

# *Creating a College Mindset for Middle School Students and Their Families*

- *Presenter:*
- *Celia Eickbusch M.Ed.*

# *What is a College Mindset and Why Start in Middle School?*

- A college mindset has been defined as attitudes and practices in schools and communities that encourage students and their families to obtain the information, tools, and perspective on post-secondary education.*
- A college mindset in the school builds the expectation of post secondary education for all students, not just the top ten percent.*
- The goal for our students is a post secondary education, so we need to help the students understand what they can start doing now to achieve that goal.*
- As high school graduation plans are changing and evolving, we at the middle school, must also change with the times.*
- Post secondary institutions are going to need to begin reaching out to the middle schools to assist staff and parents in their efforts to help the students understand the options and the pathways to a post secondary education.*

- *Along the pathway to college, students pass through predisposition, search, and choice stages where they decide whether and where to attend college.*
- *It is in Predisposition stage -(Elementary and middle school) where students begin to develop occupational and educational aspirations. It is in this stage that we need to make sure students are informed of college entrance requirements, enrolled in rigorous curriculum, and participating in extracurricular activities*



# *Existing Research Suggests That:*



*Timely information given to students can make a difference on whether a student decides to attend college.*



*Academic preparation is more important than socioeconomic status in predicting college enrollment.*



*Communication and information given to parents is a predictor of increased college enrollment.*

*Researchers have documented five preconditions that need to exist in order for an individual to decide to pursue a post secondary education.*

*1. Exposure to a College Culture in the School*

*1. Having College Aspirations Developed by the Time They are Middle School Age*

*1. Family Expectations That the Individual Will Attend College*

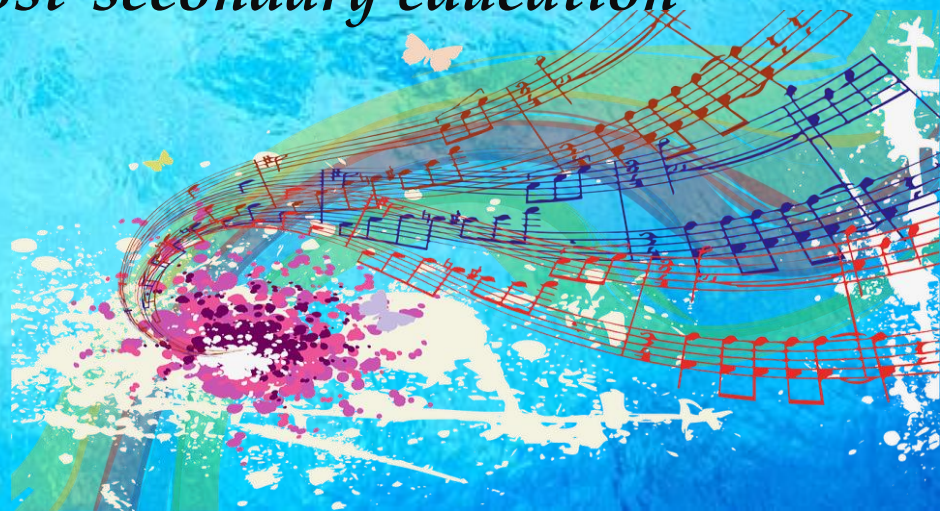
*1. Access to Rigorous Curriculum*

*1. College Counseling Available to the Individual*

# *#1 Exposure to a College Culture in the School*

*Brain stimulus and pathways are created and made stronger and with less resistance if they are reinforced with a variety of stimuli. (art, music, and visual resources )*

*Use visuals, music, and discussions...to reinforce daily the idea of attaining a post-secondary education*



# *Decorate the School with College Pennants and Flags.*







*Have teachers and staff display signs that say where they went to school and what degree they earned.*

How did I become  
Career & College Ready?

Westwood HS  
Staff Member: Mrs. Jeri Ann Robertson

My first jobs: Lifeguard at YMCA and retail

Transferable skills that I learned while in high school that helped me to become career and college ready:

Learning to use my time wisely while in high school prepared me for college in a big way. Being involved in academic clubs such as, Future Teachers of America helped me to prepare for my job now.

