



HELEN KELLER MIDDLE SCHOOL



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5/25/2023

Dear Fifth-Grade Families,

WELCOME to the HKMS FAMILY!

I am sure you're asking yourself, "wait...middle school already? I remember middle school! How can I send my most precious gift to middle school?!?" While few of us might wish to relive our middle school years, they are some of the most important in forging who we become as adults. The trials and triumphs of these three years tend to have an unweighted impact and leave a substantial impression throughout our lives, which is exactly why we want to make the transition and start of middle school super smooth and successful!

The transition from elementary school to middle school can be one that is exciting, nerve-wracking, and most often...inspiring! I have had the privilege to see shy students become leaders and isolated students develop strong friendships. I have witnessed struggling students blossom into young scholars and young children become savvy adolescents. While the road to high school may not always be straight, the guides along the journey are veteran experts who love and know middle school students, and have dedicated their lives to these transition years. Please be assured that each staff member, teacher, counselor, and administrator is here to serve in the best interests of your children. Don't be afraid to ask for guidance as it still "takes a village!"

I believe a smooth transition to middle school is accomplished by getting to know all the students, listening to parents' and teachers' insights, being available and transparent about the process, and developing opportunities to access the HKMS facilities, staff, and students. This belief helps me reach my goal of creating the best possible transition for every student (and family). This letter is designed to give you an overview of the transition process, explain various transition activities, and describe our philosophy. There are important descriptions included with this cover letter: a list of the transition activities, resources for you to dig deeper into HKMS, course selection information, and contact information for individuals who will play a role in the transition and adjustment to life at HKMS.

I look forward to getting to know you, your 5th-grader, and your family in the coming months and years. Throughout the entire transition process and the middle school years, please do not hesitate to contact me, that's what I am here for!

Sincerely,

Steven Clapp, Ed.D.

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"There is no way to compassion; compassion is the way."

~Chinese Proverb

TRANSITION ACTIVITIES

Elementary School Visit on 5/31:

Our Assistant Principal, Mrs. Annie Mohr, and I will be visiting each fifth-grade classroom to observe, meet with, and begin the orientation process with students. We will talk to each fifth grade class about upcoming orientation activities as well as an overview of what to expect next year. We will spend time at SSES during lunch waves and recess this spring to get to know students and allow students to get to know us. The 8th-Grade Orchestra will perform during lunch for the 5th-graders. We will also meet with classroom teachers, administration, and support staff to learn as much as possible about our new students.

The Amazing HKMS Race! June 6th, 6:00-7:00 pm:

All fifth-grade parents and guardians are invited to this event. Enjoy an evening of fun and adventure planned just for parents as you race through HKMS, learning about everything from our overarching beliefs & values to the structures, and systems that make a highly effective middle school operate. From grading and discipline to drop-off and pick-up, we will cover it all!

SSES Student Visit to HKMS: June 9th

On June 9th, the fifth-graders and their teachers will visit HKMS for a tour, classroom visits, and activities designed and led by our 6th-graders!

SSES & HKMS Staff Transition Meetings:

There are several types of transition talks set up between the SSES staff and the HKMS staff to ensure a smooth transition for the students to a new school. The following is a list of staff/departments that meet to share important information and plan for transition success:

- Special Education
- School Nurses
- The Counseling Department
- The ILA and Math Specialists
- The Grade Level Teacher Teams
- Administration

Summer Open Houses:

On August 2nd, 9th, and 16th, we will “open the house” up for students and families to walk around, practice locker opening, and get to know the administration a bit better. These open houses will be an informal “drop in” event, (no appointment necessary, nothing formal will be presented, and families can come and go as they please). The whole building will not be open for every open house as the custodial team will be hard at work preparing the school for the new year.

Course Selections

Course Selection for Music and World Language:

Sixth grade students are able to select a world language course as well as a music course.

1. Check out these resources to learn more about their options.

[Course Selection Slide Presentation](#)

[Course Selection Videos Link](#)

2. On 6/1, once we visit SSES and explain the various course options, we will open up the Course selection Google Form linked below for you and your child to complete together. Please complete the course selection Google Form NO LATER THAN Friday, June 9th. Some courses can fill up so it is important to complete this form prior to the due date. Any student whose form is not complete by June 9, will be auto filled with the lowest enrollment option.

Course Selection Google Form (coming 6/1/2023)

Student Schedules:

You will receive an email from HKMS when the PowerSchool Parent Portal will open up in mid-August. Once open, you will find your child's schedule. Please update the demographic information and complete the parent forms linked in Powerschool.

Resources:

Our Website:

I know, you've been on our site before, but go in with new eyes. You can see morning announcements, team pages, recent newsletters and messages as well as sample schedules and lots of resources, events, and activities!

Check it out and bookmark it on your phone and computer. Here is the link: <https://www.helenkellerps.org/>

HKMS Family Newsletter

If you really want to get a feel for being a parent (or student) at HKMS, check out the HKMS Family Newsletter, published every Friday afternoon. It is chock-full of peeks into the classrooms, happenings around campus, and insights into the middle school child and programs. The entire archive from this year can be found [here](#). Podcasts of our newsletters and other specialized topics can be found [here](#).

The PTO Website and Facebook Pages:

The Easton PTO has a wealth of information, ideas, resources and supports. The partnership between the PTO and school is long and rich, and I encourage you to join and participate! You can find their site [here](#). You can also follow them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/EastonCTPTO/>

Social Media

You can follow us at the social media sites we post regularly on:



@HKMS_Easton



helen_keller_middle_school

The Successful Middle School: This We Believe

Since 1982 the American Middle Level Educators (or AMLE) has published and updated the core values, beliefs, practices and programs to which great middle school's aspire. If you want to know what drives a top-notch middle school program, check them out [here](#).

Summary of HKMS Transition Activities and Dates

Date	Event	Information
5/31 (Afternoon)	HKMS Administration to SSES	Mrs. Mohr and Dr. Clapp will visit with our 8th Grade Orchestra
6/6 (6:00 PM)	The Amazing HKMS Race! An Event Planned for Parents	We will meet in the HKMS “Cafetorium” with a presentation then venture out for tours!
6/9 (Form responses due by 6PM)	Elementary School Visit and Activities <u>Course Selection Google Form Due TODAY</u>	5th grade classes visiting HKMS for tours and activities with the 6th-grade students and teachers <u>Link to the resources and form are above</u>
August 2nd, 9th, and 16th* (11:00 -12:00)	HKMS Open Houses	An informal chance to drop into HKMS for a brief visit, try some lockers, check out some open rooms and get to know the administration a bit better!
August 22nd or 23rd	PTO Tours	Meet the PTO Co-Presidents and the HKMS Administration while 7th and 8th graders give tours to incoming students and families!

*Open house dates subject to change

(Print this table up for the fridge or family calendar :)
