

Woodside Elementary School District

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August 15, 2018,

Dear Middle School Students and Families,

Welcome to the 2018-2019 school year! The Middle School staff is very excited for the upcoming school year and look forward to another year of learning! This year's Middle School teachers are working incredibly hard to ensure a successful 2018-2019. Below are some updates to begin the school year and an explanation to help students navigate the enclosed schedules.

New Teachers – We are very excited to welcome Amy Borges and Jonathan Schneider to the Woodside Middle School staff. Ms. Borges will teach 6th grade ELA and 7th grade social studies, and Mr. Schneider will teach 6th and 8th grade social studies. Welcome!

Block Schedule, Recess, and Lunch – The Middle School continues with a modified block schedule for Thursdays and Fridays. This means that Mondays and Tuesdays remain as eight period days and each Wednesday remains a seven period day. Thursdays and Fridays are blocked, and this allows students to have double periods for each core class.

Student Schedules – Enclosed you will find several items referring to the student schedule. The first schedule comes directly from PowerSchool. It reflects each student's schedule; however, it can be challenging to understand. To make it easier to navigate, a second student schedule is included and should be much easier to follow. Each day is displayed, and within each day, the classes are listed by period. Finally, a Wednesday Advisory/Physical Education schedule is included. Students are enrolled in both classes on Wednesday, and in order to understand which class is held on a particular Wednesday, students must locate the correct class that corresponds to the Wednesday Advisory/Physical Education schedule.

PowerSchool/Email User Names & Passwords – All students will be given new user names and passwords for their Google accounts during the first day of school. Information for both parent and student usernames and passwords for PowerSchool will also be sent home with the students as well.

First Day of School – Our Middle School teachers and staff will dedicate the first day of school on Monday, August 20 to meet in grade levels. It is a great opportunity to begin the year and address many of the topics that are pressing (e.g., schedules, lockers, behavior expectations, technology, community service, SEL and team building activities, etc.).

Technology/Behavior Forms – All students will bring home three documents on the first day of school which will need to be signed by both parents and students and returned to the school office by Friday, August 24.

- Student Expectations form
- Technology Use Agreements
- Chromebook Agreements

As a reminder, all Middle School students will receive a Google Chromebook to take home. Chromebooks will be handed out to students once the agreement form is returned to the school office.

Class Assignments – The assignment of students to classes requires time and careful planning by our staff members. Classroom teachers, specialists and administration have worked hard to create balanced class lists. Placement decisions include, but are not limited to, academic, social and emotional considerations, total class size, male/female ratio, special behavior needs, maturity, development and/or age level. **Unfortunately, we are not in a position to grant any schedule changes to the core classes.**

Math Placement – Middle school math placement is determined using student data (i.e., MARS, state testing, and classroom performance from the prior year). Students are ability-grouped into four grade-level sections that are structured to place students in the appropriate group to allow for success in math. The entire math department and the administration met to review student data and place students in their math sections for this year. We are extremely confident that every single student's math placement was reviewed with care and thought. Students often refer to the "high group" or the "low group." Please discuss with your child that the majority of students in a particular grade are taking the same math. Each section differs with depth, complexity, and pacing, but the content is the same. This should help to alleviate any misconceptions about being perceived to be in the "low" math class.

The math team and Principal will review student performance after six weeks and move students if necessary. If you have a question regarding your child's math placement, please contact the specific teacher.

Fall Athletics – Several sports are available for Middle School students. All Woodside Middle School girls can participate in volleyball, and all Middle School students can participate in flag football. For more information, please visit the [Middle School webpage](#).

Woodside Middle School Cross Country is offered for 5th-8th graders looking to try out cross country running. Practices are usually in the Woodside area on Mondays, Wednesdays, and some Sundays.

The kids have a choice to compete in both Middle School races (during the week) and/or USATF club races (on Sundays). The race schedule, registration details, and general sign up information can be found at www.woodsidewildebeests.com. Please contact Tina Lount at tinalount@gmail.com for more information.

I hope to see everyone as the new school year begins, at Back-To-School Night on Thursday, September 6, and the Back-To-School Picnic on Friday, September 7. As always, please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Best wishes for a successful school year!

Sincerely,

Mr. Frank – Middle School Principal