My university major(s):

- Bachelor of Science
- Masters of Education

My Alma-Mater University:



What I do now:

Counselor at Cedar Valley Middle School

10/09/2014  
SFA

Universität Heidelberg



UNIVERSITÄT  
HEIDELBERG  
ZUKUNFT  
SEIT 1386

German (major) & Spanish (minor)

Texas State University



Aberystwyth University  
(Wales)

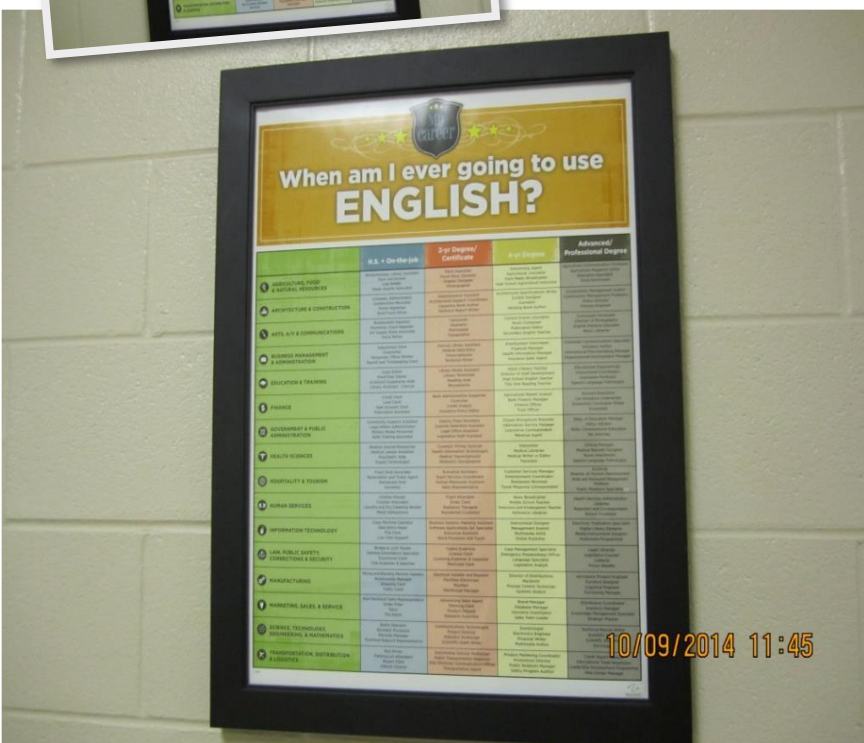
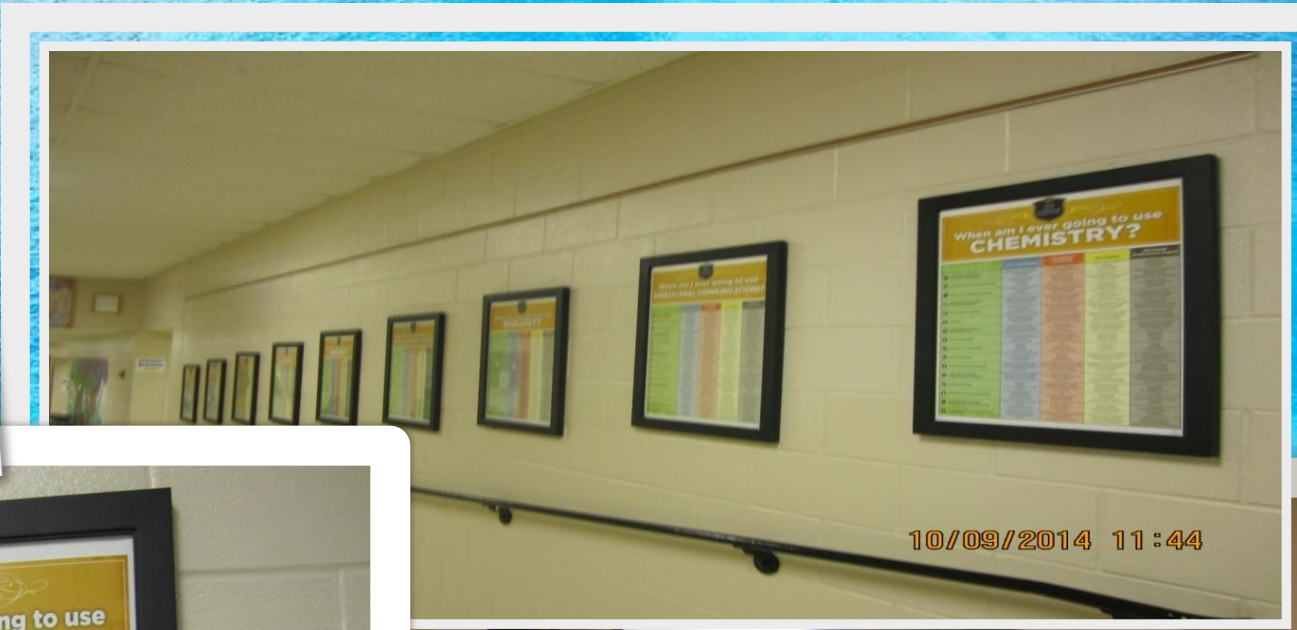
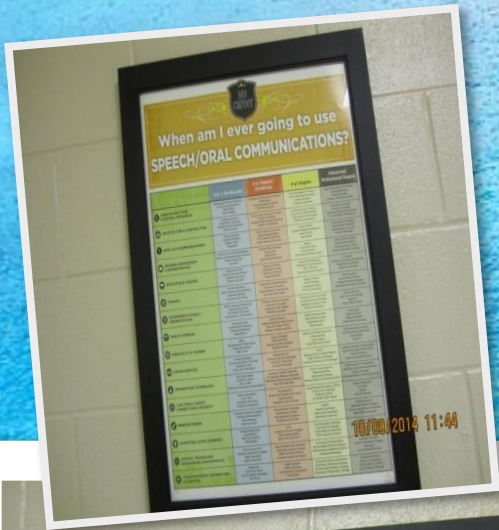


