



Pyramid Parent Meeting



Outcomes

- **Begin a conversation...**
- **Build community**



The Why?

They are all OUR students.



Discovery

- **Technology Use**
- **Social Emotional Support**
- **Teaching Responsibility**



Williamsburg

Middle School Transition
Substance Abuse Awareness
Academic Planning / Rigor
Technology Integration
Student Services



Yorktown

- **Support for students**
 - **Transition (Mentors, English 9/World History block, counselors)**
 - **Common sense - academics & extracurriculars**
 - **Anxiety**



Yorktown

Safety

- Substance Use
- Building security

Technology

Student Engagement Opportunities



Questions

- **Take a minute to write down a specific question you would like answered tonight?**



Next Meetings

- **January 31st @ Williamsburg**
- **April 25th @ Yorktown**



Elementary

How are study skills taught at the elementary level?

Study skills are mostly addressed starting in third grade where students start experiencing unit tests. Teachers review materials and offer different ways to prepare. Most preparation is done in class. As students progress through fourth and fifth grade, more studying is required. Teachers prepare study guides and offer different strategies.



Elementary

How do we reduce anxiety at elementary school?

We do not emphasize competition. We ask all students to bring their best self everyday and we espouse the importance of building community not outshining one another. Responsive Classroom and the CARES program are two school wide systems that help reduce anxiety. Our counselor presents lessons, meets with students individually, and in small groups to discuss topics related to anxiety. Parents who feel their child is experience heightened anxiety should contact their teacher. We have a variety of professionals who can help support students. Undue anxiety is frequently individualized and we work as a team to come up with the best supports.



Elementary

How do we get boys to share what is going on at school? What are some good conversation starters?

Use direct, specific questions, not open-ended questions.

1. What did you eat for lunch?
2. Did you catch anyone doing something funny?
3. What games did you play at recess?
4. What was the funniest thing that happened today?
5. Did anyone do anything super nice for you?
6. What was the nicest thing you did for someone else?



Elementary

1. What challenged you today?
2. If school were a ride at the fair, which ride would it be? Why?
3. What would you rate your day on a scale of 1 to 10? Why?

Experts suggest not peppering your child with questions the minute you see them. Give them some winding down time. Chat casually. If they aren't responding to your questions right away. Stop. Try again later. At Discovery the Learning Log offers specific topics you can ask about.



Elementary

How can parents support students during transition times?

It's important to talk about transitions positively. Children pick up on our own nerves. While it's ok to have fears, talk about the factual things a child will experience, not the "What if's?" We provide time in elementary school for the middle school counselors to come talk to fifth graders about middle school. The students also visit middle school.



Middle

What specials are available? How are students scheduled?

Students are afforded a variety of electives in middle school that are outlined in the APS Program of Studies. Students are scheduled by the system across teams and clustered in core classes if they have a GT identification.

How do you make a large school feel small?

Students are assigned to a team where they share all of the same core content teachers. There is also 2 counselors and one administrator assigned to each grade level.

What programs are available for advanced students? How do you identify the need and how to challenge students?

Students are challenged in a variety of ways in each course. Teachers use pre-assessment data to determine a student's needs and differentiate the content based on those needs.

Are there travel abroad programs?

Currently there are no programs.



Middle

Please describe the team concept and how are block classes organized? Does it change from 6th to 7th to 8th?

Each team consists of a math, science, english, reading, and social studies teacher that only teach those students. Four of the students seven courses will take place in a rotating A/B 82min block, while the remaining 3 courses will be attended daily. For the 19/20 school year 7th/8th grade students will follow a similar schedule that has yet to be determined.

How are behavior problems addressed?

Behavior problems are addressed based on the level of the infraction. We use a variety of strategies that include but are not limited to conferences, counseling, positive incentives, detention, and out of school suspension if necessary.

What's the total enrollment projected at for next year?

Those numbers are still pending due to outstanding transfer decisions yet to be made. I would roughly estimate between 950 - 1025 students.



Middle

How are sports teams determined with so many students?

