Harmony Middle School
2021-2022
WELCOME PARENTS
August Orientation
Welcome all six feeder schools!
(312 kids for WHS class of 2028)

Culbert ES (1/3)
Hillsboro Charter (all)
Lovettsville ES (all)
Mt View ES (1/2)
Round Hill ES (all)
Waterford ES (all)
What did your child do this morning?

- Went on a building tour and became comfortable with the school layout
- Participated in many activities to begin making connections with other kids
- Reviewed their class schedule and locker assignment
- Met with an 8th Grade “student coach” (we call them WEB Leaders) and several staff members
Topics for today

● “Balance” Theme

● “Communication” to help the kids

● Quick peek at school focus areas: Safety, Climate, and Instruction
Topics For Today

- Samples of “Balance”
- “Communication” to help each other
- Quick peek at school focus areas: Safety, Climate, and Instruction
Providing “Balance”
Teen Brains are Still Maturing

Maturity at age 25

Reason
Decision Making

Emotion, Feelings, Motivation

Frontal Lobe
Thinking
Speaking
Memory
Movement

Parietal Lobe
Language
Touch

Occipital Lobe
Vision
Color perception

Temporal Lobe
Hearing
Learning
Feelings

Brain Stem
Breathing
Heart rate
Temperature

Cerebellum
Balance
Coordination
Teen Brain (tips from URMC)

- Adults **have the ability** to think with the rational part of their brains
- The **rational** part of a teen brain isn’t fully developed (until age 25)
- Teenagers process information with the **emotional** part of their brain
- When kids have overwhelming emotional input, it is difficult to explain what they did and how they were feeling
Teen Brain (tips from URMC)

- Teachers and parents (and peers) are important influences on kids.

- Discussing consequences of actions can help teens link impulsive thinking with facts. This helps the brain make connections and wires the brain to make this link more often.

- Parents and staff can help by becoming familiar with things that are important to them. (We don’t have to like their music but adults showing an interest in the things kids like lets them know we care about them.)

- make connections - “As adults, we guide, teach, and work with each other to make things better.”

- (One of reasons we have ADVISORY - to be explained later)
Teen Brain (tips from URMC)

- From the same article *, “(Adults) sometimes jump in with advice and try to fix children's’ problems or place blame. But this can make teens less likely to be open with (them) in the future. You may want to make it emotionally safe and easy for them to come to you so you can be part of their lives.”
- Balance #2 - Independence versus Enabling (example of Ben’s accident)
- Decide when teens come to you with problems if they want you to just respond or to just listen.
- We want to teach kids to face struggles without us (it’s a little like teaching them to drive).
- *https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/encyclopedia/content.aspx?ContentTypeID=1&ContentID=3051
Topics For Today

- Samples of “Balance”
- “Communication” to help each other
- Quick peek at school focus areas: Safety, Climate, and Instruction
Communication is Key

● Smore Newsletters (fancy school newsletter from me through Connect Ed) – every 1 or 2 weeks
● Harmony News -” BY TOPIC” (another type of Connect Ed from me - but usually bulleted or for single announcements)
● Harmony website (all news and newsletters will be posted)
● “Naviance” counselor updates
● Teacher sites and emails
● Schoology (instruction) and PARENTVUE (grades)
Communication Sample #1

- Your child comes home upset and says the teacher yelled at the class (or him / her)
- Two Options; write principal or superintendent OR contact the teacher directly
- Things to think consider; emergency? long term effects, have you heard both sides, who needs to know

- Should you contact the teacher or the counselor or the dean or the principal?
  - You can ALWAYS contact me.
  - Good way to think about it...If you were the teacher, would you want to know about it and have a fair chance to give your side?

- Sample to Discuss (from parent, “Mr. L”)
- Our (parents and school) success is being on the same team and helping our kids learn skills of independence and communication
Communication Sample #2

- Your child comes home upset and states that he/she is angry or says he/she is angry...
- How to help? Get them to be specific.
- Anger is easy to say but can be filled with different emotions. Try to get to the specific root cause of the anger.
- What KIND of anger? (sadness, lonely, hurt, embarrassed, helpless, pain, stress, guilt, jealous, scared, tired, hungry, overwhelmed, etc.)
- Try to find the specific feeling so that can be communicated back to the teacher, counselor, dean, or principal.
- Make a plan for your child when he/she encounters a challenge - and if possible, have him/her as the initiator.
- Our (parents and school) success is being on the same team and helping our kids learn skills of independence and communication.
Topics For Today

● Samples of “Balance”

● “Communication” to help each other

● Quick peek at school focus areas: Safety, Climate, and Instruction
Climate Expectations

Some Questions:

How is my child being treated by staff and students?