American Studies

# *Have Students Decorate their Lockers with College Pennants that They Have Created.*



# Other Visuals Around Campus:



# *We created a poster of former “Jags” that we were able to contact*



<b>Name</b>	<b>Where did you or where are you currently attending college?</b>	<b>What was your or currently is your major in college?</b>
<u>Yash Aggarwal</u>	University of Texas at Austin	Computer Science
<u>E. J. Aguilera</u>	Texas A&M University	Business
<u>Bryan Barksdale</u>	University of Texas at Austin University of Texas Medical Branch	Biology-Neurobiology MD/PhD
<u>Casey Bassemir</u>	University of North Texas	Marketing
<u>Christa Bates</u>	Texas Tech	Communication Design
<u>Jonathon Bates</u>	The University of Alabama	Mechanical Engineering
<u>Kirsten Baumann</u>	University of Texas	Communications/Radio, Television, Film
<u>Nicole Baumann</u>	University of Texas	English/Spanish Majors
<u>Matthew Bickers</u>	Austin Community college	Graphic and Web design
<u>Riley Bloodgood</u>	<u>Blinn</u>	Petroleum engineer
<u>Jena Boyd</u>	Texas A&M University	Community Health with a minor in Psychology and Business
<u>Preston Bracamontez</u>	Texas A&M	Mechanical Engineering
<u>David Brown</u>	The University of Texas at Austin	Music Education
<u>Abigail Carine</u>	Texas A&M University	Biomedical Science
<u>Mark Carlson</u>	BYU	Creative Advertising
<u>Sam Carlson</u>	BYU	Advertising

*Friday is Wear your College Shirt day!*







*There is a Wide Array of College Shirts  
Worn By Our Students!*







# *College Friday Cont.*

- *In addition to college shirts on Fridays we ask our teachers to show and discuss a college video.*
- *We also ask our teachers to relate their lessons to a career and what high school and college expectations that career carries.*
- *Instead of bells, sometimes we play college fight songs.*

## *# 2 Having College Aspirations Developed by the Time They are in Middle School*

*Research states that one of the strongest influences on college enrollment is an individual's own college expectations and that most students have made this decision by the time they enter 9<sup>th</sup> grade.*



# *High School Academy Fair*

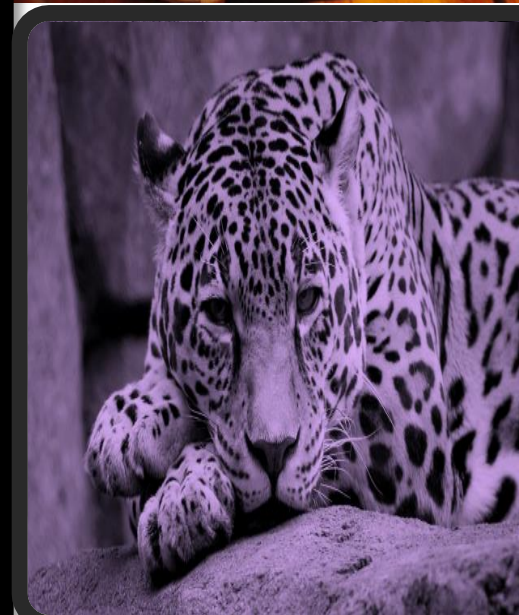


*We have the high school academy student representatives come over to set up displays and visit with the middle school students.*