Boys/Girls basketball, soccer, tennis, and cheer at cut sports. Student athletes participate in tryouts and the coaches make an assessment of their abilities to determine team selection. A complete list of sports and clubs can be found on the WMS website activities page.

What's the backpack policy for 6th grade?

Students are not allowed to carry backpacks to class because they have access to their lockers after each period if needed. Backpacks can present a safety hazard in the classroom and minimize instructional space

Will the current Discovery 5th graders visit WMS?

Yes, all rising 6th graders will have the opportunity to visit WMS.

What helps with the transition from recess to no recess?

Students have access to a variety of clubs and activities after school in addition to their physical education course. Students also have access to the courtyard after they have finished lunch in the cafeteria if time permits.



Middle

How does bullying present itself at each level and is the approach similar?

Bullying can take place in a variety of ways. We teach students how to first distinguish bullying from isolated incidents and also identify if it is physical, verbal, or cyber bullying. After this is done, we provide students with tools to combat and report it.

How much does the average student write?

Students will be required to write/read daily across the content areas.

How much homework should students expect?

On average students will have 15-25 minutes of homework per core course and 30 mins of reading per night.

How involved should a parent be in checking up on student's work?

Parents should check student work daily until their child demonstrates the ability to manage the increased workload and work independently.



Middle

Are there foreign language requirements? What are the options?

There are no world language requirements for middle school, however students can begin taking them for high school credit beginning in the 7th grade. Some of the language options available are Spanish, French, Latin, and Spanish for Fluent Speakers. In 6th grade students will have the option to take Transitional Spanish or get a sampling of another language in the exploratory wheel.

Do the students have the choice on what high school they go to? Do they visit the schools?

Students will attend the high school that they are zoned for unless transfer seats are available at other high schools. Students can also apply to the IB Program at Washington Liberty High school during their 8th grade year.



Middle

What can parents do to support children during transition times?

The best way to make the transition manageable is utilize all of the support that is provided by the school. It's important not to overschedule your child's extracurricular activities until you have a general idea of how they are managing their academic responsibilities.

How do we keep homework manageable?

Due to the A/B block schedule students will have fewer classes to prepare for on a daily basis. I highly recommend that parents work with their child to develop an organizational system that works for them that includes using a calendar to chart due dates for assignments and projects.



High

How do you make a large school feel small?

While the building and number of students are larger than middle school - which is larger than elementary school - part of the maturing process is adjusting to change. YHS offers a wide range of clubs, activities, sports and electives in which students can participate. Encouraging our students to find ways to contribute to the school community helps take the focus off of the size of the school and on to using one's abilities and talents to serve the larger community. For some students, this might take a little more time than for others. While most students begin to feel comfortable by the 3rd or 4th week, there is an occasional exception in which we might work with the counselor, the student mentor and even our school social workers or psychologists to assist in the adjustment process. The overwhelming majority of our students make connections within their classrooms and in the opportunities provided through sports, fine arts, clubs and activities to begin developing smaller communities within the larger setting.



High

Are there travel abroad programs?

APS doesn't endorse any particular foreign exchange program. There are guidelines APS has which you can access from the APS website (School Board Policies M-2 PIP-1 Foreign Exchange Student Programs).

What is the total projected enrollment for next year?

As of January 7, 2019, the projection is for approximately 2,100 students.



High

Can you do a summer meeting with the college counselor to look at the whole four years?

Counselors review student 4-year academic plans with students annually and an updated copy is mailed to the parent/guardian each year in the spring. You are welcome to set up a time during the regular school year to meet with the counselor and your child to review the four year plan.



High

How does bullying present itself at each level and is the approach similar?

Yorktown uses a safety reporting tab on the front of our webpage. These reports are filtered to Yorktown administrators who coordinate with Arlington police, counseling staff, or parents as appropriate.

How are elective options handled?

All course selections are listed on the Course Request Form (CRF) and provided to each student. Middle school counselors and high school counselors collaborate in providing course information and state graduation requirements. All students take a math, science, English, social studies and health/PE course in 9th grade which allows 2 additional periods for students to choose from a wide array of electives.



