

## Information and Tips for Parents Successfully Transitioning Students To Junior High

Website link: [Junior High](#)

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Change can be challenging for anyone. Parents and students may have many questions about how things will change when transitioning to a new grade level, building and/or program. It can be beneficial for IEP teams to start planning early for a student's transition to a new environment. If you see a need, consider requesting an IEP meeting to discuss any of the following:

- Foreseeable challenges and ways to bridge the gap for a smooth transition
- Identification of individuals who can help facilitate a smooth transition
- Ideas focused on how/what parents can do to partner with the school throughout the transition

Prior to the transition, review and reflect upon the following information for your child's future success. Please consult with district staff if additional information is needed.

### **Information About the Junior High**

1. Building: What is the layout and where are the classrooms, drop-off locations, nurse's office, and bathrooms in relation to the classrooms?
  - a. [Exterior Map](#) - This map shows drop off/pick up zones for the Junior High
  - b. Interior Map - A map of the building is available in the main office upon request
  - c. **Daily Schedule**
    - Doors Open.....6:15 a.m. for those involved in specific activities.
    - School Starts.....7:35 a.m.
    - Dismissal.....2:45 p.m.
    - Buses Leave.....2:52 p.m.
    - Late Start Wednesdays School Starts at....9:35 a.m.
2. Building Contacts: Who do I contact if I have questions for Junior High staff?
  - a. Phone Number: (515) 967-5509
  - b. Principal: Michael Dailey - [michael.dailey@southeastpolk.org](mailto:michael.dailey@southeastpolk.org)
  - c. Associate Principal: Jacob Bartels - [jacob.bartels@southeastpolk.org](mailto:jacob.bartels@southeastpolk.org)
  - d. School Administration Manager: Monica Capper-  
[monica.capper@southeastpolk.org](mailto:monica.capper@southeastpolk.org)
  - e. [Counselors](#)
    - i. Abbi Lowry - [abigail.lowry@southeastpolk.org](mailto:abigail.lowry@southeastpolk.org)
    - ii. Danielle Parsons - [danielle.parsons@southeastpolk.org](mailto:danielle.parsons@southeastpolk.org)

- iii. Michael Mott - [michael.mott@southeastpolk.org](mailto:michael.mott@southeastpolk.org)
  - f. Nurse: Emily Blackford - [emily.blackford@southeastpolk.org](mailto:emily.blackford@southeastpolk.org)
  - g. Administrative Assistants:
    - i. Melissa Ketch - Main Office - [melissa.ketch@southeastpolk.org](mailto:melissa.ketch@southeastpolk.org)
    - ii. Wendy Shepard - Main Office - [wendy.shepard@southeastpolk.org](mailto:wendy.shepard@southeastpolk.org)
    - iii. Madonna Coates - Guidance - [madonna.coates@southeastpolk.org](mailto:madonna.coates@southeastpolk.org)
  - h. Building Instructional Coaches:
    - i. Eric Hillman - [eric.hillman@southeastpolk.org](mailto:eric.hillman@southeastpolk.org)
    - ii. Justin Dopheide - [justin.dopheide@southeastpolk.org](mailto:justin.dopheide@southeastpolk.org)
    - iii. Angela Shannon - [angela.shannon@southeastpolk.org](mailto:angela.shannon@southeastpolk.org)
    - iv. Scott Wittler - [scott.wittler@southeastpolk.org](mailto:scott.wittler@southeastpolk.org)
  - i. Special Education Instructional Coach: Jeff Crowley  
[jeffrey.crowley@southeastpolk.org](mailto:jeffrey.crowley@southeastpolk.org)
  - j. District Special Education Director: Charlie Taylor - (515) 957-3428  
[charles.taylor@southeastpolk.org](mailto:charles.taylor@southeastpolk.org)
3. A typical student schedule would look like the following. Schedules may vary based upon student interests and needs.
- i. Eight Class periods
    - 1. Math
    - 2. ELA (Double Block/90 minutes)
    - 3. Science
    - 4. Social Studies
    - 5. Encore (design and modeling, art, health, guitar)
      - a. Alternate by Quarter
    - 6. PE/Music (band, choir, or music appreciation)
    - 7. Flex/Lunch
      - a. Flex may include
        - i. Academic support/Specially Designed Instruction
4. Parent Information/Involvement Meetings: How can I be involved as a parent?
- a. Join our Junior High Parent group!
    - i. Meets the last Monday night of every month at 6:00 PM-7:00PM in the Junior High Auditorium. All parents and guardians of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8th grade students are welcome to attend.
  - b. Attend Parent/Teacher Conferences
    - i. Fall Conferences - October 13th and 18th
    - ii. Spring Conference - March 7th and 9th
  - c. Other ways to engage
    - i. Check Infinite Campus for grades and announcements