*High school students come and visit with our students about the different programs offered at the high schools.*







*We hold a College and Career Fair and invite parents and local community members to share their chosen career with the students. We also invite higher ed institutions to set up displays. (It takes a village!)*





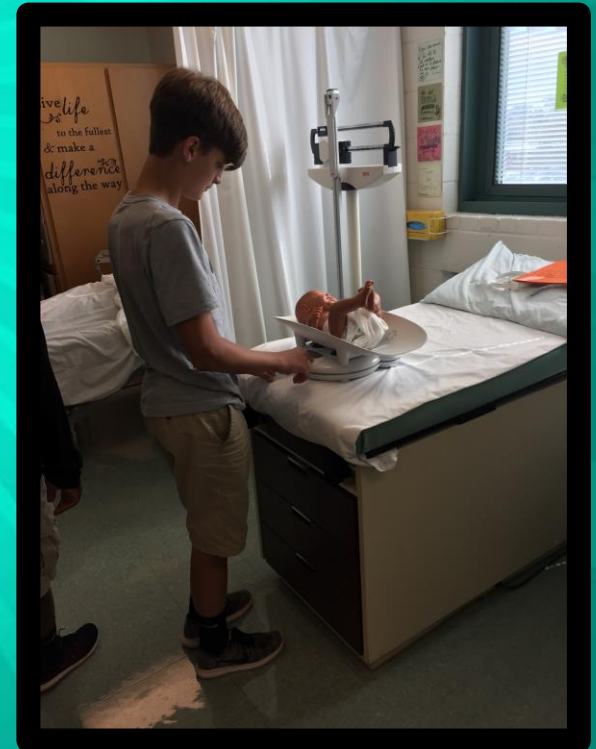


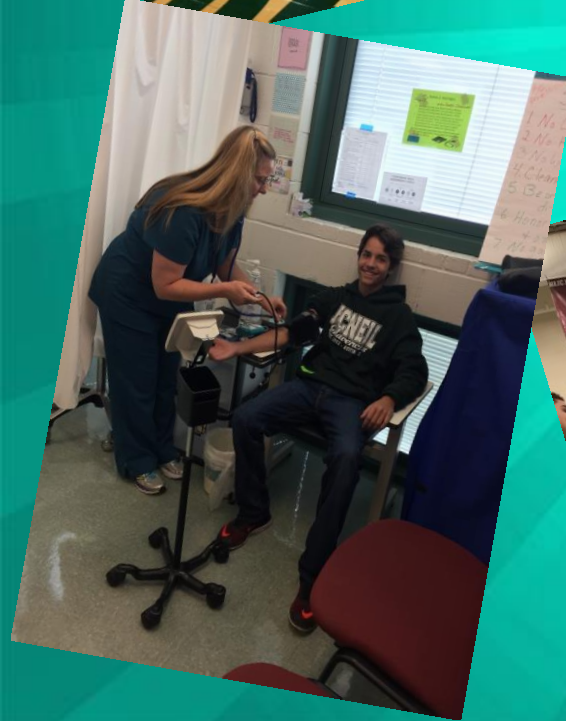
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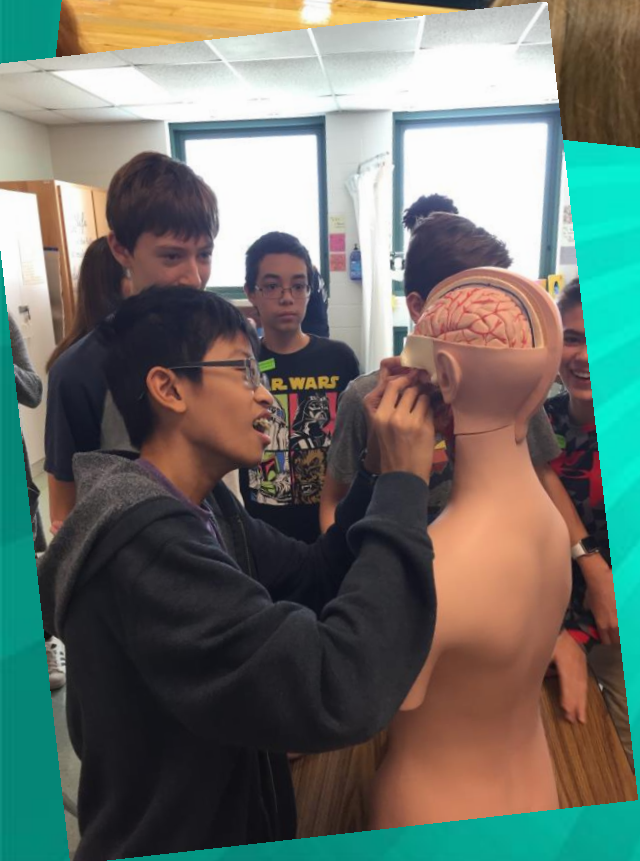


