

Guidance Lessons

Starting this year, I would like to implement a guidance curriculum for our students in grades 6-8. I plan on performing in-class guidance lessons twice a year for each grade. I will be going into students' ICE block classes and working directly with them on the lessons. The focus of these lessons will be on academic achievement and college/career exploration to get our 7th and 8th grade students thinking about what careers they are interested in and what preparation they will need to do in order to reach their goal. I would also like to work with the 6th grade students on study skills, organization, and the overall adjustment to the new challenges and expectations that middle school offers them.

I intend to start my guidance lessons at the beginning of November. For the majority of the month I will go into 6th and 8th grade ICE block classes to deliver the lessons. At the beginning of December, I will start to go into 7th grade ICE block classes. My next batch of guidance lessons will start after the new year.

My first lesson with the 6th grade class will be on learning styles. We will discuss what learning styles are, and the students will take a Learning Style Inventory to find out what their preferred learning style is. We will then talk about study tips that work best for each learning style. Students will have a sheet they can bring home that will list their preferred learning style as well as the study tips we discussed. I will also share the results of the learning style surveys with the students' teachers, so they will be aware of the ways in which their students learn best.

My first lesson with the 7th grade class will be on goal setting, specifically S.M.A.R.T. goals. We will discuss the difference between short and long-term goals, realistic and unrealistic goals, and what components are needed to make a S.M.A.R.T. goal. Students will then work in groups to set goals for different aspects of their lives (academic, social, extracurricular) and set a plan on how to accomplish them.

My first lesson with the 8th grade class will be on career exploration and identifying the relationship between educational levels and career options. Students will take a Career Interest Inventory that will provide a list of career clusters and identify their top clusters based off of their interests. Students will then explore careers in these clusters and identify any careers that interest them. They will also complete a sheet that will have them identify what skills they will need to have for a certain career, what level of education they will need to complete, what classes they should take in high school, etc. I will also discuss their upcoming transition to high school and the importance of attending class, doing their work, studying for tests, etc. and how that will directly affect their post-secondary options and their path toward their career of interest.

I encourage parents to check in with their student over the next two months to see if they have had their guidance lesson yet and get their feedback on what types of careers they are interested in and what types of secondary and post-secondary schooling would be the best fit for them as well as which clubs and activities will help students gain skills and experience that could help them toward their career path. Although it may seem early for our middle school students to start thinking about college and careers, it's never too early for students to start setting goals and embarking on their path to achieving them!

-Taryn O'Neill