives	>>
3 core teachers	4 core teachers	>>	>>
6 period day/ 70-minute classes	>>	8 period day/ 50-minute periods	>>
Elective Rotation/PE block	One Elective/PE block	Two electives plus PE or athletics	Three electives
		Increased elective choices	>>
Lockers with combination locks	>>	>>	>>
35-minute advisory	>>	25-minute advisory	>>
		High school credit for foreign language offered	Health, speech, second year of foreign language offered for high school credit
		Club Day	>>
Assigned seats for lunch (10:45); recess after lunch	Assigned seats for lunch (12:00); recess after lunch	Mixed grades lunch (11:30; 12:30); choice of seat	>>
		Increased enforcement of dress code; no athletic shorts	>>
		Try-outs for athletic teams	>>
		Try-outs for advanced band, advanced orchestra, Playbill, Spotlight	>>
		No pass/no play	>>
		Mid-terms and final exams	>>
	Increased homework and individual responsibility	Increased homework and individual responsibility	Increased homework and individual responsibility
Grade weighting consists of multiple entries for a quiz or test	>>	Grade weighting by department (major grades, quizzes, and daily)	More rigorous latework penalties >>
	Testing for 7th grade math placement	Math courses: Math 7, 7/8 TEKS, Algebra I (TAG)	Math courses: Math 8, Algebra I, Geometry (TAG)
		Attendance by period	>>

Tips for Middle School Parents

1. **Don't do for your child what he/she can do for himself/herself.** Of course a parent can do it better! You are older and more mature, but always doing things for a child teaches the child that she or he is incapable of taking care of ones own responsibilities.
2. **Actively listen to your child.** Don't ask more questions than necessary, but have conversations that allow your child to express feelings and thoughts.
3. **Learn the art of under-reacting.** Children this age like to try new ideas on parents, and if we are constantly over-reacting to everything they say, our children will stop communicating with us.
4. **Be involved in all areas of your child's life.** Know your child's teachers and coaches, but also know their friends. Peers begin to play a more important role in your child's life during this time and you need to know who has influence on your child.
5. **Encourage effort and progress more than product.** These middle years are difficult because of the incredible changes taking place in young lives, so your child needs all the encouragement she/he can get.
6. **Perfectionism is not a worthy goal. Excellence is.** Be sure that your expectations are realistic and clearly delineated. Kids feel pressure from many sources, and the pressure to do everything to perfection is unreasonable and damaging.
7. **Make home a safe haven for your child.** The world of middle school is demanding and exciting, but your child needs a place where she/he knows security and peace.
8. **Be sure your child gets enough sleep.** Students this age need 9-10 hours of sleep, and many do not get enough because of busy schedules and too much "screen time."
9. **Speak your values.** Use teachable moments to tell your child, or remind him/her, how you feel about important issues. Don't assume they know. Tell them.
10. **Give unconditional love.** So much of a middle school student's life is lived under the pressure for approval and performance. Be certain your child knows of your love and commitment to him/her.