# *High School Visits*

*Our students visit the high schools to tour the campuses and see the programs in action.*







## *# 3 Family Expectations that the Individual Will Attend College*

*Research states that one of the major influences on college enrollments are individual college expectations reinforced by the student's family. Early college expectations, especially if developed by the 8th grade, stimulate planning for college as well as provide student motivation to maintain grades and participate in extracurricular activities.*



# *Hold Parent Meetings to Review High School and College Expectations*

- *This can be done in large and small group formats*
- *At Cedar Valley we hold community meetings in the fall and the spring in order to help educate parents about high school and post - secondary opportunities*
- *We discuss with the 5th grade parents the different pathways and courses in middle school and the impact on high school coursework*
- *The middle and high school counselors meet with parents and students individually to discuss the transition to high school and beyond*



# *Encourage Discussions in the Home*

- *We use Remind to send out reminders about College Friday*
- *We ask parents to view the videos we are showing to the students*
- *Have available resources on the school website*
- *Encourage students and parents to review the SAT question of the day*
- *Send out email links to college planning websites*
- *Invite parents and students to the college fairs being held at the high schools*
- *Ask parents to show off their careers at a career fair*





# *#4 Access to a Rigorous Curriculum*

*Research states that academic achievement remains the most important determinant of whether and where the student will attend college.*



# *Rigorous Curriculum Takes a Multifaceted Approach*

*In the Classroom, In the Home, In the Counseling Office... Everyday!*

*“Success is the sum of small efforts repeated day in and day out”*

*-Robert Collier*



*What do we do to push our students towards a rigorous curriculum in middle school?*



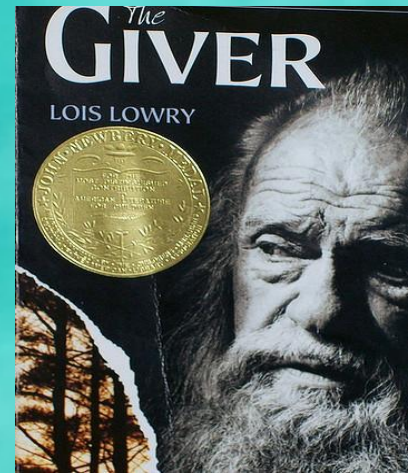
# *Academic Examples: Science*

*Science is currently partnering with the University of Texas Stem Center to give hands-on experience to students on the engineering process. Students learn engineering processes, use scientific and mathematical principles to create a concept, then make a prototype. Just like engineers, the students test, modify, and then retest their concepts until they are satisfied they met the criteria of the design challenge. This allows students to understand the process engineers use to solve problems and gives them an idea of what it is like being an engineer.*

*During “Medical School” students have the opportunity to become a 7th grade physician. Students research diseases and cures in gastroenterology, urology, neurology, cardiology, immunology, pulmonology, and orthopedics. They will be dissecting sheep hearts, kidneys, and brains as well as participating in various activities such as blood typing and online surgery simulations. After all the research and labs have been completed we will partner with the advanced theater classes where those students will portray patients with various illnesses. The theater students will schedule an appointment with the “doctor” who will then visit with the patient and diagnose the illness. The doctors will then complete medical reports explaining the symptoms, diseases, and cures.*

