



Welcome incoming sixth grade parents and students. The Schuyler-Colfax Middle School administration would like to thank all those who participated in our transition survey. The FAQs below were generated from the responses we received. We hope that you find this information useful and encourage you to check our website frequently for more information regarding your child's transition to middle school.

Mr. Matthew Mignanelli, Principal

Mrs. Jen Loniewski, Assistant Principal

---

*FAQs about academics*

**Q: How does “teaming” work?**

**A:** Schuyler-Colfax Middle School is broken down into four academic teams, two each in grades six and seven. Each team contains Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, and Language Arts teachers along with Special Education and ASSP co-teachers. This middle-level best practice creates a “school within a school” and makes a big pond much smaller. Teachers share the same group of students and can therefore provide a more collaborative, supportive environment. Students participate in team-based activities, both academic and social/emotional. Grade level teams follow the same curricula and are comprised of a homogeneous mix of students.

**Q: What grading system is used at the middle school?**

**A:** Middle school students are assigned traditional letter grades (A, B, etc...). Many teachers utilize OnCourse Connect to post homework assignments, individual assignment grades, and/or overall course average. Students will receive four Interim (progress) and four Marking Period grade reports along with a year-end course grade. Parents are encouraged to check OnCourse Connect on a regular basis.

**Q: I am concerned that my child will struggle to stay organized. How will this important skill be addressed?**

**A:** Each academic team will communicate with you and your child regarding necessary supplies and suggested organization (ie: one binder per subject area). General supply lists will be available on the school website in June. Sixth grade teachers will often have notebook and/or supply “checks” and clean-outs to assist in keeping students organized. In addition, all students are given an agenda book at the beginning of the year to record homework assignments and other important information. Finally, many teachers utilize OnCourse Connect, Google Classroom, Edmodo, and other web-based sites to post assignments and other resources.

**Q: My child lacks study skills. How will this be addressed?**

**A:** During the opening weeks of school, sixth grade teachers will address study skills in their daily lessons and will provide strategies for review as students prepare for their first middle school assessments.

**Q: How large are the classes?**

A: Class size is generally determined by the total number of students but can also be based on the type of course. The average size of academic classes ranges from twenty to twenty-eight students, while specialized classes may be smaller.

**Q: What courses are offered at the middle school?**

A: All students will take Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and English Language Arts (two period block). Students have the option to select Band, Chorus, or “cycles,” which consists of one marking period each of Art, Spanish, Computers, and Technology Education. Students who meet the criteria may also choose to enroll in Gifted & Talented Art. At the end of grade 7, students who qualify will be offered Algebra I and/or a full-year foreign language in grade 8.

**Q: How much homework is assigned?**

A: The sixth grade teams work to coordinate the assigning of projects, tests, and quizzes to avoid overload. While homework varies in length and frequency by subject, your child may receive up to 90 minutes of homework per night. Note that most students will have a daily study hall, which provides them an excellent opportunity to complete assignments in school. It is recommended that parents review their child’s student agenda daily and all homework assignments, even those completed in study hall.

*FAQs about student programs***Q: Will my child’s 504 plan carry over to the middle school?**

A: Yes. Your child’s Guidance Counselor (Mrs. Gorman) will oversee his or her 504 plan and communicate it to the teachers.

**Q: How are students selected for Gifted and Talented classes at the middle school?**

A: Schuyler-Colfax currently offers Gifted and Talented (G&T) for Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, and Art. The selection process for middle school G&T student enrollment occurs at the elementary level and parents and students will be informed by their elementary school of their child’s placement in June. Even if a student was not initially recommended for sixth grade, please know that there is an opportunity for students to be placed in G&T courses for the seventh and eighth grade. Furthermore, eighth grade teachers can recommend non-G&T students for high school honors classes. Please see the “Academic & Student Programs” tab on the district website for additional information.

**Q: Does Schuyler-Colfax offer additional support in English Language Arts and Math?**

A: Students who qualify for additional support will be scheduled for ASSP ELA and/or ASSP Mathematics. The ELA block is a push-in model wherein an additional ELA teacher provides support, while the Mathematics class is an additional period of instruction that replaces or alternates with a student’s study hall.

**Q: What services exist for students with disabilities?**

A: Schuyler-Colfax has a full-time Child Study Team comprised of a School Psychologist, School Social Worker, and Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant (LDTC). Every student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be assigned a case manager. The case manager

works collaboratively with the Guidance Counselors and team of teachers to ensure proper implementation of the IEP, including selection of appropriate programming.

### *FAQs about policies and procedures*

#### **Q: How much time do students have to change for gym?**

**A:** Please be assured that the Physical Education department at Schuyler-Colfax will spend the first several weeks of school acclimating sixth grade students to Physical Education procedures. Students will be assigned a locker, have an opportunity to purchase a PE t-shirt (\$5.00), and be given plenty of time, practice, and support. On average, students are given between four and five minutes to change. Physical Education policies and procedures are posted to the Schuyler-Colfax website in late June (“School Communications” tab).

#### **Q: How much time do students have to pass between classes? Is there enough time to visit their locker?**

Students are given three minutes to pass between classes. While most academic classes are located in C and D corridors, cycles classes and study halls may be in other areas of the building. It is not necessary for students to visit their lockers between each class, particularly since most subject areas have a class set of textbooks. We recommend that your child review his/her schedule after the first week of school to determine the best times to visit their lockers.

#### **Q: What are the arrival/dismissal procedures at Schuyler-Colfax?**

**A:** Students are permitted to enter the building at 7:50. Exceptions are made for students visiting a teacher for extra help or those purchasing breakfast. On clear weather days, sixth grade students wait near the C and D corridor entrances (to the left of the building, field-side). On inclement weather days, students enter through the main doors and wait in the Auditorium until 7:50. Students may exit the building at 2:45 through any door. Parents who drive their children to/from school are asked to remain in the designated car lanes at all times and refrain from dropping off in the parking lot, which is extremely dangerous.