- ii. Check student planners each day
- 5. Junior High summer activities - go to the Junior High webpage for more information
  - a. Mission Transition
    - i. July 14th, 15th, and 16th
  - b. Open house
    - i. August 2nd and 4th
  - c. 7th Grade Orientation
    - i. August 17th
  - d. 8th Grade Meet and Greet
    - i. August 16th
- 6. Additional Information: Additional information on Junior High can be found by accessing the Junior High webpage either by clicking [here](#) or by going through the Southeast Polk District website.
  - a. Junior High staff work hard to ensure smooth transitions and to address all student and parents' questions. Multiple opportunities have been created to help facilitate these smooth transitions. Information on these opportunities is listed on the [Junior High webpage](#).

### **Information About Junior High Procedures and Routines**

Below is basic information about the operation of Southeast Polk Junior High; for more detailed information consult the Junior High Student Handbook which can be accessed from this link [Student Handbook Link](#) -- When applicable a quick reference page number will be provided.

- 1. How are grades determined?
  - a. Grading is consistent within subject matters.
- 2. What are the ways that information is commonly shared with parents?
  - a. Junior High staff use Infinite Campus to post grades and send mass communications to parents regarding upcoming events.
  - b. Many teachers have a Canvas page for updates on course content, homework assignments, and other direct communication regarding courses.
- 3. What system is in place to reinforce safe, respectful and responsible behavior?
  - a. Junior High is a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) School
  - b. PBIS is implemented school-wide - around the building, in classrooms, in the planners and student handbooks you will see what the expectations are and rewards/minors for following the expectations.
  - c. Students are given multiple opportunities to learn about and benefit from positive behavior examples throughout the school year.

4. What are the routines and expectations of the building?
  - a. Bells:
    - i. The bells ring at the beginning and end of the day. 7:30, 7:35, and 2:45
    - ii. The bells also ring to signal the beginning and end of each class period.
    - iii. Information on the Student Tardy policy can be found in the Student Handbook, page 5
  - b. Black Day/Gold Day Schedule: Days alternate between being designated as Black and Gold. The difference between the 2 days impacts social studies/science and art/music.
  - c. FLEX Period (5th period opposite lunch): Students have a 30 minute FLEX period every day. During FLEX, students are engaged in some of the following activities:
    - i. Specially Designed Instruction
    - ii. Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (differentiated support for core content courses)
    - iii. Interest-based activities if academic expectations are met
  - d. Lunch Shifts: There are four (30 minute) lunch shifts beginning 11:04. Your student's lunch time depends on his/her assigned teacher's scheduled time.
5. What are teachers' expectations regarding students' typical levels of independence?

Students are expected to independently complete the following:

  - a. Bring expected materials to class. Most teachers have certain materials expected every day and will post or request any additional materials beyond routine items.
  - b. For students to advocate on their own behalf. This may look like asking for help when needed, asking questions when they don't understand or need clarification, etc.
  - c. Bring their daily planner to class and record assignments in it. (Teachers will post daily tasks and assignments on their boards.)
  - d. Additional support and assistance in these areas will be provided to any student who needs it.

