



The Parent Teacher Association / Asociacion de Padres y Maestros

Alvarado Elementary School

Middle School Night
PTA Meeting, November 12, 2009
6:00-7:00 PM

Agenda

1. General discussion on looking for a middle school for your child
2. Breakout groups with parents and students of several middle schools

Additional Handouts available:

- Spreadsheet of SFUSD public and charter middle schools
- Checklist for school visits

Important SFUSD enrollment dates:

Education Placement Center accepts applications – November 9, 2009 – January 8, 2010.
Deadline for Round I is Friday, January 8, 2010.

Round I assignment letters are mailed Friday, March 12, 2010.

If you like the assigned school, you **MUST** visit the school's Main Office **between March 19th to 26th** to officially accept the placement and register your child. **This is very important.** They use the registrations to determine if there are spots available for Round II placement.

If you do not like the assigned school, you should visit EPC and participate in Round II with an Amended List, Waitpool request (you can only choose one school's wait list) and/or Hardship/medical appeal.

- Prior to the Round II deadline SFUSD offers informational counseling sessions that give parents more information about other schools options available to you
- Application deadline for participation in Round II is Friday, March 26, 2010.
- Round II assignment letters are mailed Friday, April 30, 2010.
- Again, if you like your Round II placement, visit the school's Main Office between May 3rd to 14th to register your child.

If need be, there is a Round III and that application deadline is Friday, May 14, 2010. Open enrollment begins June 1, 2010 for schools with openings and no waitpools. Waitpools are run continuously through September 2010.

What You Need to Consider When Choosing A Middle School

- Know that all middle schools provide a good education if you and your child want it. Test scores are only one thing to look at; they don't tell you all about what's going on at a school.
- Know the child's strengths and weaknesses and choose a school accordingly.
- Is the school the right fit for your child – size, programs, etc.
- Check what schools offer the best subject choices for your child. Look at Honors/Gate clusters and ask about how participants are selected.
- What is your child interested in, eg. Music, Art, Technology, etc.; Make sure the student chooses the elective they are interested in, not the one their parents want them to take
- Check extracurricular activities in the school but be aware that they might not have the time or chance to participate due to homework load or competitiveness of making the school teams (this is most important during the 6th grade year)
- Convenience to your lifestyle and location (hours, transportation, school year calendar, do they have minimum days and when, after school programs and availability of after school bussing, etc.). Where will your child's friends live?
- Will your child be comfortable with the community in the school? Middle school years are prime adolescent identity seeking years.
- Which High Schools do students attend upon graduation?
- Remember, 2nd choice may be a very good fit – don't dismiss it.

How Parents Can Prepare for Middle School

- ✓ Start the process early and submit your applications early (SFUSD application deadline for participation in Round 1 is Friday, January 9, 2009)
- ✓ Know your child, their capabilities and needs
- ✓ Promote good, structured study habits as soon as possible
- ✓ Provide your child with a three ring binder and subject dividers to keep their work for each class easily available.
- ✓ Promote punctuality, not just at the beginning of the day but also during “passing period” between classes. Also practice bus route and alternatives if you won't be driving your child to school every day.
- ✓ Set up a homework area at home and provide the supplies your child will need for homework.
- ✓ Attend school tours/open houses and ask questions (a sample check list you can use is attached); attend school events
- ✓ Talk to current Middle School students/other parents about their choices and opinions
- ✓ Meet with your child's past and current teachers and ask their opinions on the right fit for your child
- ✓ Have relevant documents on hand – birth certificates, utility bills, immunization history, etc (as current public school students you won't need some documentation but it's better to be prepared just in case you're asked)

How Students Can Prepare for Middle School

- ✓ Develop good regular study skills, it's an ongoing process, not achieved in a day or month
- ✓ Keep organized with a three-ring binder and a student planner
- ✓ Make a point of having your assignments completed and on time for teachers
- ✓ Be respectful in class
- ✓ Seek adult help when you need it ... from your teachers, counselors, and other adults at the school.
- ✓ Aim for success
- ✓ Consider visiting the schools your parents like and talk to them about what you like and don't like about a school

CHECK LIST FOR SCHOOL VISITS

(Adapted from PPS-SF)

School name:

Address:

Hours:

- What different program choices are available?
Gate/Honors/Immersion/Bilingual/etc.
- What does parent involvement look like?
- School size: _____ Class size: _____
- How is cultural diversity at the school?
- What are the transportation options?
- What are the before- and after-school childcare options?
- What is the uniform policy?
- How are the Library and technology facilities?
- What electives/enrichment activities are available? Who can take them?
- What are the extracurricular activities?
- How does the school address the needs of each child? What tutoring/support services are available?
- Are accommodations made for different learning styles and if so how?
- How much homework time is there?
- How are conflicts handled?
- How are skill areas taught?
- What is the situation with regards to teacher stability?
- What are the current initiatives/programs to improve classroom instruction and increase student achievement??
- What is the school's biggest success and what is the most pressing challenge?