



## New VBMS Parent FAQ | Frequently-Asked Questions

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### Our Shared Vision

We strive to be an inspiring and supportive school community where all are challenged, through diverse experiences, to take intellectual and personal risks that develop the whole person.



**Welcome incoming sixth grade families!** The transition for middle school can be full of anxiety. At Van Buren, we've worked to minimize the anxiety for students, but we're also aware that parents have many questions and are sometimes as anxious for the transition as their children! It is our hope that this letter answers questions and puts some fears and worries to rest.

### Will my child choose his/her classes? When does this take place?

*Much like fifth grade, sixth grade classes are all standard, with the exception of band and choir. Students will be scheduled into four core classes (language arts, math, science, social studies) and will have a rotation of "exploratory mods" (called 'specials' in an elementary). Those "mods" in sixth grade are physical education (meets for one semester [1/2 year]), art and health (each meet for one quarter). If your child was in band as a fifth grader, that will continue in sixth grade. Choir will also be added as an option.*

### What is "Opening Knight"?

*Opening Knight is the middle school orientation and open house. At this event, held a week or so before the first day of school, students will have their school pictures taken, receive their class schedule and locker assignment and a brief meeting will be held to discuss some of the procedures used in the middle school. Information will be mailed to families in early August with details.*

### Who will my child's teachers be? How does the schedule work?

*In the middle school, grade levels work as teams. Your child will have the same four teachers that all other sixth graders have for the core courses listed above. Unlike fifth grade, each student's schedule is unique – students do not remain with a common group all day long. The day begins with homebase, which is a time to get help on homework, complete assignments, and create a more personal connection between a staff member and students. Academic assist, at the end of the school day, provides time for students to get organized for the trip home.*

### My child was identified as part of the gifted program in elementary. How does that work in middle school?

*Middle school students identified as gifted are scheduled into advanced language arts and math courses based on students' identified areas. Notification of your child being scheduled into these class sections is sent home in an August mailing.*

### How will my child find his/her classrooms and locker?

*We provide time during Opening Knight for students to practice their class schedule. Additionally, parents and students are welcome to stop in those few days before the first day of school to find classrooms and lockers.*

# Van Buren Middle School



Home of the Black Knights

## **My child has an IEP (individualized education plan) or 504 plan. Does this work like the elementary?**

*Your child's IEP or 504 plan follows him/her from the elementary school. For students with IEPs, there is an intervention specialist who will work with your child and his/her teachers to provide the necessary accommodations and modifications.*

## **How does lunch work in the middle school?**

*We use the same point-of-sale system as the elementary. If your child had a balance at the end of fifth grade, that follows him/her into sixth grade. Additionally, each student's PIN moves from elementary to middle school.*

*There are more lunch options in middle school. In addition to the daily lunch on the menu, the second line in the cafeteria offers a la carte items and a salad bar. This lunch costs slightly more and students pick from a variety of sandwiches/entrees. Students have a thirty minute lunch period.*

## **How does the school one-to-one computer program work?**

*Beginning in the 2010-2011 school year, middle school students were loaned a school computer. Over the last few years, the middle school has migrated to Chromebooks. All students are required to use the school-issued case for their Chromebook at all times. Students are responsible for charging the device nightly and the computer will be used daily in most classes.*

## **How do I know what's happening in the middle school?**

- [www.vbschools.net](http://www.vbschools.net) > Offices > Middle School
- Be sure your email address is accurate on the emergency medical card – you will receive a monthly e-newsletter
- Facebook & Twitter: @VanBurenMS