



Middle School 101

***A Handbook for Students and Parents
Paulding County School District***

2025-2026

Please note: The information provided in this guide is subject to change as updates and/or requirements become final from the Georgia Department of Education, Paulding County School Board (policy), and/or other agencies such as the Georgia Student Finance Commission Guidelines.

MISSION POSSIBLE: GRADUATION AND BEYOND

BEGINNING MIDDLE SCHOOL

Beginning in Kindergarten, counselors assist students in focusing on *Mission Possible: Graduation and Beyond*. This program supports students in the academic, career and personal/social life domain areas.

Making the move from elementary to middle school can be exciting and challenging for students and parents. Sometimes, it may feel like a roller coaster ride. It can be an unpredictable time with highs and lows, and your student feeling upbeat, inquisitive, and thoughtful one minute or sad and apathetic the next minute. Moving to middle school is a change that can cause a myriad of concerns, emotions, and behaviors for young adolescents and their parents. Not only do students experience stress during this transition, but parents are often concerned about the welfare of their children. Students and parents may have many questions, fears, and even misconceptions.

While everyone makes many transitions during their lifetime, the change from elementary to middle school can bring about many questions and concerns. For many fifth grade students the past six years have been spent in a smaller, more family-style elementary school program, and both students and parents have known what to expect at school. Both knew the policies of the school, what the handbook stated, and the schedule of the day. Parents knew how to help their child to have a successful learning experience. To address this transition, address new feelings, and prepare for an exciting experience in middle school, the middle school advisement handbook has been created.

This handbook addresses:

- Mission Possible
- Transition Events
- Academics
 - Characteristics of Middle School
 - Middle School Curriculum
 - Testing
- Career Awareness, Exploration, and Planning via BRIDGE Advisement
- Personal/Social Issues
 - Characteristics of Middle School Child
 - Concerns of Middle School Students
 - Social Issues
- Parent Involvement
 - What Parents Need to Know
 - Tips for Middle School Parents
- School Personnel
- The Transition
- Middle School Athletics
- Appendix



"Life is like an ever-shifting kaleidoscope - a slight change, and all patterns alter."

Sharon Salzberg

MISSION POSSIBLE: GRADUATION AND BEYOND

Mission Possible: Graduation and Beyond is a district-wide program that places emphasis throughout all grade levels that students and parents/guardians will focus on graduating from high school and students will be College and Career Ready. In addition, students work collaboratively with school counselors to make certain that academic and career goals are identified and met.

Under this initiative, students are referred to as the “Class of”. Therefore, your 5th grade student has been and will be referred to as a student in the Class of 2030. Beginning in January 2013 and throughout all future school years, elementary students have been provided with Career Cluster Awareness lessons. Each 5th grade student has been provided with career information on eleven of these clusters. This, just like the career awareness information provided in elementary, is known as **BRIDGE Advisement**. In addition to these worthwhile activities, students receive academic support and major advisement/transition opportunities. Information is provided for students and parents as the student both enters and leaves middle school as well as high school.

As your student moves to high school, high school counselors also provide academic and career support through major advisement projects, classroom guidance, Career Fairs, mandated **BRIDGE** Law requirements. Individual students who need additional support are provided with credit recovery opportunities, individual and/or group counseling sessions, and mentoring support. High school counselors will implement the counseling program by providing classroom guidance which includes topics in academic skills support; organizational, study and test taking skills; career exploration and planning; and communication, problem-solving, and decision making skills. In addition to classroom guidance, students will be advised in individual student planning. Students along with parents/guardians will have an opportunity to participate in annual major **BRIDGE** Advisement planning sessions. Additionally, students may meet with a counselor to implement goal setting and career plans. Both middle and high school counselors provide "responsive services" support for non-academic needs through either individual or small-group counseling. Also, counselors are intricately involved in the School Improvement Plans, support of testing, and the overall management of the counseling program. School counselors work collaboratively with parents on academic planning and support, one-on-one parent conferencing, and during high school, school-to-work transition programs and post-secondary planning.

Today's young people are living in an exciting time, with an increasingly diverse and mobile society, new technologies, and expanding opportunities. To help ensure that they are prepared to become the next generation of workers, leaders, citizens and parents, every student needs support and guidance while exploring opportunities during the middle and high school years, a time of rapid growth and change. Today, young people face unique and diverse challenges, both personally and developmentally, that impact academic achievement. School counselors do not work in isolation; rather they are integral to the total educational program of all students. They provide proactive leadership that engages all stakeholders in the delivery of programs and services to help the student achieve success in school. Professional school counselors align and work with the school district's mission: For Success Today and Tomorrow, to support the academic achievement of all students as they prepare for the ever-changing world of the 21st century.

MISSION POSSIBLE

5TH TO 6TH TRANSITION EVENTS

BRIDGE Advisement Parent Night

Fifth Grade Parent Night is scheduled by each middle school in May. During the Parent Night opportunity, teachers, administrators and counselors are introduced and a brief PowerPoint Presentation used district-wide is provided for parents/guardians as an overview of what to expect when their children begin middle school. BRIDGE Advisement information is also on the district website under Student Support and then, Counseling Information.

6th Grade Orientation/Transition Opportunity

The transition from elementary to middle school can be scary for both students and their parents. To make this time less stressful, the middle schools of Paulding County hold either a summer opportunity or an early school year transition opportunity. During these special transition programs, students focus on procedural information, the *Just Keep Peace* (anti-bullying district program) as well as academic, career, and social information.



Opportunities Held Outside the School Day

Registration forms are available at each middle school during the Parent Night and until the summer break begins. The registration information is available at the middle schools who hold these opportunities prior to the beginning of school. Therefore, schools begin the registration process for this opportunity at Parent Night in May as well as send information home before the end of the 5th grade school year. The cost for any opportunity that is held outside the school year is decided by individual schools and early registration is requested.

For summer transition opportunities, all materials needed are included in registration packets. Students are asked to wear comfortable clothing and shoes. Food is provided. Extra money may be needed to purchase school spirit wear.

Opportunities Held for Students (within the School Day)

Some middle schools provide intense transition support opportunities during the first two or three weeks of school. For this type of program, there is no registration fee and students concentrate on academic, career, procedural, and social topics through teacher guided lessons that include activities and videos.

Parent Participation in Summer Opportunities (outside the school day)

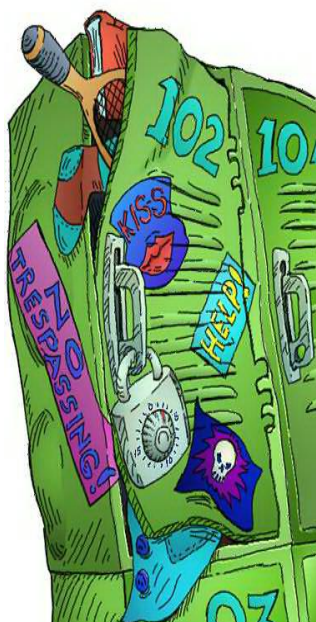
While the students are learning about the structure of middle school, a parent Question and Answer Session is offered to meet with either “Experienced” middle school parents or building administration and staff at some of the district middle schools.

During the May parent night students and parents will learn if the middle school the student will be attending will offer a summer opportunity or will be providing an intense transition opportunity during the school day during the first days of school.

ACADEMICS

The American School Counselor's Association national model has three academic goals: skills for learning, school success, and academics for life success. Middle school students need attitudes, knowledge and skills that will contribute to effective learning. Students often leave an elementary school that they are both comfortable and familiar with and enter a middle school where the expectations for performance and responsibility will increase dramatically. While these students are struggling with the transition from being child-like to adult-like, they are also expected to adjust to a new academic setting.

Standard C. Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work and to life at home and in the community.



- ✓ Teach your student to master big projects by breaking them down into smaller ones. Help your student set realistic goals for completing the project early.