#### **Q: What is the cell phone policy?**

**A:** Wayne Township Public Schools has a “Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)” policy, which allows students with parental permission to bring devices (ie: cell phones, iPads, e-readers) to school to use during designated times. Each teacher establishes their own technology procedures, and many integrate devices into their daily instruction. Students are expected to abide by the BYOD policy, and those who use devices inappropriately or without permission will have their privileges suspended. Please note that students who do not have devices will be given one to use as needed.

#### **Q: How does lunch work?**

**A:** All sixth grade students eat lunch during period 5. Students will be assigned to eat in one of Schuyler’s two lunch rooms (Cafeteria, Auditorium). Each room is monitored by three lunch aides. Students are given several weeks to decide upon a permanent seat; however, seating changes are permitted during the year so long as permission is granted. Half-way through the year, students will switch their lunch room and thus be given an opportunity to meet new lunch aides and select a new seat and table. Recess is on an every other day basis.

## *FAQs about social/emotional learning and supports*

### **Q: Middle school is a challenging time. What ongoing programs and support do you offer?**

**A:** Schuyler-Colfax is committed to making sure that all students feel safe and comfortable in school. Monthly Character Education programs address important topics such as bystander vs. upstander behaviors and effective interpersonal skills. In addition, topics such as the dangers of drugs and alcohol and managing peer pressure are integrated into the Health curriculum. The School Climate and Safety Team communicates monthly with parents regarding trends in social media, bullying, and the like. Your child will also have the support of their Guidance Counselor (Mrs. Gorman) throughout their three years at Schuyler. Extra-curricular clubs such as #T.R.E.N.D., Service Club, and Break the Barrier provide opportunities for your child to get involved and meet new people.

### **Q: What after-school activities are offered?**

**A:** Schuyler-Colfax offers a wide array of clubs, including Computer club, Student Council, Service club, All School Production, Art club, VIPs, and more. Information regarding clubs will be available in mid-September, and all students will attend a “club fair” during their lunch period to learn more about each club and speak with active members. Most clubs will begin in October. After-school clubs end between 3:30 and 5:00, depending on the frequency of meetings. Schuyler-Colfax does not offer before/after care or athletic programs.

### **Q: What kinds of activities will students participate in to get to know each other?**

**A:** The opening day of school includes an additional orientation and team-based activities where students will get to know their fellow team members. Sixth grade students also participate in Mix it Up activities throughout the school year.

### **Q: I am concerned about bullying at the middle school.**

**A:** Schuyler-Colfax is committed to educating students and communicating with parents to increase bullying awareness and promote upstander behavior. Monthly character education homerooms address topics such as self-advocacy and conflict versus bullying. In addition, the School Climate & Safety Team communicates with parents monthly via email to share valuable articles and resources on bullying, social media, and other pertinent topics. If you have concerns regarding instances of harassment, intimidation, or bullying (HIB), please contact your child’s guidance counselor or the administration.

### **Q: How much interaction will my child have with seventh and eighth grade students?**

**A:** Typically, students only interact with peers in their grade level in academic classes. Some exceptions to this include the bus, gym locker rooms, hallways, study halls, and out of class support. In addition, students in all grade levels participate in after school clubs. SCMS also offers peer tutoring through the National Junior Honor Society, where eighth grade students meet with underclassmen during lunch or study. Finally, seventh and eighth grade students facilitate “Mix it Up” activities with sixth grade students several times during the school year.

## *FAQs about communication*

### **Q: What orientation programs will Schuyler-Colfax have for students and parents?**

**A:** Parents are invited to an evening orientation on Wednesday, May 11 at 7:00 p.m. Fifth grade students will visit Schuyler in early June for an orientation program and tour led by our Student Council and STARS members. Schuyler-Colfax students will then visit each elementary school in late June for peer to peer chats. Various open-house dates will also be announced over the summer and will occur after schedules are released in late August. On the first day of school in September, sixth grade team teachers will again lead new students on a tour through the building and spend several days assisting them in managing their schedule, lockers (assigned on the first day of school), lunch assignment, and arrival/dismissal. Students will also meet with guidance and administration on opening day. In the weeks to follow, Mrs. Gorman will facilitate small group “getting to know you” activities through the Guidance office.

### **Q: What kinds of information can I expect to receive in the opening days of school?**

**A:** District required forms, such as emergency cards, BYOD, and photo release permission will be available online. Either in hard copy or electronically, your child’s teachers will individually communicate classroom procedures and expectations and provide a curricular overview. For more in depth information regarding your child’s courses, we suggest that parents attend Back to School Night (September 13).

### **Q: When will I be able to meet my child’s teachers?**

**A:** Representatives from each academic team will be present at the Parent Orientation on May 10. You will also have a chance to meet your child’s teachers and follow their daily schedule on Back to School Night (date TBD). Team meetings are scheduled through the Guidance office. Note that there are no parent-teacher conferences at the middle school.

### **Q: I have a question or concern regarding my child and/or the school. Who do I contact?**

**A:** Most questions and concerns can be addressed via direct communication with the teacher and/or your child’s Guidance Counselor.

### **Q: How can I keep informed of important dates, events, and happenings at Schuyler-Colfax?**

**A:** Refer to our weekly update email blasts, sent each Friday, which are also posted on OnCourse Connect. These emails contain important announcements, upcoming events, reminders, and a week-in-review. We also suggest that you visit our website often. Note that most school communications are electronic.