

*Moving to*  
**MIDDLE SCHOOL**

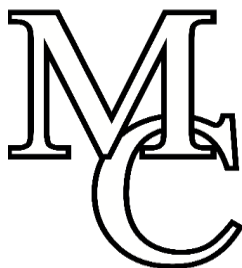


A GUIDEBOOK FOR PARENTS

DAWNWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL

SELDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL

2023-2024



**MIDDLE COUNTRY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**



Dear Parents/Guardians:

We would like to welcome you and your students to our highly regarded middle schools. This brochure is designed to provide answers and information related to the rewarding and challenging experience of middle school. Your child will experience many changes in the next few years as they begin their transition from child to adult.

During the middle school years, your child will experience significant physical and emotional changes. These changes will be both exciting and challenging for your student, as well as for you. In addition to these changes, your student will begin to participate in independent activities, such as co-curricular clubs and sports.

Throughout all of these changes and adjustments, your child will continue to develop into a unique individual who will need your support and guidance. Your child may not feel that he or she requires your guidance and assistance, but this is a time in their lives where parental support is critical. Your child will be introduced to and make many new and different friends, but only you can be his or her parent.

The middle school environment is arranged to foster greater independence in our students. A typical middle school student may think that he or she is almost grown up and ready to make his or her own decisions, but your child needs your guidance now more than ever. Each middle school student is assigned a guidance counselor. It is extremely helpful to know and work with your child's guidance counselor to provide consistent support as your child grows and matures.

We invite all parents of Dawnwood and Selden students to become involved in the many programs within our schools. Staying involved with your child and his/her school can be accomplished by checking your student's agenda book daily, attending PTA meetings, volunteering at school, and, most importantly, talking to your child daily to let him or her know that you are interested in what he or she does every day.

Our staff is eager to assist and support every student as they grow and learn. As a parent, we encourage you to communicate with your child and his or her teachers and guidance counselor frequently.

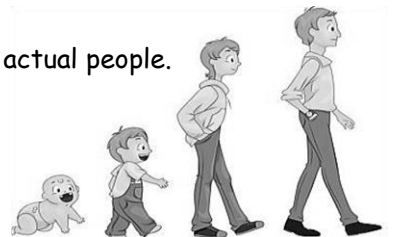
Sincerely,

*Andrew Bennett, Principal of Selden Middle School*

*Daniel Katchihites, Principal of Dawnwood Middle School*

## COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

- Students may be overly sensitive and often critical of themselves and others.
- Students may begin to independently respond to daily challenges.
- Students may act serious one minute and silly the next.
- Students may ask for additional privileges and freedoms.
- Students may seem to value a peer's opinion more than a parent's.
- Students need time and patience to grow emotionally and physically.
- Students' physical appearance may become very important to them.
- Students may require additional privacy from family.
- Students may seem restless or over-anxious at times.
- Students may want to expand their interests by joining clubs.
- Students may develop self-interests.
- Students may require assistance developing a positive self-image.
- Students may become extremely interested in trends and fads.
- Students are developing their own unique personalities.
- Students may begin to be more inquisitive.
- Students become self-aware - adjusting their grooming and dressing habits.
- Students begin to see their parents as actual people.



## NEW EXPERIENCES OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

- Middle School students will be held accountable for their own actions.
- Middle School students have access to a guidance counselor for support and schedule planning.
- Middle School students interact with a large number of students and faculty every day.
- Middle School students will participate in physical education activities every other day.
- Middle School students will maintain their own hall locker and lock, as well as a separate gym locker.
- Middle School students will have the opportunity to attend social activities and functions.
- Middle School students will be allotted 4 minutes to move from class to class between periods.
- Middle School students will use an agenda book to assist them in organizing their class and homework.
- Middle School students will be expected to independently maintain additional study and homework assignments.