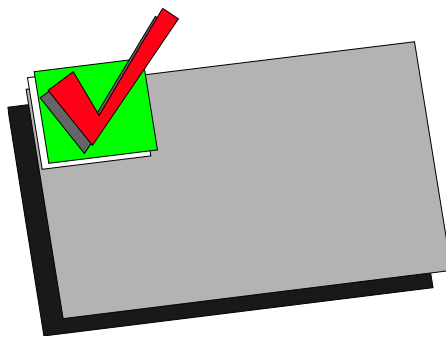
- ✓ Make time for homework. Be sure that your student has a special time each day to complete homework. Help your student balance his or her life: homework vs. other activities.

- ✓ Make a place for homework. Students need a quiet, well-lit place to work. Supplies that are necessary to complete work should be close by and distractions should be kept at a minimum.
- ✓ Encourage your student to prepare for school the night before. Organizing notebooks, selecting clothing, and packing book bags the night before will help your middle school student have a relaxing start for the school day.



Use Reminders

- ✓ Encourage your student to use reminders. There is no way that they can remember everything they need to know in middle school. Reminders can help when they forget their locker combination, bus number, homework assignments, or emergency numbers.
- ✓ Reminders can also be helpful for students when there is a change in routine. Use notes to help your student remember where they are to go after school, what special items they may need for school, or if there is something they need to remember to bring home from school.
- ✓ If you will not be home when your student arrives in the afternoon, you may want to use reminders to help him or her stay on task while you are away.



CHARACTERISTICS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle School Vocabulary

Academic Classes – Middle school students take language arts, mathematics, reading, science, and social studies classes.



Advanced Courses

Students in grades 6th, 7th, and 8th who have met specified criteria in the core courses of Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies may register for an advanced course in one or multiple core courses.

The content in an advanced course is significantly different (more rigorous) in content, pace, process skills, and student expectations. Advanced courses are taught by teachers who have been trained and/or have the gifted endorsement on their teaching certificate. Advanced

courses will better prepare students for the rigor of the high school curriculum including the honors and/or Advanced Placement coursework.

Band and Chorus – Music classes offered through the connections program for interested students at all grade levels. All sixth grade students have the opportunity to attend a band & chorus orientation. These courses are co-curricular.



Connections Classes – Connections classes may include physical education, family and consumer science, business education, general music, art, Spanish I (for qualifying 7th and 8th graders), band, chorus, and math support. Students typically take a different connections class each semester.

Grading Scale – The grading scale in middle school is based on point averages.

A = 100% - 90%

B = 89% - 80%

C = 79% - 70%

F = 69% and below.



High School Courses Taken During Middle School – Students in 8th grade have the opportunity to take advantage of a ninth grade course such as Honors English Lit & Composition I and Honors Algebra: Concepts & Connections. These courses earn 1.0 credit total (.5 credit each semester) with a grade earned of 70 or higher. More information is provided in the Advanced Course section of this guide. In addition, some middle school students can earn credit for Spanish I. The scheduling of this course depends on the school as some have the course split over two years and some schools offer the course in one year. For the first option, 7th grade students earn high school credit in Spanish I A in 7th grade and then, Spanish I B in 8th grade (½ credit for the 7th grade year and ½ credit for the 8th grade year of Spanish I). The second option has Spanish I all in the 8th grade for a full high school credit. Again, this depends on the school.

Homework – The middle school student has homework three to five nights per week. Homework is practice for knowledge. Reviewing notes, reading a chapter in the text, book reports, projects, and other types of written work are examples of homework a middle school student might expect. Sixth grade students should plan on approximately 10-15 minutes of homework per subject. Students need to be motivated to do homework. Students need a quiet place to study and set time limits for weekday evenings. Some reasonable questions to ask your student, when they are struggling with homework are:

Do you understand what you are supposed to do? Please tell me step-by-step.

Have you read the directions?

Do you have everything that you need to complete the task (book, notes, ruler, calculator, pencils, etc.)

Did you miss class when the instructions were given?

Are there terms that you do not understand?

Would it help you to move to a quieter place without distractions?

Make up Work - Parents may request make-up work for their student(s) when they have been absent. Please keep in mind that we must give the teachers 24 hours notice. Note individual school procedures in student handbooks.

Online Courses-Senate Bill 289 Online Learning Opportunities

REQUEST FOR ONLINE COURSES

Senate Bill 289 allows districts to provide students in grades 3 through 12 the option of taking an online course should your student or you choose during the school year.

This option is provided with the understanding that requests are approved based upon the available infrastructure, either physically or technologically, that a school might have. Approval will be based upon available access to computers and supervision when the course is requested to be taken during the school day. However, students may choose to take a course outside of the school day as well.



Online courses can be accessed through our district online course catalog, Georgia Virtual School, or other vendors and local virtual schools. If the online course is taken during any of the regular periods of the school day, there is no cost to the student for the course. However, if an online course is chosen in addition to the regular schedule, the student's parent may incur a charge for the course.

To facilitate the process of registration for an online course, we will accept an electronic application during April, May and June . There will be an application window open each spring for each subsequent year.

ONLINE CLEARINGHOUSE

There is an online clearinghouse of online courses and online course providers available for you. This clearinghouse provides parents and students the ability to search for available courses, online course providers, and guidelines for what constitutes high quality online courses. The clearinghouse may be accessed through the following link:

<http://www.gadoe.org/layouts/GADOEPublic.SPApp/Clearinghouse.aspx>

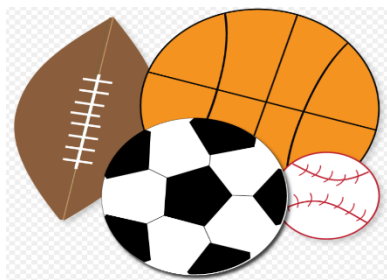
REQUEST ONLINE COURSES

Online Course Request Form - Application will be available starting in early April.

Report Cards – Paulding County Middle Schools operate on the full-year system. Each year is made up of two semesters and each semester is eighteen weeks long. Progress reports are issued each 4 ½ weeks and report cards are issued every nine weeks. With the exception of the connections grades, nine-week grades are not final. In the middle school core academic subjects grades are final at the end of the school year. The end of year report card determines honor roll, promotion and retention. High School courses taken in 8th grade have grades and .5 credit posted to the student’s transcript at the close of each semester (exception 7th and 8th grade Spanish I with .5 credit offered at close of school year). Concerns about grades should be directed to your child’s teacher first. The school counselor will set up a parent conference for you after you have spoken with the teacher(s). Please use Infinite Campus (Parent Portal) to review attendance and grades. You must come to the school and show your ID to receive a code to set up your Parent Portal account.



Schedule – Each individual student is given a schedule of classes. Students have six classes per day plus, depending upon the local middle school, may either have a 45 minute class called Needs Based Instruction (NBI) or an advisement segment. NBI classes are tailored to the academic needs of each individual student. Each student schedule is unique depending upon the needs of the individual.



Sports-Middle School Conference--Sports activities are not available in middle school.

Team/Pod – In some middle schools a middle school student is assigned to a team. For those schools, there are usually three to five teams at each grade level. The team consists of a group of students and teachers who work together throughout the year. Typically, teams consist of three to five teachers. The team concept allows students to have a close student-teacher relationship while still having the opportunity to work with a variety of teachers. The team concept also allows teachers to work together to help each student develop to the best of his/her ability. A middle school team/pod teacher teaches between 90-150 students each day.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Paulding County middle schools serve students in 6th, 7th and 8th grades. There is a rigorous and challenging curriculum for all students in a safe and supportive environment. Intensive instruction is offered in English language arts, reading, science, mathematics, social studies, vocabulary, spelling, health, and for some, World Language, through an instructional program designed to foster a positive learning environment for preadolescent students. Connections classes include a variety of interest areas. Students who meet state guidelines may qualify for special services through the gifted or special education programs.

You may link to core subject areas by going to the department websites via the Paulding County School District website and clicking on Curriculum. The Career Planner is an excellent tool to use when considering completing a high school course(s) during 8th grade.