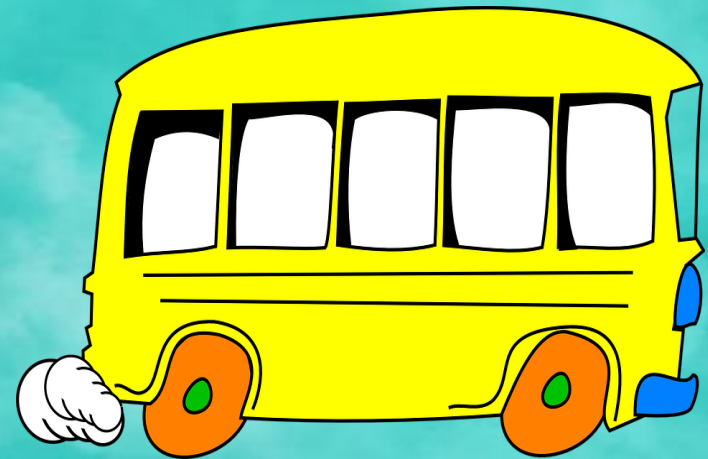
# English

*In the novel, *The Giver*, the main character experiences apprehension because he is about to receive his assignment. He worries that his interests were too broad for the elders to know where to place him. After a class discussion about future possibilities, students completed a career interest inventory. We held a discussion on the results and the significance relating to high school courses, four year planning, and post-secondary education. Several parents then contacted me to let me know that the students were excited and discussed with their parents their results.*



# *Courses Beyond Middle School*

*And...If the student needs to take a higher level course not offered at the middle school, we work with the high school to arrange the course and then provide transportation for the student to the high school.*

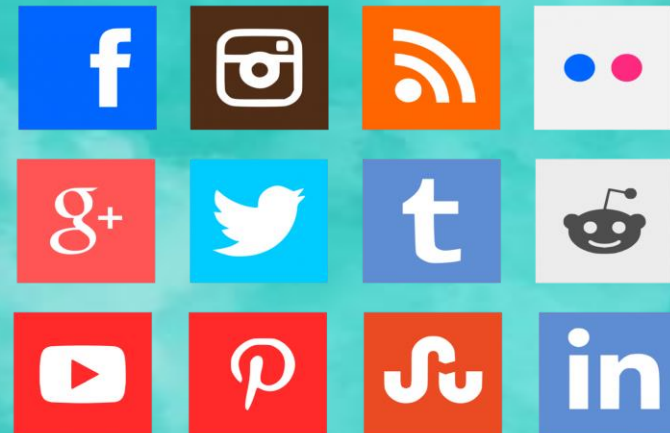


# *Another Facet to Increase the Rigor: Incorporating Technology*

*Let's Speak Their Language:*

*We are digital immigrants and the students are the digital natives so:*

- *We as a staff set a goal...100% of the staff from the hall monitor to the principal to become Google Certified educators. Now the classrooms have a stronger push for the use of hands on, interactive technology*
- *Examples of the technology uses:*
  - *Google Classrooms*
  - *Google Hangouts*
  - *Flipped Classrooms*
  - *Kahoot*
  - *Virtual Field Trips*
  - *Khan Academy*
  - *Nearpod*
  - *Google Expedition*





*Google Expedition lesson in a science classroom*



# WELCOME to CEDAR VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL



# *Innovation Day....A Creative Learning Side*

- ★ *Each teacher has the opportunity to select a topic to teach on based on their unique talents and hobbies*
- ★ *We invite guest speakers to hold sessions for students to attend*
- ★ *Students then choose four lessons to attend that day*
  - *Examples: Coding, Google, College Student Talks, Career Speakers, Yoga, Fishing, Escape Room, Robotics, Line Dancing.....and many, many more...*

# *The Interventions*

*The teachers, counselors, and administrators meet weekly to review student needs and determine who might need more academic support. The committee then creates a plan for each of the individual students discussed.*



# *The Changing Face of Classrooms*



*Technology, Flexible Seating, Project Based Learning, Discussion  
and Debate*

# *Another Facet.....Clubs*

- ❑ *Cedar Valley Middle School offers multiple clubs for students to join and explore their interests and challenge their skills:*
- ❑ *examples:*
  - ❑ *Coding*
  - ❑ *Cooking*
  - ❑ *Math Counts*
  - ❑ *Library Council*
  - ❑ *Art*
  - ❑ *Maker Space*
  - ❑ *Robotics*
  - ❑ *Table Games*
  - ❑ *Drama*
  - ❑ *Cross Country*
  - ❑ *TAME*
  - ❑ *FCA*
  - ❑ *Rubic's Cube ....*
  - ❑ *and many more.*