## ACADEMIC CONCERNS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

- Will I be able to find my classrooms in time?
- How will I keep all of these teachers and assignments straight?
- Will I be able to keep my agenda book in order?
- Will I remember all my assignments and supplies for every class?
- Will I be able to pay attention in all 9 periods?
- Will I be able to complete all of my school work?
- How will I manage to study and review my notes every night?
- How will I prepare for all my different assignments and exams?
- What will happen if I mess up or miss an assignment?



## SOCIAL CONCERNS OF MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

- Will the friends I had in elementary school be in any of my classes?
- Will I embarrass myself and have everyone laugh at me?
- Will the kids from other elementary schools accept me?
- Will my clothes and how I look fit in with the other students?
- Will I be able to handle all of the various academic and social pressures?
- Will I be able to keep my old friends and still make new ones?
- Will the other kids make fun of me or talk about me?
- Will I fit in or be accepted by a particular group or will they leave me out?
- How will I handle changing clothes for physical education classes in a locker room with all of my classmates?



## SIXTH GRADE: *Transition to Middle School*

Attending middle school is an especially important event for sixth graders. They will be excited and anxious about this new experience. Since this youngest group of middle school students will face the largest challenge of acting independently in a large school, our middle schools are organized into levels/wings to provide a sense of security and guidance necessary for them to thrive.

In addition to having greater access to more diversified co-curricular activities, sixth graders will benefit from the expanded academic opportunities available in the middle school. The sixth grade course of study emphasizes basic skills, the refinement of good study habits and other special projects designed to help students become responsible for their own learning. Students will be challenged with NYS Assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics. At the end of each course, students will also complete a final exam.



## SEVENTH GRADE: *The Focus is on Exploration*

In our middle schools, the seventh grade program is based on the continuation of skill development. Proficiency in basic skills, homework and solid study habits, combined with opportunities for the exploration of independent and creative interdisciplinary projects is emphasized. Seventh grade students will also take their first year of World Languages and be able to compete on middle school athletic teams. Seventh grade students participate in NYS Assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics. At the end of each course, students complete final exams.



## EIGHTH GRADE:

### *Setting the stage for High School*

Our eighth grade program introduces students to the types of classes they will experience in high school. During this year, counselors place additional emphasis on career exploration and begin the high school planning process. Eighth grade students continue World Language instruction.

The experience of middle school strives to provide experiences that challenge your child's needs, interests and abilities. Eighth grade students complete NYS Assessments in English Language Arts and also complete the Living Environment and Common Core Algebra Regents, as well as the FLACS Checkpoint A Exam in their chosen Foreign Language.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSES OF STUDY

During their three years in the middle school, students will take courses in the following subject areas.

**ART  
MUSIC  
HEALTH  
WORLD LANGUAGES  
MATH  
SOCIAL STUDIES**

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS  
SCIENCE  
FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCE  
TECHNOLOGY**

*Most students will be assigned a lunch period in the cafeteria.*

Additional programs for some middle school students may include:

**BAND  
CHORUS  
ORCHESTRA  
ADVISORY  
READING**

**ACADEMIC INTERVENTION  
ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT  
COUNSELING SERVICES  
ENGLISH AS A NEW LANGUAGE**

## PARENT AND TEACHER COMMUNICATIONS

### **Parents may communicate with teachers by...**

- E-mailing, calling and/or writing notes
- Writing notes in their child's Student Agenda Book
- Attending scheduled conferences
- Participating in school and PTA functions
- Attending Student Support Team Meetings (SST meetings)
- Utilizing Parent Portal



### **Teachers may communicate with parents/guardians by...**

- E-mailing, calling and/or writing notes
- Writing notes in Student Agenda Books
- Completing assignment sheets
- Conducting teacher/parent telephone conferences
- Writing notes to parents
- Completing progress and grade reports
- Attending scheduled conferences
- Utilizing eBoards on the MCCSD website

## THE ROLE OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

The Middle Country Central School District Counseling Program is an integral part of the total educational experience through which students prepare for meaningful and rewarding lives as productive members of a changing society. Pupil Personnel services and programs help students resolve emotional, social or behavioral problems and help them develop a clearer focus and sense of direction. Counselors guide students in making appropriate decisions, solving problems and accepting responsibility for educational pursuits.