Advanced Course Criteria for Initial Entry in Middle School – Students Moving from 5th to 6th Grades

Criteria for advanced courses in the core subjects will include district Georgia Milestones, mastery of the standards and work ethic. These core subjects are:

- Advanced Language Arts
- Advanced Mathematics
- Advanced Science
- Advanced Social Studies

Advanced and Honors Courses in English for High School Credit

Beginning in your 8th grade year, you may wish to take Honors English Lit & Composition I for one full credit with .5 credit awarded after the fall semester and .5 credit awarded after the spring semester.

8	Honors English Lit & Composition I	High school course that is taught in the 8 th grade with student earning grade and credit on high school transcript with grade of 70 or higher. Course also receives honors weight. <i>(If a student is not successful, the failing grade is recorded on the high school transcript.)</i> <i>This course does not count as a HOPE Scholarship eligible course.</i>
9	Honors Literature & Composition II	Course receives honors weight with grade earned of 70 or higher on high school transcript.
10	Honors American Literature or AP Language	Course receives honors weight with grade earned of 70 or higher on high school transcript.
11	Honors British Literature or AP Literature	Honors course receives honors weight with a grade earned of 70 or higher. AP Course receives Advanced Placement weight with grade earned of 70 or higher on high school transcript.
12	Dual Enrollment Course at College Or Additional English course	Optional

Advanced, Accelerated and Honors Courses in Mathematics for High School Credit

Some students will take advanced, accelerated and honors math courses in middle school. These are rigorous courses that not only lead to a math unit of credit being recorded on the high school transcript after the 8th grade year, but also provide the opportunity to take rigorous math courses throughout high school.

Advanced and Accelerated Courses in Mathematics

Class of 2030 students may begin this rigorous math curriculum in the 6th grade. The rigorous advanced math curriculum will transition one grade level each year.

For students beginning 6th grade:

Grade	Course Title	Curriculum That is Taught
6	Advanced 6 th Grade Math	All of 6 th grade math standards taught at a deep and rigorous level with opportunities for extension.
7	Advanced 7 th Grade Math	All of 7 th grade math standards taught at a deep and rigorous level with opportunities for extension.
8	Enhanced Grade 8 Mathematics and Algebra: Concepts and Connections	A thoughtful blend of 8 th grade standards and High school Algebra. This course is taught in the 8 th grade with student earning credit for Algebra: Concepts and Connections on the high school transcript with grade of 70 or higher. Course also receives honors weight. <i>(If a student is not successful, the failing grade is recorded on the high school transcript)</i> <i>This course does not count as a HOPE Scholarship eligible course.</i>
9	Honors Geometry: Concepts and Connections	Course receives honors weight with grade earned of 70 or higher on high school transcript.
10	Honors Advanced Algebra: Concepts and Connections	Course receives honors weight with grade earned of 70 or higher on high school transcript.
11	Honors Pre-Calculus: Concepts and Connections	Course receives honors weight with grade earned of 70 or higher on high school transcript.
12	AP Calculus AB or BC or AP Statistics or Dual Enrollment	Course receives Advanced Placement weight with grade earned of 70 or higher on high school transcript.

For students beginning 6th grade:

Grade	Course Title	Curriculum That is Taught
6	Accelerated 6 th Grade Math (Course: 6 th grade and 1 st semester of 7 th grade/ 6 th grade/7A)	All of 6 th grade math standards and 3 units of 7 th grade math standards
7	Accelerated 7 th Grade Math (Course: 2 nd semester of 7 th grade and all of 8 th grade/7B/8 th grade)	The other 7 th grade math standards and all of 8 th grade math standards
8	Honors GSE Algebra I	High school course that is taught in the 8 th grade with student earning credit on the high school transcript with grade of 70 or higher. Course also receives honors weight. <i>(If a student is not successful, the failing grade is recorded on the high school transcript)</i> <i>This course does not count as a HOPE Scholarship eligible course.</i>
9	Honors GSE Geometry	Course receives honors weight with grade earned of 70 or higher on high school transcript.
10	Honors GSE Algebra II	Course receives honors weight with grade earned of 70 or higher on high school transcript.
11	GSE Honors Pre-Calculus	Course receives honors weight with grade earned of 70 or higher on high school transcript.
12	AP Calculus AB or BC or AP Statistics or Dual Enrollment	Course receives Advanced Placement weight with grade earned of 70 or higher on high school transcript.

Criteria for Placement in Advanced Math

Demonstrates 13/17 standards in 5th grade math course
Distinguished (Level 4) on Georgia Milestones Assessment
Advanced (level 4) on Math Inventory

Middle School World Language Program

Students take Spanish I over two years in the 7th and 8th grades or they will take it the course all in the 8th grade. Spanish is offered at each middle school during the regular school day to qualified students. Middle School Spanish entrance requirement criteria is a 6th grade Advanced Language Arts course grade that is a 90 or above for the grade average. At some middle schools there may be a limited number of spaces in the 7th grade Spanish course.

Middle School World Language	Ninth Grade Placement
Successful completion of two years of middle school World Language program with a final passing grade for .5 credit at the end of seventh grade and then, with a final passing grade for .5 credit at the close of eighth grade	Continue in second year of same language OR Begin a new language (Two years in the same World Language are required by colleges and universities for admission)
Failure to complete the World Language course with a passing grade in the seventh or eighth grade year for .5 credit	Take portion of course that student did not pass in ninth grade or begin a new language OR Postpone starting another World Language course until 10 th grade Failing grade is recorded on the high school transcript.
Completing an Online SB289 Course in World Language during 8 th grade year (only during 8 th grade).	Continue in second year of same language, if offered at local high school or apply again for SB289 World Language Online course for ninth grade year. (Two years in the same World Language are required by colleges and universities for admission)
Starting a World Language program in high school rather than opting to begin courses in middle school.	Begin a World Language in 9 th , 10 th , or 11 th grades

At the conclusion of the 7th grade year of World Language study, students who complete the course will be awarded a final grade and ½ unit of high school credit will be recorded on the high school transcript for students who have passed the course with a 70 or higher. Then, at the close of the 8th grade year of World Language study, students who complete the course will be awarded a final grade and another ½ unit of high school credit. Students may continue the language studied in middle school and enroll in the second year World Language class at the local high school or select another World Language for high school study. As high school students graduate, students must have taken a minimum of two World Language courses in the same language to be admitted to college.

For students not enrolled in Middle School World Language

The Middle School World Language course is used to meet high school graduation requirements. However, this grade and credit earned do not count as a part of HOPE Scholarship eligibility.

For students not enrolled in Middle School World Language

Eighth Grade Language Arts	Ninth Grade Placement
A, B, or C average	Enroll in any World Language offered or wait to begin World Language during the tenth grade year

Dual Enrollment Program

Dual Enrollment is a program for High School students in grades 10th-12th. Students take postsecondary (college or technical college courses) while in high school and earn credit on the high school transcript as well as earn up to 30 college hours on their college transcript.



This program is very popular as eligible high school students do not pay for tuition, books, and mandatory fees. The goal of Dual Enrollment is to increase college access and completion and prepare students to enter the workforce with the skills they need to succeed. Students who take advantage of earning high school course credit while in middle school often decide to become a Dual Enrollment student. Counselors provide information beginning in 8th grade regarding this valuable program. In addition, there are two informational Dual Enrollment Summits each year in October and March.

The Counseling Information link for additional information is:

<https://www.paulding.k12.ga.us/Page/23177>

TESTING

The following chart explains the standardized testing that is done in middle school:

Test	Purpose of Test
ACCESS	ACCESS for English Language Learners is administered, annually, to all English Language Learners in Georgia. ACCESS for ELLs is a standards-based, criterion referenced English language proficiency test designed to measure English Language Learners' social and academic proficiency in English. It assesses social and instructional English as well as the language associated with language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies within the school context across the four language domains.
GAA	The GAA is a portfolio of student work that enables the demonstration of achievement and progress relative to selected skills that are aligned to the Georgia curriculum. The portfolio is used to capture student learning and achievement/progress in four content areas: English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies
Georgia Milestones Assessment	Georgia Milestones measures how well students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted content standards in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students in grades 6-8 take these summative assessments.
Test-Out for High School EOC Courses	There is a Georgia State Board of Graduation Rule regarding Awarding Units of Credit, students may opt to "test out" of courses which are associated with End-of-Course assessments. This impacts students wishing to complete a test-out opportunity in up to three of the following eight high school courses: Literature & Composition II, , Algebra: Concepts & Connections, , US History, , and Biology. Middle school students and parents need to listen for information regarding this opportunity during the December-January time frame of the 7th grade school year and/or the 8th grade school year. Information is communicated by school counselors and the Director of Student Assessment. Applicable information is on the school district website.