# *#5 College Counseling Available to the Individual*

*Research shows that middle and high school counseling regarding college has been shown to positively impact a student's expectation of attending college.*



# *So What Do We Counsel Them About?*

- Advanced classes that are available in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, foreign languages, art, music, and computer science and more...*
- College and career exploration*
- College credits that can be earned after participation in AP classes and successfully passing the appropriate AP exams.*
- Students achieving the International Baccalaureate Diploma receive 24 hours of college credit at any public Texas college or university.*
- Benefits of the AVID Program*
- Early College High School Opportunities*
- Online courses are also available.*
- Dual credit opportunities are offered through the local community college at no charge for high school students.*
- Endorsement and certification opportunities available at the high school level*
- What they will need to be prepared to show on their college applications*
- How to keep a portfolio to help create a college resume*
- The importance of extracurriculars and leadership opportunities*
- The importance of community service*

# *We Blaze the Trail in the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade!*





*We start in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade with high school, college and career vocabulary so that students can begin to make intelligent decisions about the high school courses that are available to them in middle school.*

- Present high school graduation plans and vocabulary.*
- Review possible high school credits that can be taken in middle school*
- Tell them what colleges are looking for: Examples; rigorous courses, community service, awards, honors and extracurricular activities.*
- Hold Parent Information nights so that parents hear the same information and lessons given to their students*



# *We Pave the Road in 7th Grade*



*In the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, students complete interest and career exploration inventories. This in turn leads to research on the college degree or other post secondary education and training that they will need to attain that career.*

- Review of graduation plans.*
- Review high school, college, and graduation vocabulary*
- Completion of a career and interest inventory survey such as Career Cruising*
- Encourage participation in the Duke University Talent Identification Program.*
- Encourage participation in rigorous and high school credit courses*
- And hold more parent community meetings*



# *We Give Them a Road Map in 8th Grade*

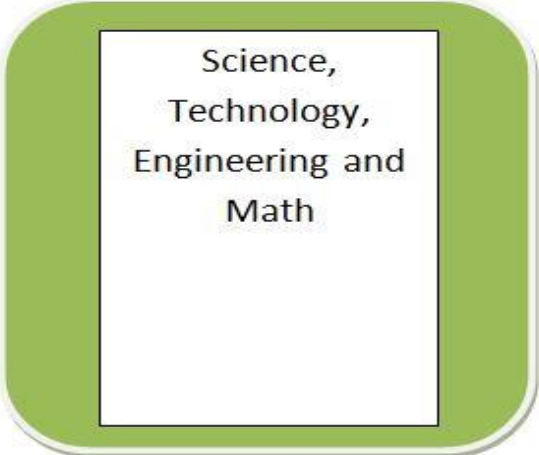


*By the 8th grade, 97% of our students are enrolled in high school credit courses. In the spring the students select their high school endorsement and program of study. In order to assist our students to make their selections....*

- ❖ *Each 8th grader completes a career interest inventory*
- ❖ *8th graders take the PSAT 8*
- ❖ *Review High School Important Terms*
- ❖ *Give a presentation on Early College High School Options*
- ❖ *Help students select their Academy and their Endorsement opportunities.*
- ❖ *Explain and assist students to complete a Four Year Plan.*
- ❖ *Show them how to use college and career websites to research their interests.*
- ❖ *Hold a presentation from a College Board Representative about college planning.*
- ❖ *Schedule individual student and parent meetings with their high school counselor.*
- ❖ *And hold more parent community meetings*




# High School Signing Day!



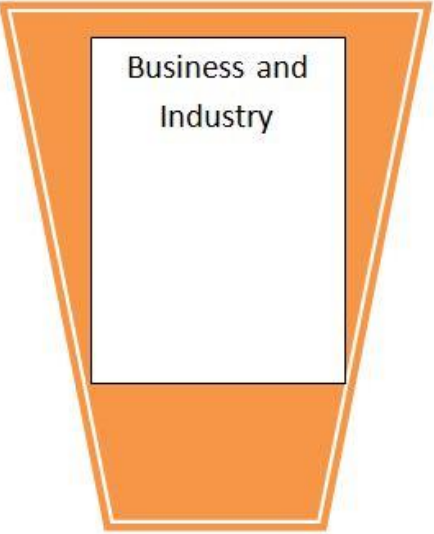
Science,  
Technology,  
Engineering and  
Math