### **Counseling Services focus on three main aspects of development:**

- ~ Academic achievement
- ~ Career development
- ~ Social/Emotional development

### **Services designed to meet these goals include:**

- ~ Classroom Presentations
- ~ Individual Planning
- ~ Group Counseling
- ~ Teacher and Parent Consultation



## MIDDLE SCHOOL VOCABULARY

**ADVISORY:** An opportunity for students to read, complete homework, and receive assistance from staff.

**COMPUTER LAB:** Students will spend time in the computer labs during their subject areas. There are also times set aside for programs in career awareness and other special activities.

**GUIDANCE COUNSELOR:** These staff members assist and guide students in making good choices in regard to their social and academic endeavors.

**INTRAMURALS:** Sports activities held either before or after school under faculty supervision. A variety of sports are offered - all students may attend - no previous experience needed.

**LOCKERS:** Each student is assigned a hall locker and a small physical education locker. Students are reminded to keep all combinations to themselves.

**PASS:** A note issued by school staff allowing a student permission to be out of class.

**PASS ROOM:** "Positive Alternative to School Suspension" is a room set aside to which students may be temporarily assigned for infractions of school rules.

**PASSING TIME:** The time allotted for students to move between classes.

**RELATED ARTS** Students explore the components of art, music, health, physical education, technology, world languages, family and consumer science.

**STUDENT AGENDA BOOK:** A calendar book which students will use to organize their academic assignments and homework.

**TEACHING TEAM (6<sup>th</sup> Grade Only):** A group of academic teachers who teach the same group of students. A team consists of two academic teachers who have a common professional period which can be used to schedule parent conferences.

Joining your school's PTA is a great way to become involved in your child's school community.

Please complete this form and return to your school's main office.



## Middle School PTA Membership Form

<b>Member Name:</b>	
<b>Additional Member:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Phone Number:</b>	

<b>Student's Name</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Homeroom Teacher</b>

Enclose \$9.00 for membership.

Please make check payable to:  
Selden Middle School PTA - OR - Dawnwood Middle School PTA

PTA: Cash/Check \_\_\_\_\_  
Issue Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Card No. \_\_\_\_\_



## **Board of Education**

Dawn Sharrock – President  
Robert Feeney – Vice President

Arlene Barresi  
John DeBenedetto  
Doreen Feldmann  
Denise Haggerty  
Robert Hallock  
Deborah Mann-Rodriguez  
Kathleen Walsh

### **Administration**

Roberta A. Gerold, Ed.D.	Superintendent of Schools
Francine McMahon	Deputy Superintendent for Instruction
Beth Rella, Ed. D	Assistant Superintendent for Business
James G. Donovan	Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources
Diana Cook, Ed.D.	Director of Music, Fine Arts and Community Media Relations
Jennifer Harrison, Ed.D.	Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Joseph Mercado	Director of Physical Education, Health and Athletics
Vincent Raicovi, Ed.D.	Director of Technology, Business and Information Systems
Jonathan Singer	Director of Core Curriculum

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS**

### **Dawnwood Middle School**

**Daniel Katchihtes – Principal**

#### **Assistant Principals**

Bruno Bernardino  
Jessica Ragazzi

#### **Guidance Counselors**

Lizette Fuentes  
Jennifer Lindstadt  
Jessica Morgan

### **Selden Middle School**

**Andrew Bennett – Principal**

#### **Assistant Principals**

Kim Houlihan  
Jon Silkowitz

#### **Guidance Counselors**

Meredith Kaye  
Mark Matvya  
Chris Russo