CAREER PLANNING

National Standards for Career Development

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) has established national standards for school counseling programs that equate career development with academic and personal/social development as the most important factors in student success. These are the ASCA standards for career development:

Standard A. Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self, and to make informed career decisions.

Standard B. Students will employ strategies to achieve future career success and satisfaction.

Standard C. Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education and training, and the world of work.

The World of Work in the 21st Century:

Work situations and skills needed for employment will constantly change.

- Almost half of the working population will change jobs during a three year period
- Retraining and upgrading skills will be required in most careers
- Two-thirds of the jobs will require education beyond high school
- Students need to have a tentative career plan in place by the time they end the first semester of their 8th grade year.

BRIDGE Advisement

BRIDGE (Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia's Economy) Law provides mandated guidelines for elementary students. Students in grades 1-5 began Career Cluster Awareness lessons in January 2013. These Clusters are the following:

1. Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resources
2. Architecture and Construction
3. Arts, Audio-video Technology, and Communications
4. Business Management and Administration
5. Education and Training
6. Energy
7. Finance
8. Government and Public Administration
9. Health Science
10. Hospitality and Tourism
11. Human Services
12. Information Technology
13. Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security
14. Manufacturing
15. Marketing
16. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
17. Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics

BRIDGE Law also provides an opportunity for 5th grade students to complete a career portfolio project on the career of the student's choice. This career is selected from one of the 17 Career Cluster areas. This project includes a research paper and presentation.

BRIDGE Law also focuses on middle and high school students and provides support for all district students regarding career exploration and decision-making. The following is an overview of the BRIDGE ADVISEMENT tasks for middle and high school students:

Middle School

- **The following BRIDGE Law advisement tasks are required to be completed in middle school:**
 - Grade 6
 - Create an electronic profile in You Science.
 - Complete a the career interest survey (“Snippet”) through You Science.
 - Grade 7
 - Complete the career interest & aptitude inventory (“Snapshot”) through You Science
 - 3 Career Concentrations/Clusters will be explored through You Science.
 - Grade 8
 - Individual Graduation Plan must be created in the Multi-Year Academic Planning Tool within Infinite Campus our Student Information System.
 - Dual Enrollment Information must be provided to students and parents/guardians.

High School

- **The following BRIDGE Law advisement tasks are required to be completed in high school in the student’s portfolio:**
 - Grade 9
 - Continued Exploration and research of 3 Careers/Occupations
 - Review BRIDGE Graduation Plan and Update Plan
 - Receive Dual Enrollment Information
 - Grade 10
 - Receive Dual Enrollment Information
 - Review BRIDGE Graduation Plan and Update Plan
 - Grade 11
 - Explore 3 Postsecondary Institutions related to student’s Program of Study/Career Interest Area
 - Review BRIDGE Graduation Plan and Update Plan
 - Review state or local workforce development initiatives
 - Receive Dual Enrollment Information
 - Grade 12
 - Understand Senior Letter that contains all Graduation Requirements
 - Identify and submit “next step” information: 4-year institute, 2-year institute, apprenticeship, military, technical college, special purpose school, or workforce.
 - Participate in Work-based Learning or complete Senior Capstone Project

The following is the BRIDGE Bill that was signed into law on May 20, 2010 by the Georgia General Assembly. The major advisement projects in the Paulding County School District support the requirements of the current BRIDGE Law.

BRIDGE BILL- Section 20-2-327 Part (c) - Georgia General Assembly HB 400 (May 20, 2010)

(c) Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year, students in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades shall be provided counseling, advisement, career awareness, career interest inventories, and information to assist them in evaluating their academic skills and career interests. Before the end of the second semester of the eighth grade, students shall develop an individual graduation plan in consultation with their parents, guardians, or individuals appointed by the parents or guardians to serve as their designee. High school students shall be provided guidance, advisement, and counseling annually that will enable them to successfully complete their individual graduation plans, preparing them for a seamless transition to postsecondary study, further training, or employment. An individual graduation plan shall:

- (1) Include rigorous academic core subjects and focused course work in mathematics and science or in humanities, fine arts, and foreign language or sequenced career pathway course work (Federal Perkins Program of Study (POS))*
- (2) Incorporate provisions of a student's Individualized Education Program (IE), where applicable;*
- (3) Align educational and broad career goals and a student's course of study;*
- (4) Be based on the student's selected academic and career focus area as approved by the student's parent or guardian;*
- (5) Include experience based, career oriented learning experiences which may include, but not be limited to, internships, apprenticeships, mentoring, co-op education, and service learning;*
- (6) Include opportunities for postsecondary studies through articulation, dual enrollment, and joint enrollment;*
- (7) Be flexible to allow change in the course of study but be sufficiently structured to meet graduation requirements and qualify the student for admission to postsecondary education; and*
- (8) Be approved by the student and the student's parent or guardian with guidance from the student's school counselor or teacher adviser.*

An individual graduation plan shall be reviewed annually, and revised, if appropriate, upon approval by the student and the student's parent or guardian with guidance from the student's school counselor or teacher adviser. An individual graduation plan may be changed at any time throughout a student's high school career upon approval.

[Career Opportunity]

Also, as a part of BRIDGE Advisement middle school counselors plan and implement Career Fair opportunities for district students. These events vary throughout the school year depending on the calendar for the local middle school. This opportunity provides students time with an expert in various career fields. Students may also talk with someone in their career area of interest(s).



BRIDGE ADVISEMENT AND CAREER PLANNING CHECKLIST

The following information is the BRIDGE ADVISEMENT CHECKLIST for grades 6-12

Middle School:

Middle School Task	Grade Level and Task #	Career Advisement Processes	School Staff Responsible to Verify Responses
1	6-1	6 th graders will create an electronic career profile. *If logged in through Student Longitudinal Data System Student Backpack, the account is already created for all students.	School Counselors / Advisors
2	6-2	6 th graders complete one career interest inventory and save the results in their career profile.	School Counselors / Advisors
3	7-1	7 th graders will complete at least one additional career interest inventory and save the results in their electronic career profile.	School Counselors / Advisors
4	7-2	7 th graders will explore at least three (3) Career Clusters based on their career inventory results and save the results and career statements in their electronic career profile.	School Counselors / Advisors
5	8-1	8 th graders will complete a career aptitude inventory.	School Counselors / Advisors
6	8-2	8 th graders will use their career interest and career aptitude inventory results to complete an Individual Graduation Plan and to guide registration for 9 th grade courses.	School Counselors / Advisors
7	8-3	8 th graders will receive notification of the Georgia Dual Enrollment program information by the time of their IGP development (flyers, website, e-blast, etc.).	School Counselors / Advisors

High School:

High School Task	Grade Level and Task #	Career Advisement Processes	School Staff Responsible to Verify Responses
9	9-1	9 th graders will explore at least three (3) Careers / Occupations and save the results in their electronic career profile.	School Counselors / Advisors
10	9-2	9 th graders will annually review and revise, if necessary , their Individual Graduation Plan/Program of Study.	School Counselors / Advisors
11	9-3	9 th graders will receive notification of the Georgia Dual Enrollment program information by February 1 each year (flyers, website, e-blast, etc.).	School Counselors / Advisors
12	10-1	10 th graders will complete a career interest and aptitude inventory.	School Counselors / Advisors
13	10-2	10 th graders will annually review and revise, if necessary , their Individual Graduation Plan/Program of Study.	School Counselors / Advisors
14	10-3	10 th graders will receive notification of the Georgia Dual Enrollment program information by February 1 each year (flyers, website, e-blast, etc.).	School Counselors / Advisors
15	11-1	11 th graders will save three possible choices of postsecondary options in their career profile.	School Counselors / Advisors
16	11-2	11 th graders will annually review and revise, if necessary , their Individual Graduation Plan/Program of Study.	School Counselors / Advisors
17	11-3	11 th graders will research at least one additional state or local workforce development initiative , such as "High Demand Careers Initiative," "HOPE Career Grant," "Specialized Training Centers" or any other Georgia workforce and education initiative.	School Counselors / Advisors
18	11-4	11 th graders will receive notification of the Georgia Dual Enrollment program information by February 1 each year (flyers, website, e-blast, etc.).	School Counselors / Advisors
19	12-1	12 th graders will complete "Next Step" information as saved to their electronic career portfolio: 4-year institution, 2-year institution, apprenticeship, military, technical college, special purpose (vocational) school or workforce.	School Counselors / Advisors

BRIDGE ADVISEMENT AND CAREER PLANNING

Beginning in Grade 6 the IC Portal is used.

The Account Name/User Name for the student to use the IC Portal is:

Student Number

Password: Network with local school counselor regarding password.

The IC Student Portal lets the student utilize important resources on the Georgia Career Information System.

BRIDGE Advisement “Your Individual Graduation Plan”

Using the district BRIDGE Advisement Plan document, the 8th grade student updates the “Your Plan of Study” information also known as the **Individual Graduation Plan** or IGP. This chart represents the fields of information that are updated. The IC MYAP tool is utilized the spring semester of 8th grade and all subsequent high school years.

	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade	Total Units
English/ Language Arts					
Math					
Social Studies					
Science					
Health					
Physical Education					
CTAE					
World Language					
Fine Arts					
Electives					

4-year Total: _____

Helping Your Middle School Student Plan for a Career:

- ✚ Discuss your student's skills, interests, abilities, and goals to begin planning for the future.
- ✚ Encourage good work habits at home.
- ✚ Increase responsibilities gradually.
- ✚ Help your student make the connection between education and careers.
- ✚ Talk with your student about your own work, and/or the work of friends, neighbors, and/or relatives.
- ✚ Allow children to explore their interests by using the local library.
- ✚ Help your child begin thinking about the choices they will make in high school that will impact their career choices.
- ✚ Get information about the middle and high school courses your student will need to pursue their interests.
- ✚ Help your student find ways to volunteer for a charity or community organization.
- Look at newspapers and job opportunities with your student. Investigate the changing job market.
- Support your student on the Georgia Career Information website for career/college exploration and planning.

Again, school assisting each middle school individualized maintaining a this valuable BRIDGE



counselors will be student during the years in developing an career plan and Career Portfolio. All of support is known as Advisement.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES

National Standards for Personal/Social

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) has established national standards for school counseling programs that will help students acquire respect for self and others, goal setting and goal-attainment skills and survival and safety skills. These are the ASCA standards for the personal/social counseling domain:

Standard A. Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

Standard B. Students will make decisions, set goals and take necessary action to achieve goals.

Standard C. Students will understand safety and survival skills.

Middle school students have a lot of ups and downs with their friends. They often leave home with one “best friend” and return home the same afternoon with a different “best friend”. Help your child understand that people are special and unique and have differences of opinion. Friends may even become angry at each other, but that does not have to mean that the friendship is over. Remind your child that one problem does not have to end a relationship. Working through conflicts is an important life skill. Teach your child the value of compromise and when it is appropriate to end a friendship. Middle school students have to learn that being “best friends” isn’t always smooth sailing.



Middle school students are faced with positive and negative peer pressure. Help your child maintain a positive self-concept and encourage your student to use their influence to inspire others to do the right thing. Reinforce with your student that our differences are what make us unique. While most middle school students want to be different, they are more likely to conform to the values of the group if they are not self-confident. Know the group of friends your student has acquired. Know what your student is doing on social media. Role-play situations with your child and help them determine solutions that are in line with your family values. Give your child permission to use you as an excuse when faced with situations involving negative peer pressure. Knowing that you are always there for them will create a safety net for your student.

PERSONAL/SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



Being a successful student is what school is about. Yet, we know that sometimes what you think and feel may get in the way of academic success. If you are having problems with friends or others, this may distract you from focusing on school. For this reason, school counselors help you develop the following standards for success in your personal and social life.

Standard A: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

Standard B: Students will make decisions, set goals and take necessary action to achieve goals.

Standard C: Students will understand safety and survival skills.

(Source: The American School Counselor Association National Model)

HOW SELF-AWARENESS HELPS YOU LEARN

When you purchase a new smart phone, game or hair dryer, you read the instructions, so you will know how everything works. You should do the same thing with your brain and think about developing your self-awareness. Determine your self-image, attitudes, and habits.

To build your self-esteem:

- Be CONFIDENT and trust that you are a powerful person.
- Know that everyone is unique and embrace others who are different than you are.
- Do not be discouraged by the mistakes that you make.
- Always treat others in a kind manner.
- Be KIND to yourself.
- Believe in yourself.
- Think positively and distance yourself from negative people.
- Do your best at all times and take pride in everything that you do.

To build your attitude:

- Your attitude affects everything you do.
- Your attitude will either energize or drain you.
- A positive attitude opens your mind to many possibilities.
- You always have the power to treat others with RESPECT.

To increase your positive habits:

- Identify the bad habits that may prevent or slow you down from reaching your goals or potential.
- Review your habits from time to time and see if you need to change a habit.

GOAL SETTING

Throughout high school, you begin evaluating your life, whether it is day-to-day details, a short term project, or a long-term project. A goal moves you toward something that you want to strive for or attain. Goals incorporate prioritizing, managing time, setting up a plan or schedule, and staying flexible. GOALS WILL HELP YOU SEE YOUR PURPOSE CLEARLY!

GETTING CONNECTED TO OTHERS

You need the adults in your high school, so make an effort to form positive relationships with:

Teachers—Obviously, they are there to guide students and to help students learn the course content. However, they are not just interested in giving out homework and having you taking tests. Teachers can be great resources to help you with your career plans, especially as you learn what your favorite subjects are. Teachers also can be very good listeners for any type of issue that you are facing.

Professional School Counselors—His or her very reason for being at your school is to support you and see you succeed. Remember to discuss academic, personal/social, and career issues with your counselor. They will assist you in settling conflicts and making smart choices.

Other Adults—There are all types of adults who will support you —the resource office, school nurse, media specialists, and administrators are only a partial list.

EMOTIONAL/MENTAL HEALTH - Keep in touch with your school counselor regarding any life issues for which you need support. Reaching out for help is a sign of **STRENGTH**.

Taking care of yourself means being emotionally healthy too. Talking to your school counselor is a great way to keep yourself from getting overwhelmed by the demands in your life. School counselors have resources to help you. Sometimes, students need to see a therapist for additional mental health support. When they do, therapists can meet with them at school, at home or in offices. School counselors work with school staff to maintain confidentiality when students meet with therapists at school.

Paulding County School District staff are trained in suicide prevention. If you are having suicidal thoughts or are worried about a friend, tell a trusted adult or contact a crisis line, or make a report using the Vector Solutions App.

Crisis Numbers

Free, Confidential, 24 Hours/Day, 7 Days/Week

Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741741

Georgia Crisis Line: Call 1-800-715-4225

BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM

The Paulding County School District supports the use of Evidence-Based programs to improve the culture and climate in schools while systematically decreasing bullying behaviors.

Bullying prevention should be a schoolwide initiative in order to be the most effective at improving the climate of the school.