What activities does the school have for my child to make positive connections with others?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are the key things to remember?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Variety of staff and student activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• We work closely with the PTA</td>
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<tr>
<td>• We believe that problems are temporary</td>
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<tr>
<td>• We try to be positive and NOT negative</td>
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<tr>
<td>• We are open to feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We encourage health and wellness initiatives (Boot Camp, yoga, walking, healthy food, daily activity, Fit Five, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• We memorize all student’s names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication is two way</td>
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<tr>
<td>• We focus on KIDS</td>
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</tbody>
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Clubs (Challenge: pick 3 from over 50)

“Most friendships are friendships of common activities“

Kickball  Chess  FCA
Ping Pong  FCA  German Club
Birthday Club  German Club  Yoga
Running Club  Mad Science Club  Musical (Guys and Dolls)
Raising Chickens  Paper Football  Odyssey of the Mind (OM)
Student Council (SCA)  Sign Language  Debate
Board Games  Debate  Wrestling
Board Games  Wrestling
Baking  Wrestling  Fishing
Movie Making  Wrestling  Fishing
Photography  Wrestling  Fishing
Instructional Expectations

Engage students with upper level Bloom’s activities and questions to give children opportunities to evaluate, create, and analyze.

Design lessons to help the students move towards Deeper Learning.
Surface Learning vs. Deeper Learning

Why does it work?
How did I learn?
How can I apply this?

Memorizing
Recalling information
What's my grade?

At Surface

Below Surface

Knowledge Iceberg

Explicit Knowledge:
('know what': lives in books, categories, databases, etc.)

Tacit Knowledge:
('know how': in people's heads, intuition, emotions, experiences, practices, etc.)
[e.g. "consciousness"]
Deeper Learning

• Getting kids to think at a deeper level means that teachers must design lessons that engage kids to use higher order thinking skills like creating, evaluating, analysing, and applying.

• Skills such as these enable students to support their reasoning, convey their thoughts, and answer questions like why and how things happened.

• A good illustration of higher thinking skills can be shown by comparing sample questions (for when you see your child in 30 minutes):

  • Sample 1: Did you have a good time this morning? Do you like it more than elementary school?

  • Sample 2: What was the best thing you did this morning? How will this be different than elementary school?

• One requires a yes / no answer (lower level). The other enables kids to think, justify, and express their thoughts.
## Sample Student Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block</th>
<th>A Day (~90 min each)</th>
<th>B Day (~90 min each)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
<td>Language Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Comp App or Art (semester)</td>
<td>Math (2 choices)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>US History (to 1877)</td>
<td>Science (Earth Science)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Health and PE</td>
<td>Resource (or Spectrum) paired with Music (45 each)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Safety Expectations

#### Questions you should be asking:

**How is the school helping my child be prepared for an emergency?**

**What is the school doing to be pro-active on issues of safety and security?**

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<tr>
<td>• Drills (11 fire drills, 4 lock down drills, 1 tornado drill, 1 earthquake drill, and 1 emergency drill) and six “scenario” practices with kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mental Health Awareness: Day (Nov) / Week (April)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Parent Workshops, Kindness Challenge, You Matter Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Anti-Bullying procedures for all staff, students, and parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Staff Supervision and Visibility expectation, staff trained on Run, Hide, Fight</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Daily involvement of SRO and SSO plus over 70 security cameras throughout the building</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “Raptor” visitor check in</td>
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<tr>
<td>• All current and updated LCPS guidelines for masks</td>
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Summary From Today

- Samples of “Balance”
- “Communication” to help each other
- Quick peek at school focus areas: Climate, Instruction, and Safety
Things We Need Help With

- Make a plan for your child’s first day (bus #, address, phone #, etc.)
- Make a plan for getting your child involved in the school (join three clubs)
- Teach them and make them use their planner (given free by us)
- Make a plan, with them, to categorize and handle problems on their own - but communicate with you about it (1 to 10 scale). 1 to 6 - I got it, 7-8 - need you to listen, 9-10 - need help.
- Discuss the idea behind “balance” with them
- Make a plan to help your child less and less and teach them to be independent
- Everyone will make mistakes. Sixth grade will not determine adult life. We want to give them tools to be successful and independent.
Things We Need Help With

- Be involved in some capacity (PTA, volunteer helper, club co-sponsor)
- Lunch the first day (and Acct Info)
- Locker Helpers needed (first two mornings)
- Preserve “Instructional Time” - limiting early dismissals, late arrivals, and deliveries
- Help us by communicating early and often and strategically
THANKS FOR COMING

- Thanks for listening to us today.
- We will announce a split into 3 groups
- Last Name starts with A to G, go to GYM
- Last Name starts with H to O, go to CAFE
- Last Name starts with P to Z, go to AUD (here)
- If you have any questions, please see us today or email us