

## **Junior High School Is Not As Scary As It Seems**

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Summer is here! This time of year brings forth a great deal of joy as students have ended their school year, are enjoying vacation, and looking forward to either moving up a grade level, or in some cases moving on to the next school. As parents, this time of year brings about mixed emotions. On one hand we are very excited for our children who have finished elementary school and are ready for junior high. On the other hand this transition evokes feelings of anxiety due to the unknown. In Santa Clarita, not only are sixth graders moving on to junior high school, but they are also changing school districts. This tends to add an additional level of anxiety to parents and students. As someone who has worked across all grade levels in public education for twelve years, I have learned a few easy ways parents can make this transition as smooth as possible.

Demystify junior high school. This can be done simply by taking your student on a tour of the campus. Allow them to get used to their new surroundings by learning where the main office, counseling center, bathrooms and cafeteria are. If possible, have them meet their counselor. Prepare them for this by having a list of questions ready that when answered by the counselor, will help calm nerves. Let them do a "dry run" of the schedule. This can include getting up early a few times over the summer to figure out how long it takes to get ready and get to school in time for their first class. Look at the bell schedule to see how much time there is between classes. Then have your student time themselves walking from opposite ends of campus to see how much time is needed to get from class to class.

Meeting with success in junior high requires diligence from students and parents. Keeping communication lines open with each other and the school are important aspects of a smooth transition. Remain involved in your student's academic and social life. There is no bigger advocate in the life of a child than their parent. One final word of advice. Hold on tight, you may be in for a bumpy ride!

For further information regarding transition issues, contact Christopher Jones, Licensed Educational Psychologist with Dynamic Interventions at 661-257-1254.