Programs that are being implemented in PCSD to improve school climate and reduce bullying behaviors:

- ❖ Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports (PBIS)

- ❖ Capturing Kids Hearts
- ❖ Sources of Strength
- ❖ Olweus Bullying Prevention Program
- ❖ Restorative Practices

Bullying is a behavior that is:

- ❖ **Repeated** by the same person multiple times, by several people or online
- ❖ **Intentional** – it was done on purpose to hurt or threaten the targeted student
- ❖ **Power Imbalance** – the targeted student feels like they can't defend themselves because the other student is older, bigger, more popular, etc.

The district program believes in these best practices:

- ❖ The focus is on the social climate of the school so that the learning environment is positive and norms are developed against bullying behaviors.
- ❖ Data is used to assess bullying at each school as well as at the district level to estimate the nature and prevalence of bullying.
- ❖ Through training sessions and workshops, information is shared so that both staff and parents buy-in to support bullying prevention.
- ❖ A representative group is developed to support each school's bullying prevention activities and program plan and to assess data results.
- ❖ Training for school staff presenting classroom guidance activities for students include the definition of bullying, the effects of bullying, how to respond when bullying is observed, how to support others in bullying situations, and how to report bullying.

Bullying prevention takes active participation of administrators, counselors, teachers, other district personnel, parents and students along with the community. It takes all stakeholders to create a positive school climate where students are respectful to each other.

In addition to bullying prevention, the district program addresses and supports the aftermath and consequences of a student who has bullied another student.

Please note: All school districts in Georgia will have a Bullying Prevention Policy and Protocol in place.

Download the Vector Solutions APP!

Bullying, suicidal ideation, harassment, weapons, drugs and other events can be reported through this anonymously.

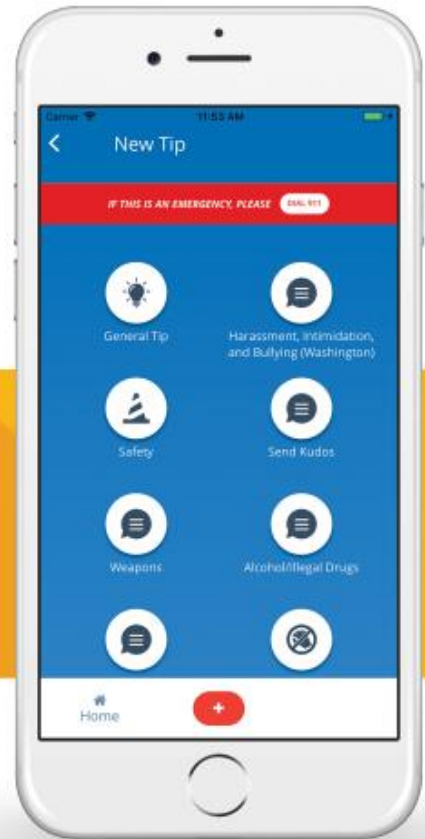


Paulding County School District

Report It

Vector Alert is our district's tip reporting service. If you have information about a threat to our safety, do your part and report it! And remember, you can remain anonymous.

SUBMIT USING OUR APP



MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS

Currently, there are no middle school athletic programs due to budget constraints.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

There is not a "typical" middle school student. Every student remains an individual with strengths and concerns. Early adolescence begins around age ten. This is the time when a child changes in four areas--intellectual, physical, behavioral, and social. The concerns and needs of early adolescence are distinct, yet each child is an individual with unique characteristics.

Intellectual

- ❖ Are reflective, analytical, and introspective regarding thoughts and feelings
- ❖ Moving from concrete facts to thinking in more abstract ways
- ❖ Intensely curious
- ❖ Prefers active learning and working in groups with peers
- ❖ Enjoys meaningful learning – developing skills that relate to real life
- ❖ Exhibits independent, critical thought
- ❖ Personal-social concerns are primary; academic goals are secondary
- ❖ Experience meta-cognition – understand what they know and do not know

Physical

- ❖ Increases in height, weight, heart size, lung capacity, and muscular strength
- ❖ Mature at varying rates – girls earlier than boys, typically
- ❖ Lack of coordination due to uneven muscle/bone development
- ❖ Marked differences in development among children
- ❖ Experience changes in metabolism
- ❖ Appearance becomes more important

Behavioral/Emotional

- ❖ Are asking themselves, "Who am I?"
- ❖ Behaviors can fluctuate from anxiety and fear to bravado and superiority
- ❖ Chemical and hormonal imbalances create range in emotions
- ❖ Moody, restless, self-conscious, and introspective
- ❖ Basically optimistic, hopeful
- ❖ Searching for adult identity, even when peer groups are very important
- ❖ Take risks and love danger and adventure; feel immortal
- ❖ Will cry easily and frequently and can quickly be offended by criticism
- ❖ Needs time to grow up emotionally as well as physically – the body will outgrow the mind
- ❖ Extremely sensitive to criticism, yet highly self-critical
- ❖ Overreacts to any form of rejection and often feels inadequate
- ❖ Hides true feelings behind sarcasm or silence or humor

Social

- ❖ Refer to peers for standards and models of behavior
- ❖ Rebellious toward parents, yet still impacted by family values
- ❖ Loyal to peer group values; very responsive to fads
- ❖ Want to be independent from families; yet still want approval from family members
- ❖ Need love and affirmation from significant adults--teachers and family members
- ❖ Will challenge authority figures; may act out by being aggressive or argumentative
- ❖ Worry a lot about what their friends think about them
- ❖ Search to establish positive social relationships with members of the opposite sex
- ❖ Want increased rights and responsibilities, but frequently won't be able to handle them

CONCERNS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

- Appearance and peer status
- Being able to open the lockers
- Being with friends, especially having someone to sit with at lunch
- Finding lockers, classes, and bathrooms
- Getting on the right bus
- Getting through crowded halls
- Getting to class on time
- Keeping up with belongings and the work
- Knowing and following the rules
- Larger school building
- Making new friends
- More responsibility
- More teachers
- No free time during the school day
- Peer Pressure and Social Media
- Physical differences in peers
- Safety issues such as bullies and harassment
- Social status

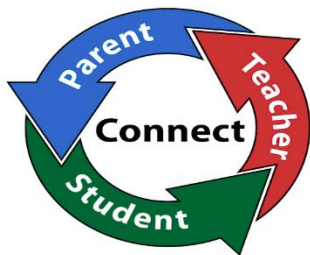
PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement in middle school is important to the success of your student and the school. Parents need not mistakenly believe that this is the time for them to withdraw from the educational process and let their student become completely independent. While developing independence is crucial for the young person, there is a difference in dominating your student and providing prudent guidance. In fact, research shows that students whose parents stay involved in their education and keep their student connected to school activities have students who are more successful in school. Grades and test results are higher, students' attitudes and behaviors are more positive, academic programs are more successful, and the schools are more effective. Becoming involved in your student's education at

this age can be a big job, but it is well worth it. Quality education now will be the key to obtaining good jobs over the next several decades for your student.

How can you get involved?

- ❖ Get to know the teachers and the counselors at the middle school
- ❖ Read all information about school policies and curriculum carefully
- ❖ Get involved in PTSA
- ❖ Volunteer at the school – there are many ways that you can assist the school without having direct contact with your student, i.e., media center, grounds committee, fundraisers, chaperone field trips, proctor during standardized testing, etc.
- ❖ Participate in committees or parent groups at the school
- ❖ Go to school whenever you are invited. Whether it is a BRIDGE advisement opportunity, parent-teacher conference week, a band concert, a school play, or a parent meeting, attend every event possible at the school.



What parents need to know...

The first 10 days of school....

- ❑ **Make certain you have taken care of immunization requirements.** The state of Georgia Department of Human Resources requires that all sixth grade students show proof of meeting current immunization requirements on Form 3231. Students entering sixth grade must have had two MMR vaccines and show proof of immunity to varicella. All requirements are at this district website link: <http://www.paulding.k12.ga.us/administrativeDepartment2.aspx?aid=10>
- ❑ Find out the names of building administrators and counselors along with phone numbers.
- ❑ Know your student's team name, if applicable at your middle school.
- ❑ Know your student's core teachers (language arts, math, science, and social studies).
- ❑ Ask the time of day for electives or connections courses.
- ❑ Know that core teachers may have conference times available during connections times.
- ❑ Ask your student about their lunch schedule.
- ❑ Be certain that you understand the middle school dress code.
- ❑ Get information about your student's bus number, bus route and driver.
- ❑ Find out what communication you can expect--newsletters, websites, etc.
- ❑ Know the procedures for having medication administered during the school day.

