



SUFFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL

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DAMON PEARCE, Principal

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Dear 6th grade families,

Welcome to Suffield Middle School! This year is a big transition for your child and I would like to take a moment to review some topics that are unique to the middle school and will ease the start of the school year.

I expect that your child is waiting to see their schedule. The schedule will enable them to see their team assignment and share that information with their friends. Knowing this, we work as fast as possible during the summer to publish those student schedules. However, we are also committed to reviewing every schedule in order to catch mistakes and to create the best possible scenario for your child. As you can imagine, this takes a lot of time. Last week we completed the review process and all of the major pieces of your child's schedule are in place. You can find a copy of their schedule on PowerSchool but I must caution you that a few students may experience minor changes within their current team as we continue to balance a few remaining classes.

At the middle school we create our schedules using an online program called PowerSchool. One of PowerSchool's features is a parent portal that will allow you to check your child's schedule. Additionally, you may also use the portal to monitor your child's academic progress throughout the year. If you have any questions regarding your child's schedule our two school counselors, Tom Kadamus and Tracy Scatolini, will be back in the office on Friday, August 18th, and will be available to address any concerns that you might have.

I would also like to briefly describe the first day of school. Experience tells us that the most common "first-day-concern" of 6th graders is a fear of not being able to find their classes. Not to worry! Our student council will be offering school tours on August 30th (information is available on our website) but if you are unable to attend, do not be concerned. On the first day of school all 6th grade students will be directed to the auditorium where they will be greeted by their teachers who will escort them to their classes. The 6th grade teachers are so adept at welcoming new students to our school that your child will know the entire building within a couple of days.

Technology is another topic that requires mention. All SMS students receive a Chromebook as part of the 1:1 Digital Learning Environment. We will distribute Chromebooks to all students within the first week of school and once the teachers have reviewed responsible use and care they will be sent home. Families also have the option of providing their own district sanctioned personal device in lieu of a district-issued Chromebook. In addition, this letter also included a form asking families if they wish to purchase Chromebook insurance. The completed form is due back at the middle school by August 31st. If the form is not returned, the student will be issued a Chromebook and he/she will assume full responsibility for the device.

I also have a celebratory note! On a gorgeous summer evening in July, Ashley Molden (our assistant principal) was married and is now Ashley Eichorn (pronounced Eye-corn). For those families who have been with us in the past, Ashley may now be reached at AEichorn@suffield.org beginning August 31st.

I truly hope that your child is looking forward to attending the middle school. We are blessed with a fun, energetic, and enthusiastic faculty who are committed to your child's success. Indeed, over the summer many staff members have already been meeting to plan curriculum for the upcoming year. The school's intramural athletics schedule has already posted on the school's web site. The winter and spring concerts have been scheduled. The Wingman program has selected a focus on team building for the year. The drama club has selected *Aladdin* as the school's production this year. There are lots of good things in store for 2017-18 at SMS. While we certainly do not want to wish summer to end, we are all looking forward to the upcoming school year.

Sincerely,

Damon Pearce

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