High

How do you grow the community mindset and kindness mindset?

To grow community and kindness mindsets we embrace the conscious promotion of skills and attitudes every individual needs for success in school and life through a program in social-emotional learning. The goals of the Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) are to expand our students' understanding of what intelligence means; help our student develop their capacity to understand themselves, make intelligent decisions, and develop healthy interpersonal relationships; and to promote a school environment that is challenging, nurturing, inclusive. ROCS is a part of the SEL program, and stands for Respect for Others, Community and Self. At Yorktown, we know that a positive, respectful school environment is most important and can never be taken for granted. Our ROCS emphasis helps us to focus daily on being a supportive, welcoming and respectful school where we seek to grow and develop to mindsets of community and kindness.



High

Describe the writing requirements at the high school level.

Students should expect frequent in-class and informal writing. Students will produce these less formal pieces at least weekly, while more formal papers are assigned 2-5 times per quarter.

How much homework should students expect?

We can provide a general idea but there are a number of factors that impact this generalization (appropriate placement, amount of sleep, stress, organizational skills, attention issues, etc.). Realizing this is an average, we find 1 ½ - 3 hours per night (some nights there might not be anything while there might be an evening in which a major project is due the next day as well as an assessment, etc.)



High

How can we limit screen time?

While students will need access to assignments posted on Canvas to complete homework assignments, parents are the decision-makers regarding the amount of time students use their devices while at home and the quality of interactions while using the device. *iRules* by Janell Burley Hofmann and *52 Ways to Connect with your Smartphone Obsessed Kid* by Jonathan Mckee, are helpful resources in setting boundaries and initiating conversations with your child about their digital citizenship. In a nutshell, it is important that parents develop realistic and authentic expectations with their child about use of their devices outside of school time; model the behaviors they expect from their child regarding screen use; and have honest and conversations regarding the challenges that unlimited access to digital devices can occur.



High

How involved should a parent be in checking up on student's work?

You want to remain involved while simultaneously developing responsibility and ownership within the student. For some students, this might mean doing a daily check is necessary and then progressively less as the student becomes more mature and takes ownership. For other students, they might already have these skills and a strong trust relationship has been developed in which the student is filling you in on her/his progress and difficulty. Students want to be successful, know you believe in them yet also are in the developmental stage in which they are trying to become autonomous. It's a balance which involves dialogue with your student and understanding. The goal should be to find ways to help them develop the independence and trust and might require assistance in accessing the "tools" necessary for the student to find success.



High

Are there foreign language requirements? What are the options?

Yorktown offers a variety of World Languages such as French, Spanish, Latin, American Sign Language, Chinese, Arabic and German. Starting with the Class of 2022, in order to earn an advanced diploma, students must take three years of one language or two years of two languages. For a standard diploma, students need 2 credits in a World Language, Fine Arts or Career and Technical Education. There are no SOL exams for World Language courses. Students can also earn World Language via the “Credit by Exam” program.



High

How do we keep homework manageable?

This is a difficult question to address since families have different ideas of “manageable.” Some common items that assist with managing time and homework are: routines, breaks, sleep, down time/fun time, etc. If you think your child is struggling, feel free to contact the teacher/s directly as well as the counselor. There might be suggestions the teachers might have.



High

Who are the college counselors? Are they the same as regular counselors?

Each of the comprehensive high schools in APS have a College and Career counselor who works collaboratively with the rest of the counseling team and is a certified high school counselor. The College and Career counselor builds the relationships with the college admission representatives, coordinates the college rep visits to the high school, works with the counselors to prepare and present to parents and students, meets with parents/students individually to discuss college options, post and manage college scholarship information, etc.



High

My kid is twice exceptional, what does that look like at Yorktown?