Throughout the year

- ❑ Middle schools have one parent-teacher conference week each year during the Fall Semester, usually in October and another opportunity during the Spring Semester in March.
- ❑ If your student is absent from school, he/she is responsible for making up all missed assignments.
- ❑ Middle schools welcome parent volunteers!
- ❑ Middle school students have one or more lockers. Students may be assigned a hall locker and/or a physical education locker. Locks are provided at the school and additional locks are not permitted.
- ❑ Middle schools dress codes are different from those of most elementary schools. All students are expected to dress in a manner that demonstrates respect of the learning environment. See the student handbook for more detailed information.
- ❑ Parents may establish a lunch account for their student.
- ❑ Many schools provide a supply list for students and these can often be found on the school web site.
- ❑ All Paulding County schools (K-12) adhere to a strict policy prohibiting harassment and/or bullying. **Just Keep Peace** is the bullying prevention program and additional information may be found on the PCSD website regarding this important program. Students are also expected to follow an established behavior management plan.
- ❑ Middle schools offer a variety of clubs and activities for students. Encourage your student to get involved!
- ❑ Middle schools typically separate students by grade level. Sixth grade students rarely interact with seventh or eighth grade students.
- ❑ **Organization and time management are vital components** to your student's adjustment to middle school.
- ❑ Communication is the key to success in middle school. Communication with your student and his/her teachers will help your child achieve academic as well as career and personal/social success in middle school.



TIPS FOR PARENTS

Parents are by far the most important teachers our children will ever have, and they learn primarily from what we do, not what we say. It will be hard for your student to be caring if you are unconcerned; for them to be positive, if you are dismal; for them to love, if they feel unloved. Show interest in your student's work. Let him/her know that it is important and that you have high expectations. Be willing to help them with their work, but not to do it for them. There is no substitute for spending time with children. Not just "quality" time, occasionally, but lots of time...time to work, time to play, time to laugh, and time to bond with each other. Enjoy the middle school years!

- Be consistent. Set firm, clear rules and stick to them!
- Don't believe that, "everybody else gets to. . ."
- Have comfortable conversations with your student. Talk with your child and listen. Avoid talking "to" them. Listen to your student as you talk together each day and offer praise and encouragement. Listen to the unspoken messages, just as intently as you do the spoken messages.
- Give your student an appropriate amount of freedom and responsibility.
- Spend time as a family unit.
- Be sure criticism is constructive and not destructive.
- Follow through. Don't make idle threats. If you say that they cannot go to a friends on Friday, then stick with that statement.
- Never be afraid to say "NO!" Never be afraid to check out where they are going and when they will be home.
- Distinguish between, "I don't like you," and "I don't like your behavior."
- Be sure you apply rewards and consequences in a firm, fair, and appropriate manner.
- Listen when your student wants to talk to you. It may not be the best time for you, but stop and listen. Typically, they know when you are preoccupied with something else.
- Work to build a relationship of mutual respect and trust.
- Help your student find activities in which he or she excels. It is extremely important that students have a school connection--sports, band, and performing arts are all good school connectors.
- Help your child accept and like who they are.
- Set realistic goals and expectations with your child.
- Know what is going on at school. Parents who volunteer at school feel more connected to their student because they know what is going on at school.
- Check your student's homework, book bag, and notebook daily.
- Know who your student's friends are, where their time is spent, and what they spend their money on.
- Encourage your child to try new things, learn new skills.
- Tell them that it is OK to fail and act that way when they do fail.
- Teach them that making mistakes is a part of learning and that learning takes effort, time and practice. Get help when you need it. Be patient! Success doesn't happen overnight.



Administration

The administration of a middle school usually consists of a principal, one or more assistant principals, and/or one or more administrative assistants. The administration has many responsibilities including the operation of the school as well as a positive learning environment for students. Administrators are there every step of the way to support students in the valuable learning process. These school officials work to ensure the success and safety of the learning community. They are valuable assets to the school and community!



Counselors

The Middle School Counseling Program is part of the Paulding County Comprehensive Counseling Program and mirrors the framework of the American School Counselor's Association National model. The program supports students in three counseling/life domains--academic, career, and personal social. The program is developmental and proactive as it builds on the counseling program established in the elementary school and prepares students for the high school counseling program. Middle school students continue with BRIDGE Advisement activities to prepare each student to be college and career ready. The focus of the counseling program facilitates student learning and academic success. Like the elementary and high school levels, there are four delivery system services--school guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services and system support. Middle school counselors are available to work with students, parents, and teachers through guidance, counseling, consultation services, and referrals.



Media Specialist

The media specialist in the middle school can help your student with much more than locating a book. They are experts in research and technology and can provide a variety of services for students, parents, and teachers.

Teachers

Middle School Teachers involve students in the learning process through a variety of teaching strategies and techniques. The classroom is positive with teachers accepting a variety of learning styles and an acceptance and understanding of each student's differences. Teachers have a genuine concern for all children and help every student to "focus on learning" and be prepared for high school and beyond.

TRANSITION CHART

Differences in Elementary & Middle Schools

Elementary School	Middle School
One teacher and classroom	Different teachers and classrooms
Expectations that students are used to with frequent reminders from teachers	Expectations may be different and students are given more responsibility
Belongings stored in the classroom with teacher assistance	Students have specific place or locker to store belongings
Same students in each class	Different students in each class
Many of the same students kindergarten through fifth grade	Students coming from different schools. New opportunities to make friends.
Limited choices	Choices for clubs, organizations, band, chorus, orchestra, and intramurals.
Work is completed in class with some homework.	Students receive more homework and must learn how to organize book bags, lockers, materials, and their time.
Testing Georgia Milestones Assessments - 3rd - 5th Grades Math Inventory Screener (K-5)	Testing Georgia Milestones Assessments - 6 th - 8th Grades Math Inventory Screener (6-8)

APPENDIX

WEBSITES

Academics and Education

- <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us> - Georgia Department of Education This site offers more than 7,000 pages of educational materials.
- www.paulding.k12.ga.us- Paulding County School District - Here you will find current information regarding county policies, curriculum, and links to individual schools. Click on Counseling Program for K-12 information
- <http://www.education-world.com/students/study/index.shtml> -Education World - Study Skills and Homework Help
- <http://www.middleweb.com/Homework.html> - homework sites
- <http://www.how-to-study.com> - Designed to help students do better in school
- www.schooldiscovery.com - Another extremely useful resource is Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators, which has a "homework helper" section with links to all sorts of educational resources

Career Planning

- www.collegeboard.org - Information to aid in the transition from high school to college.
- www.bls.gov/oco - Search by keyword, index, or occupational cluster.
- www.math.unl.edu/~nmsi/tQ2/3index1.html - Designed to help students think about futures in math, science, and technology.
- www.ulinks.com/main.html - Virtual tours of universities.
- www.vocabulary.com - Vocabulary is extremely important in SAT exams, and you can brush up on your skills on this site.
- www.WorkmanWeb.com - More definitions and SAT test-taking advice.
- www.number2.com - More definitions and SAT test-taking advice.
- www.gomath.com - Free math help using simple animation to bring problems and solutions to life.



General Educational Resources

- <http://www.pta.org/commonsense> - Strategies for raising alcohol and drug-free children provided by National PTA.
- www.nagc.org/parentinfo/index.html - Includes characteristics of various areas of giftedness.
- <http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/cise/ose/parents> - Information for parents whose children are in special education classes.
- www.parentingteens.com - A newsletter with valuable ideas for parents.
- www.talkingwithkids.org - An overview of the health concerns facing many young people
- www.ed.gov - United States Department of Education
- <http://ericeece.org/midlink.html> - This page lists Internet sites that focus on (or have some section that focuses on) middle level education or the development of adolescents.

