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**Mission Connection**  
5th & 9th Grade Orientations

# Board Report - October 2022

## Middle School Division - 5th Grade Orientation

Brian Jimenez, Assistant Principal - Middle School

### What?

When tasked to plan summer orientation, Mr. Becker and I began by reviewing previous Summer Splash agendas that we could find. We aligned on essential elements for both orientations and then created our individual session.

For 5th grade, I considered what our newest Waver-Makers needed to know and understand about the physical campus, middle school Routines, Expectations, and Procedures (REPs), and who are important adults on campus that they know in case they needed support. Wanting to make sure we had a plan before August PD (Professional Development) week, I created an agenda for the day.

That being said, I knew I needed the 5th grade team's input in order to begin making connections with staff, and more importantly, I knew teacher input would create a better experience for our students.

I partnered with founding faculty member, lead teacher, and 5th grade lead, Marianna Rodriguez. We each shared draft schedules with one another and workshopped our ideas to balance the heart of previous orientations with the logistics of our current situation. We focused on five major components:

1. Logistics: Picture Day, IDs and Laptop Distribution
2. Campus Tour & Routines, Expectations, and Procedures (REPs)
3. Supportive Adults: Assistant Principal, Teachers, Dean of Students, Social Workers, Front Office, Nurse
4. Meeting Homeroom Teacher & Students
5. Dismissal: routines and logistics

Lastly, while the 5th grade team had the most responsibility for orientation, all grade level faculty supported. 7th grade faculty led arrival and attendance, 6th grade faculty led lunch and recess and 8th grade faculty led dismissal for 5th grade orientation.

### So What?

5th Grade Orientation provided our newest Wave-Makers the opportunity to be introduced to the campus and the adults who lead it in a more developmentally appropriate way. We expanded on this idea after orientation to include other modified experiences for 5th grade:

- Transitions: Lining up
- 5th Grade wing of Middle School Building 1
- 5th & 6th Grade Lunch
- 5th & 6th Grade Dismissal

We also tried to continue establishing strong REPs with the 5th graders by having Deans of Students and myself present during their lunch and break for the first 4-5 weeks of school. This was strengthened by having staff with historical knowledge of the school as the captain of their lunch and break: Mr. Nelson and Ms. Cuellar (Lead After School Educator).

5th Grade Orientation

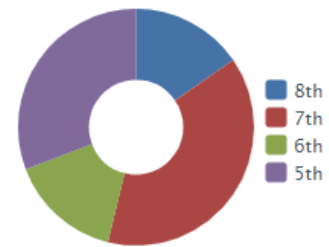
Community • Respect • Resilience • Responsibility • Scholarship			
Time	What (Content)	Location	Point Person
8:15-8:30	Arrival	MS Car Pickup	7th Grade Team
8:30 - 8:45	Welcome Breakfast (Breakfast at Middle Commons)	Middle School Commons	Ms. Sanchez
8:45 - 9:00	Welcome & Introductions: - Assistant Principal, Principal, Dean, Social Workers, Teachers, Ops Team		Jimenez Cerna Jones Garay Navarro
<b>9:00 - 11:00 Small Group Rotations</b>			
9:00 - 9:35	Rotation 1 Red Group: DoS & Holistic Support Green Group: ID Picture Orange Group: Campus Tour	- MS2 Media Center (DoS/HS) - MS Gym (IDs) - MS campus	5th Grade Team DoS HS Jimenez
9:40-10:15	Rotation 2 Red Group: ID Picture Green Group: Campus Tour Orange Group: DoS & Holistic Support		
10:20-10:55	Rotation 3 Red Group: Campus Tour Green Group: DoS & Holistic Support Orange Group: ID Picture		
11:00-11:30	LUNCH	MS Commons & Outside	6th Grade Team
11:35-12:15	Homeroom Greeting & Lines - HR teacher spends time with their class and shows students where and how they are expected to line up daily (5th graders line up on the basketball court after arrival, lunch, and recess) - Chromebooks will be located in your classroom. You can distribute them today or tomorrow.		5th Grade HR teachers
12:15	Prep for Dismissal - 8th grade team run dismissal - Escort students to the car pickup area - Supervise students while they wait for their ride	MS Car Pick Up Location	8th Grade Team

