

## Camillus Middle School Orientation to 6<sup>th</sup> grade Activities

The following is a summary of activities that take place as part of the orientation for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students transitioning into 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Our 5<sup>th</sup> grade students come primarily from two elementary schools, Split Rock Elementary and East Hill Elementary. We have approximately 6-9 students come from the local parochial schools each year.

**P.A.R.P** (March) – The Principal goes to the elementary schools and reads to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade students. This provides an opportunity to introduce him to the students and start to build connections.

**Parent Orientation** (Late May) – This is an evening orientation which introduces the administrators, as well as 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, support staff, and PTO Presidents. Principal discusses:

- school climate/culture
- introduction to adolescence
- team structure
- school activities
- academic support

Teachers then review:

- first week of school
- communication between school and home
- summer reading program
- guidance support

**Elementary School Visits** (early June): - The Principal and the two school counselors meet with each 5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom in both the elementary schools. These are individual class meetings which take about 45 minutes each. During that time, we introduce the following topics:

- similarities and differences between middle school and elementary school
- structure of the day
- orientation to the building
- orientation activities scheduled prior to the beginning of the school year
- beginning of the school year schedules
- the activities, clubs, and organizations at the school
- Q & A

**Orientation** (last week of school in June) - A program has been established which includes the following activities:

- LEAP activities – These are activities from our student leadership group. These students are current Camillus Middle School students who lead the incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in a variety of icebreaker activities. Groups are made by combining students from both elementary schools, as well as inviting any parochial school students who plan on attending 6<sup>th</sup> grade in the fall.
- barbeque on the front lawn
- scavenger hunt: Students receive a blank “passport” that has a page for each location to visit. Each student’s passport is stamped at each location. Small subject related (Oriental Trading Co.) items are purchased and given to students when they find their way to each location. These include: nurse’s office, main office, technology rooms, library, art rooms, etc.

**End of August Orientation** - Late in August, we have a mini orientation for any students who have registered during the course of the summer, or since the orientation program we had held for students that we anticipated arriving at CMS. This is approximately one hour long and is run by our counseling staff.

**Locker Day** - This is typically held the Wednesday before Labor Day. This is an opportunity for students and parents to come to the building and walk around the building to find locations or refresh their memory about where their classrooms may be. Students are given their locker assignment and combinations, as well as their team assignment. No class schedules are distributed. Students can practice their locker combination and place materials that have been purchased already into their lockers. This eliminates some of the volume of materials brought in on the first day of school. Last year, 92% of students in grades 6-8 attended.

[Individual student schedules are not distributed prior to the first day of classes. This allows us to redistribute students to balance class loads as needed right up until the very last minute. It also eliminates the potential problems associated with students calling or texting friends to find out what team they are on, what classes they may be in, and then having parents call so they can be switched into the room with their “best friend.” With the present schedule of distributing class schedules on the first day of school, we have virtually eliminated this issue.]

**First Day of School** - With the exception of special area classes, 6<sup>th</sup> grade students remain with their homeroom teacher for the entire day. During this day, teachers go through the individual student’s schedules with students and explain how they are structured. They take tours of the building, practice locker combinations, and organize lockers. They also begin some of the organization structures we have worked with from the “Study Skills Across the Curriculum” program. We begin explaining how to keep a locker organized, how to organize materials with color-coded binders, folders, etc. This first day allows students to become more accustomed to the building, the use of their lockers, and meeting new friends. The second day of school begins the regular schedule.