Safety on the Internet



- www.safekids.com/contract.htm - Family contract for online safety. Guidelines for parents and their children.
- www.safeteens.com/safeteens.htm - Teen safety on the information highway. Learn about the dangers so that the positive aspects of the internet can be enjoyed.

High School Course Taken During 8th Grade

Parent Information Letter for 7th Grade Student Taking Honors English Lit & Composition I Course during 8th Grade Year



Dear Parents,

With the successful completion (maintaining an 80 or higher average) of seventh grade Advanced Language Arts, your student will have the opportunity to take Honors English Lit & Composition I, which is a ninth grade course, in eighth grade.

Students and parents should consider the following before making a decision to take Honors English Lit & Composition I:

- Students will take the 8th grade Georgia Milestone in English
- Students will take the English Language Arts state end of course assessment. The state EOC assessment will count 20% of the student's final course grade and their final course grade will post to their high school transcript.
- Grades will be posted to transcript at the end of each semester. Passing grades will be awarded credit on their transcript.
- Honors courses successfully completed with the final average of 70 or higher will have five (5) quality points added to the final numeric average. The numeric average is used to determine class rank at the local schools.
- Honors courses at the middle school level do not calculate into HOPE criteria.
- Honors courses at the middle school level will calculate into class rank and GPA.

Student success is our main goal and we want the most successful placement for them. Review the information above and then complete the portion below. Return the completed portion to your student's homeroom teacher.

Student's name: _____

- ☐ I would like to enroll my student in Honors English Lit & Composition I.
- ☐ I do not wish for my student to be enrolled in Honors English Lit & Composition I.

Parent's Signature: _____

High School Course Taken During 8th Grade

Parent Information Letter for 7th Grade Student Taking Honors Algebra: Concepts & Connections during 8th Grade Year.



Dear Parents,

With the successful completion (maintaining an 80 or higher average) of seventh grade Accelerated Math, your student will have the opportunity to take Honors Algebra: Concepts & Connections, which is a ninth grade course, in eighth grade.

Students and parents should consider the following before making a decision to take Honors Algebra: Concepts & Connections:

- Students will take the 8th grade Georgia Milestone assessment in Math.
- Students will take the Algebra: Concepts & Connections state end of course assessment. The state EOC assessment will count 20% of the student's final course grade and their final course grade will post to their high school transcript.
- Grades will be posted to transcript at the end of each semester. Passing grades will be awarded credit on their transcript.
- Honors courses successfully completed with the final average of 70 or higher will have five (5) quality points added to the final numeric average. The numeric average is used to determine class rank at the local schools.
- Honors courses at the middle school level do not calculate into HOPE criteria.
- Honors courses at the middle school level will calculate into class rank and GPA.

Student success is our main goal and we want the most successful placement for them. Review the information above and then complete the portion below. Return the completed portion to your student's homeroom teacher.

Student's name: _____

- ☐ I would like to enroll my student in Honors Algebra: Concepts & Connections.
- ☐ I do not wish for my student to be enrolled in Honors Algebra: Concepts & Connections.

Parent's Signature: _____

Questions and Answers Regarding Taking High School Courses during Middle School

Why should my student take a high school course in 8th grade?

Taking high school courses during the 8th grade year provides opportunities for students to take advanced courses when they are juniors and/or seniors. Students have opportunities to take a variety of Advanced Placement rigorous courses that may be recognized at a college or university that the student will attend. Students may also complete additional pathway courses. In addition, students have the option to take advantage of Dual Enrollment courses. Students earn high school credit via Dual Enrollment program as well as college hours as they attend a college, university, or technical college while in high school. Finally, a student may want to graduate at the end of the 3rd year of high school or after the fall semester of the 4th year of high school to move on to his/her college and career goal. Taking high school courses during the 8th grade year means that graduation requirements may be met at these checkpoints.

What will now be my student's course sequence in high school?

Grade Level	Math	English
9 th	Honors Geometry: Concepts & Connections	Honors Literature & Composition II
10 th	Honors Advanced Algebra: Concepts & Connections	Honors American Literature or AP Language
11 th	Honors GSE Pre-Calculus or AP Statistics or Dual Enrollment	Honors British Literature or AP Literature or Dual Enrollment
12 th	AP Calculus or Dual Enrollment	Academic Elective or Dual Enrollment

What is the difference between an Honors course and a regular course?

Honors courses follow the same Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) as non-honors courses, however the content is studied at a much deeper level and it is often at a quicker pace than in a non-honors course. As long as a student earns a grade of 70 or above, 5 points will be added to the student's average in the course at the close of each semester. With HOPE scholarship calculations for an honors course, however zero points will be added to their average.

How are credits awarded?

Credits are awarded on the high school transcript. One credit is awarded for the completion of the full year course. These course credits will be awarded with a .5 credit at the end of the fall semester and a .5 credit at the end of the spring semester. High school courses that are taken during the 8th grade year count toward graduation requirements. Grades for these courses are calculated into the local numeric and 4.0 scale GPAs (weighted and unweighted) that are printed on the official high school transcript. These courses will also count for class rank.

How will this impact HOPE?

The HOPE grade point average is not impacted by the high school courses taken during middle school. Georgia Student Finance Commission does not calculate any high school course grades taken during middle school.

If they do not take Honors Algebra: Concepts & Connections or Honors English Lit & Composition I in 8th grade, what Math, Science, or English course will they take in 8th grade?

Students not taking Honors Algebra: Concepts & Connections will take 8th grade Math.

Students not taking Honors English Lit & Composition I will take 8th Language Arts.

Questions and Answers Regarding Advanced Courses in Middle School Continued

What are the criteria for students for initial placement in an advanced course?

There are 2 criteria for an advanced course. Refer to criteria information on page 9.

Are the criteria the same for gifted students?

No. Gifted students do not have to qualify for advanced courses since they have already qualified for the gifted program. Gifted students had to take a battery of tests in the areas of mental abilities, achievement, creativity, and motivation in order to be eligible for the gifted program. Per the state gifted rule, the district is required to serve gifted students. The Paulding County school district serves gifted students at the middle school in advanced courses.

What is the continuation criterion and is it the same for both gifted and non-gifted students in advanced courses?

Per the state gifted rule, districts must have a continuation plan in place to determine if gifted students remain in the gifted program. Paulding County's continuation plan is that students must maintain a nine-week average of an 80 or above.

Since advanced courses are heterogeneously grouped with both gifted and non-gifted students, the continuation plan applies to all students in advanced courses.

What happens if a student does not meet the continuation criteria?

After a nine-week grading period, students who have not maintained an 80 average should be placed on probation for the next nine-week grading period. Teachers are required to implement an improvement plan for all students who have been placed on probation.

What happens if a student is on probation and still does not make an 80 or above?

Students on probation have until the end of the next nine-week grading period to improve their grade. If at the end of the probationary nine-week period a student's grade is still not above an 80, the teacher should use their professional judgment as to whether or not the student should remain in the course. If the student has made progress per their improvement plan but has still not reached an 80, then the teacher could determine that it is best for the student to remain in the advanced course. If the student has continued to struggle and is at risk of receiving a failing grade, then the teacher should talk to their administrator about finding a better placement for the student. In many cases, there is not an alternate regular class where students can be placed so only those that are the most at risk of failing should be removed all together.

Gifted students that fail to maintain an 80 after the probationary period should have their gifted status removed from Infinite Campus for that course. Teachers must communicate with their Gifted Lead teacher as well as their AP scheduler so that they can make those changes. Gifted status can be reinstated after a gifted student has maintained an 80 or above for a nine-week grading period.

Criteria for Continuation: Student must meet 2 of the following 3 criteria to continue on in an advanced course.



The process of becoming who we truly are brings forth infinite, ever-changing possibilities. The human journey that we share with our children and with each other is one of constant creation and recreation. We must all be patient with one another and allow our children to shine as brightly as the stars in the night sky!