

Wow! Where did September go?. Last month flew by. Our students are adjusting well to the school day and to the expectations that we are asking of them. We had an unexpected bump in our population this year and have around 30 additional students enrolled then what we were expecting. We will be making adjustments to some schedules to help us with the unexpected increase to ensure that students needs are being met at all grade levels.

Miss Hackett and I held our beginning of school "Welcome Back & Handbook Assemblies" for each grade level during the first week of school. We discuss with the students the ideals of "Respect" and "Responsibility" and how each relates to the school atmosphere, their environment and the school community in general. Students are reminded that their education is their responsibility and that teachers and parents are there to help them to succeed to the best of their abilities. They are reminded to always try their hardest, to give their best and not be afraid to challenge themselves. We encourage the students to ask questions on topics they may not fully understand. One of our goals is to help students become comfortable with and develop the skill of advocating for themselves. This is one of the reasons that we provide our students with their own access to PowerSchool and to their grades.

PowerSchool can be great tool to help your child take ownership and responsibility for their education. It provides students with the ability to check their progress throughout the marking term in between report cards. However even with all of the positives that PowerSchool has to offer, it can also have a negative effect if students begin to check it too often and begin to put undue pressure on themselves. Like all good things, PowerSchool is best in moderation. Weekly check-ins are great, daily check-ins are not. We want students to take ownership of their education in a healthy way.

If you are new to the middle school or are a returning family it is important to recognize that middle school can be a difficult time for students. They are not only growing physically, but emotionally and socially. Their social interaction focus changes from being family based to being more peer based. Their friends and how they are perceived by their friends becomes the most important things in their lives. The transition to middle school can be especially difficult for some 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. The move from a mostly self-contained classroom with the same teacher all day long to multiple classrooms with multiple teachers can be overwhelming for some. Time management and organization become the skills that the 6<sup>th</sup> grade staff assists students to develop over the course of the first month and beyond. It is important to give your child time to adjust to the middle school and the different schedule. If you see your child having trouble adjusting, please contact their teachers or their school counselor.

Adolescence isn't an easy time for students and it usually isn't an easy time for parents either. It is often during the middle school years that parents comment most often that their children don't talk to them as much as they use to. You may not know as much about your child's day as they used to tell you. It's okay. It is part of your child growing up. Ask them questions about their day, talk to them at dinner or in the car, and let them know that you are interested. As adults one of our responsibilities is to reassure and provide our children with the support necessary to help them get through this difficult period of development while providing them the independence that they need to grow socially and emotionally. Keeping this in mind and it will help you get through adolescence too.

Sincerely,

Tony DeMarco  
Principal