



November 11, 2016

Hello Soon-to-be-Middle School Families,

As you know, our school district will be transitioning from junior high schools to middle school (grades 6-8) for the 2017-2018 school year. This is an exciting change that will provide age-appropriate learning environments and support for our students. We have been working hard to ensure a smooth transition occurs for staff, families and most importantly our students.

For the past several months our team of teachers and staff have been researching the most successful middle schools, and designing a program that will best meet the needs of our learners. We know you are eager to learn more about this process so you can assist your child in his or her transition to middle school. We will be sharing information about our middle school program with families in December, and we're looking forward to hearing your feedback. Until then, our middle school transition team believes it's important to share the mission statement we created and have been following. Our mission is based on best-practices and research associated with middle level education, and aligns with what we know about the unique needs of our middle school students.

Our Mission: Middle level education in Stillwater will provide a **nurturing** and **collaborative** learning environment in which **positive relationships** create a foundation for **challenging, exploratory** and **integrative** experiences to maximize **individual growth**.

For students, middle school is a time of growth and development in all areas. In addition to all the physical, emotional and social changes students are going through during this time in their lives, we also know students are keenly aware and sensitive to fitting-in. To support our students, our staff must be experts in more than just the content they teach. We're proud to have staff members who embrace the characteristics of adolescence and understand the importance of meaningful personal connections. We can't wait for you to meet them!

Throughout the past month we have had the opportunity to visit each of our elementary schools to speak with fifth and sixth grade students and staff. We used this time to introduce ourselves, meet the students and talk about our schools. The best parts of our meetings were hearing what the students were nervous and excited about in regards to their transition to middle school. We listened carefully to each thought and took notes so we can plan future opportunities that are tailored to meet our students' needs. We've had so much fun getting to know your children and hearing about their expectations for the coming year. We're also looking forward to meeting you in the coming month, and hearing your ideas, questions and concerns about our new middle schools.

Our schools, district and staff are committed to making our middle schools a pillar of strength for our community, and a foundation for growth and development for our students. Please stay tuned for more middle school information to come.

We are excited to partner with you,



Andy Fields,
Principal of Oak-Land Junior High
(Eighth grade class photo)



Eric VanScoy,
Principal of Stillwater Junior High
(Sixth grade class photo)