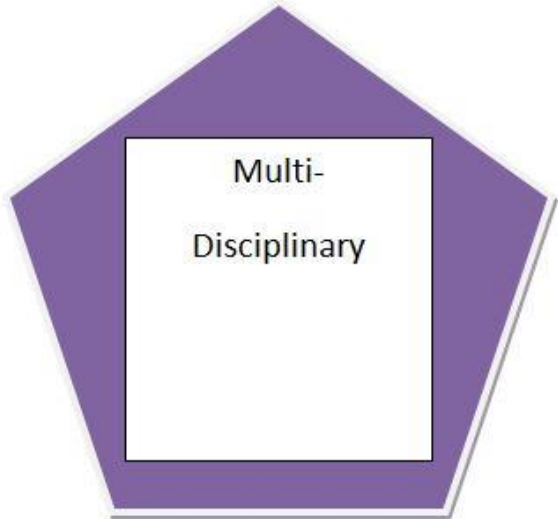
Public Service



Arts and  
Humanities



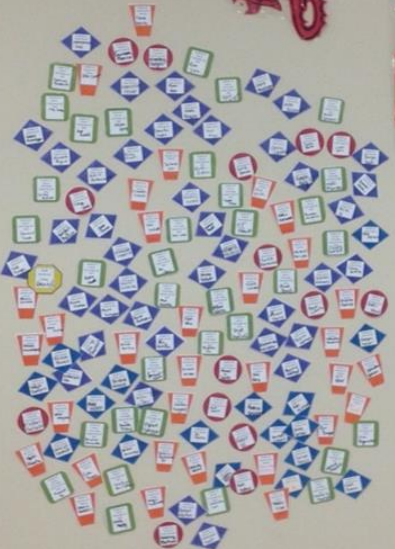
Business and  
Industry



Multi-  
Disciplinary

*Each 8<sup>th</sup> grader chooses their endorsement by signing a shield for that program of study, and then places their shield on the wall under their high school mascot.*

High School



# *By the Time They Leave Us Students Understand About:*

- *Pre-Advanced Placement Courses (Pre-AP)*
- *Advanced Placement Courses (AP)*
- *AP Exams*
- *International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IB)*
- *Online Courses*
- *Dual High School and College Credit Courses*
- *Endorsements*
- *AVID*
- *Early College High School*
- *Extracurriculars / clubs*
- *Community Service*
- *Leadership*
- *Class Rank and GPA*
- *Four Year Planning*





# *As a Result of our School's Efforts at Creating a College Mindset on our Campus*

*Currently there are 440 students at Cedar Valley enrolled in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade*

- 96 of them will earn 1 high school credit*
- 111 of them will earn 2 high school credits*
- 113 of them will earn 3 high school credits*
- 66 of them will earn 4 high school credits*
- 35 of them will earn 5 high school credits*
- 7 of them will earn 6 high school credits*

*Before they walk through the doors of the high school*

*(This does not include credits earned through EFA exams)*

*Because research shows that just taking one high school credit in middle school more than doubles the chance of a student graduating and moving on to a post secondary institution.*

*And 60% of the National Merit Scholars at the high schools we feed into were students from Cedar Valley Middle School*

# Challenges We Face

- *How to identify first generation students*
- *How to better reach out to parents of eco dis students*
- *Parents who push their child too hard*
- *The race to the top between parents*
- *Where did vocational education in middle school go*
- *Are high school credits becoming more important than exploring interests through electives*
- *Tracking Results*
- *Financial aid knowledge*
- *High counselor to student ratios*



*College readiness needs to begin in middle school to ensure that students have enough time and information to plan and explore for college and beyond. It is our responsibility to help students build their road map.*

**We do this by incorporating FIVE preconditions in the students' everyday environment in order to increase the likelihood that a student will pursue a postsecondary education, but need your help to build an even stronger foundation!**

- 1. Exposure to a college culture at the middle school level*
- 2. Having college plans developed by the time they are middle school age*
- 3. Family expectations that the individual will attend college*
- 4. Access to rigorous curriculum*
- 5. College counseling available to the students*

*“It Takes Twenty Years to  
Make an Overnight  
Success”*

*-Eddie Cantor 1892-1964*

*Singer / Songwriter whose hits included “Yes, We Have No Bananas” “If You Knew Susie” and  
“Merrily We Roll Along”*



**Questions?**



*Thank you for attending. Please provide feedback  
on this session*

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