Rotation Teams:  
Rodriguez, Root, Mathews  
Beltran, Cruz, Torres  
Cervantes, Glenn, Noori, Reese

### Now What?

There were many celebrations on how we launched the school year with our 5th graders. Since the beginning of the school year, 5th graders have had some of the fewest issues following expectations across campus. While launched with intention, there are still several recommendations for future orientations that can make their start even stronger. For example, having picture day and laptop distribution on the same day as uniform and material distribution for 5th graders only. This would shift logistical needs to a different day than orientation in order to maximize time for connection and relationship building for students, as well as getting comfortable on campus. Students could have used this time building community with their Homeroom classes. Apart from adjusting how to structure the day, we could also adjust how we partner with other schools and families to better prepare for higher needs students.

Breakdown by Grade (behaviors only)



The majority of 5th graders, 98%, have had no referrals to Deans this school year. This data is reflected through Kickboard referral data. That being said, there are four students who have had referrals, two students who have had repeated ones. Taking us a moment to identify and begin addressing their needs, both are now in the process of being evaluated for additional services. If we had better partnered with those families and schools from the beginning, we could have better understood their needs and developed supports for them from the start of the school year. So, we should think about 5th grade orientation in not only how we prepare to welcome students but also in how we prepare to work with our students.

### Assistant Principals and Dean of Students

Eric Becker, Assistant Principal for 9-12

#### What? Mission Connection: 9th Grade Orientation

On August 10th, 2022, the upper school held its 9th grade orientation to kick-off the 2022-23 school year. The effort was led by:

- Myself
- Upper school Dean of Students, Arella Sidransky
- members of the Career and College Counseling team
- Student Activities Coordinator, Jamuari Thomas
- Upper school History Teacher, China Ruiz

Members of this group are staff liaisons for the upper school Associated Student Body (ASB), who led a panel discussion for the 9th grade students about “planning for success” in high school.

#### So What?

During an all staff meeting later in the day, the faculty reflected on the event. Overall, staff were enthusiastic about the opportunity to bring in the 23rd Wave (this year’s 9th graders), have them get to know each other and the entire upper school faculty, as well as to practice Routines, Expectations, and Procedures (REPs) with them. Noted highlights include:

- “everyone coming together”
- “kids seeing all upper school staff was impressive”
- “the ASB panel, having older students [communicate their experience].”

Staff, student leaders, and administrative leadership all have commented that they felt greater buy-in from the current 9th grade, better behavior overall, and have witnessed greater participation from the ninth grade in student clubs, athletics, and ASB elections.

Some changes suggested for next year include having more time with the ninth graders as well as a simpler schedule - some of the challenges from overlapping the day with 9th grade picture day made for a less than smooth experience, with some students missing out on parts of the presentations. Advisory teachers also wanted more time for the tour with their advisory students (most advisors only got 10-15 minutes to complete their tour of campus and spend some time with their advisees). Staff also noted the need to be better prepared for the traffic, recognizing that many 9th grade parents were unfamiliar with the upper school procedure for arrival.

#### Now What?

This academic year we will plan for orientation in the spring, allowing the ASB and any other student leaders to know the date in advance and to prepare more broadly for the event by inviting them to take on a greater leadership role in helping plan and execute ice-breaker and connector activities, while still getting the opportunity to present and answer questions as a panel. Additionally, advisory teachers will have the opportunity to plan activities for their small groups over the summer. This represents a shift from prior years where orientations were largely the role of Dean of Students office. This most recent 9th grade orientation and the vision moving forward is for a more distributed and shared responsibility for planning and implementing the orientation, which benefits students by seeing all adults in the community work together toward the same goal and recognizing the efficacy behind student leadership.