- Students' case carrier and Resource Teacher for the Gifted (RTG) work together to support student strengths with RTG attending IEP
- Patriot Period and/or Instructional Studies may be used for organizational and executive functioning needs if applicable.
- Accommodations are implemented in all courses
- Case carrier and/or counselor support testing accommodation applications



High

- **What can parents do to support children during transition times?**

Dialogue ahead of time. Emphasize normalcy of transition as it is a part of life. Assure your student of their ability to adjust and flourish. Normalize the feelings of angst rather than try to avoid or protect them from it. Your child looks to you for assurance and their anxiety/fear increases when they see you take on their anxiety and fears. Some student naturally experience more discomfort than others but the overwhelming majority of students handle change well when they know they are believed in, know they have the ability to overcome the changes, and realize they aren't the only person in the world who struggles with insecurities. Look for other opportunities to see them experience transitions outside of school.



County-wide Questions

Is anxiety social or academic? How can we help? What is being done?

Everyone deals with anxiety at some level and it can be triggered by a variety of reasons - in more severe cases it can become debilitating. While not all causes of anxiety disorders are completely understood, traumatic events and inherited traits can be factors. Academics and social factors can contribute to increased levels of stress – which can be contributing factors leading to anxiety - and helping your student address and healthily manage those areas can assist in avoiding becoming overwhelmed and possibly becoming anxious. It is important to remember we all handle stress differently, and some of us can handle more than others. Some of the factors we find influencing a student's ability (or inability) to handle stress are, but not limited to: the home environment; messages communicated about one's self-worth; fear of failure; fear of acceptance; self-doubt; inability to control one's environment; belief one's value is dependent on one's performance; peer influence and comparing oneself to others; and taking on too much (academic rigor, outside commitments, clubs/sports/activities). (Continued on the next slide)



County-wide Questions

Is anxiety social or academic? How can we help? What is being done?

(Continued from the previous slide)

- **Help your child understand when she or he is taking on too much and how to reduce some of the stress.**
- **Ensure messages from home about one's value are not measured by performance. Doing one's best doesn't mean 1st place, 1st string, 1st chair, or receiving an "A" for a grade. Much of the anxiety we see is influenced, in some degree, by a student's fear of failure, or fear of not being good enough. Ensuring your child understands his/her love and approval has nothing to do with performance is extremely important.**
- **For some students, it can help by remaining calm when they are feeling stressed and helping them develop an action plan to deal with the issues they are struggling with. This would include assuring them they will be fine, can get through it, you are confident in their ability to handle it. (Continued on the next slide)**



County-wide Questions

Is anxiety social or academic? How can we help? What is being done?

(Continued from the previous slide)

- For some, it might mean they need to alleviate, or reduce, some of the stressful factors and making some difficult decisions. An important factor to remember when helping our children deal with decision like this is that we don't belittle or make them feel like they are letting us down or they are less of a person because they are unable to handle the current level of stress.
- - For some, it might mean helping them develop some organization skills, or address any incorrect/ self-destructive messages they are telling themselves.
- Reach out to your student's counselor.

(Continued on the next slide)



County-wide Questions

Is anxiety social or academic? How can we help? What is being done?

(Continued from the previous slide)

- **At YHS we have implemented a number of items to assist students and continue to review and explore how we can support our students. Some of the decisions already implemented are: 9th grade English/Social Studies blocks; counselor assignments to blocks; mentors assigned to small teams of freshmen and meet with them through the blocks; School homework policy in which no assignments are given over long breaks; quarterly testing calendars to reduce the number of tests assigned on the same day; organizational and study skills lessons through the 9th grade blocks; “Laugh More/Stress Less” campaign each semester; “Choose Health” school-wide program; monthly student recognition by staff for contributing to a positive school climate; mental health specialists; attendance specialist; substance abuse counselor; and, clubs/activities/sports for students to have something to contribute.**



County-wide Questions

What is being done about technology content issues and access across the county?

-APS' Department of Information Services filters content using Global Protect. Global Protect is dynamic and constantly evolving to allow students to access curriculum and needed instructional resources.

-Information Services is also reimaging devices to include Global Protect and Airwatch so that it can be more active in locating lost devices and it can monitor students' access of inappropriate content.