### **Suggestions for Parent(s)/Guardian(s)**

1. Prior to the end of the 6th grade year consider the possible need to have an IEP meeting to discuss your child's transition to Junior High. If you determine that a meeting is needed and request a meeting:
  - a. Develop a list of questions and concerns that you would like to discuss at this meeting - feel free to share these questions ahead of time with the IEP team to make sure they are addressed.

- b. Share ideas on things that might help your child with this building transition. i.e. building tours, practice opening lockers, etc.
  - c. A small number of students have a great deal of difficulty adapting to change. For these students, consider whether your child needs to spend time at the Junior High before transitioning full-time in the fall. Discuss this with your child's special education teacher or the building principal/counselor.
- 2. My student's Junior High schedule:
  - a. Schedules will be available on Infinite Campus approximately July 8. If schedules become available sooner, a notice will be sent to families through Campus Messenger. Schedules will include teacher and locker information.
  - b. Review your child's Junior High schedule with your child.
  - c. Junior High is open most of the summer. Consider bringing your student to the Junior High to help him/her acclimate to the building, find classrooms and practice using the combination lock on their locker.
- 3. Opportunities to learn about the building prior to the start of the school year:
  - a. Mission Transition: Students will be able to spend 4 hours at the Junior High between the hours of 8:00 AM and 12:00 PM or 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM on July 15<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup>. Each day students will have an hour of STEM learning and transition opportunities such as figuring out locker combos, learning school surroundings, and adjusting to the Junior High building. Registration for Mission Transition will be available in mid-April at [www.southeastpolk.org](http://www.southeastpolk.org). If you have further questions you may contact the Junior High office at 515-967-5509.
  - b. Open House: August 3rd and August 5th, 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM. Come and explore the building and get school pictures taken. Families are encouraged to walk around the building following their student's daily schedule.
  - c. Orientation: August 17th, 6:00 PM -8:00 PM. Time for students to briefly meet teachers and walk around the building with their schedule in hand.
- 4. Important dates: Information on upcoming events can be obtained through:
  - a. Infinite Campus emails
  - b. Junior High webpage
  - c. Teachers may have a Canvas web-page
  - d. Emails from classroom teachers
  - e. District Calendar
  - f. Teachers will typically have students write upcoming dates in planners
  - g. Calling Junior High for information on important dates.
- 5. Encourage independence and self-advocacy.

- a. Help your child work on his/her self-advocacy skills, including asking questions and requesting help.
  - b. Help school staff learn the level of prompting and support your child may need when presented with familiar and unfamiliar tasks.
6. Anticipate and address your child's anxiety and your own. We all experience fear of the unknown; sometimes this can be heightened if a student has a disability and needs support in communicating needs.
  - a. Some of these worries are natural and part of the growing process.
  - b. Consider brainstorming with the IEP team about possible solutions and supports to positively meet your child's needs.
7. Send a brief note to Junior High teachers letting them know you are interested in feedback and to collaboratively find a mutually beneficial communication method.
  - a. What is your communication preference?
    - i. Do you prefer to be contacted via phone, email, or text?
    - ii. What time of day do you prefer?
    - iii. For non-emergency communications-- do you prefer phone or email?
8. Encourage positive risk taking. Students may need a push to try something new such as:
  - a. playing a musical instrument, sing in the choir, try out for the school play/musical
  - b. joining a [club/sport/activity](#) or
  - c. making new friends
9. Stay positive! We are committed to partnering with you to work through any situation should it arise. Working together to address the needs of your child works best! Students respond based upon the reactions of adult role models. Those behaviors and attitudes can quickly impact their own perceptions of school, circumstances, and people. Work together with the school to ensure you are on the same page with the IEP team and school staff as it greatly impacts your child.
10. Once you have reflected on these questions and key points, think about how you will introduce this new information to your child.
  - a. Consider what is important for your child and how to make sure he/she feels comfortable, too.
  - b. Communication is the key to a successful transition.
  - c. Even with the most thoughtful planning, there may be something unexpected that arises.
  - d. If so, communicate in a calm, open and honest manner with school staff to ensure a workable solution.

Other Resources: Click [here](#) for special education resources posted to the SEP district website

