

Fall 2010 7th Grade Parent Meeting
October 7, 2010

Dr. Allan Gold, District Psychologist, Dr. Alan Vann Gardner, Del Mar
Principal, Janet Cerni, 7th Grade Teacher Team Leader

This year the faculty has been working on a vision of the Del Mar student in order to make more concrete the School's mission for its students. After consolidating faculty input five parts of the vision resulted: motivated learner; engaged; _____; problem solver; and effective communicator.

At the meeting the parents made suggestions and comments about the vision, which included:

- parent modeling to help the kids achieve the vision
- creating opportunities for kids to gain self confidence
- providing a safe, reflective environment for the children
- placing limits and creating structure and letting kids become more independent tolerance, sensitivity to others
- engaging children parents to be more tolerant
- promoting learning from mistakes
- promoting self advocacy, self reliance, healthy risk taking
- promoting understanding of connection to global view, global citizen
- promoting love of self.

A discussion then ensued regarding the role of parents at this age of child development. Those listed were:

- be a good role model
- accurately articulate emotions relating to your own mood/behavior
- be present and aware of where the child is both physically and emotionally
- set clear parameters for freedom and boundaries
- give kids confidence and encouragement
- provide positive feedback
- set structure and limits for what your child has to accomplish but don't micromanage
- ask questions to get your child to think about how s/he is going to accomplish things
- have a helpful family environment

An important principle for Del Mar for parents to remember is: "If you see it, say it." This should include both acknowledging the positive about what kids, staff, and parents are doing, and communicating the negative to other parents or to school personnel, so that we can all work together to resolve problems. If we don't know about the impact of the good we're trying to accomplish, then we might not continue or improve on it; if we don't know about the uncomfortable or the outright wrong that may be occurring on campus (particularly kids' behaviors), then we can't address it.

Changes that parents noted in their children from last year included:

- more opinionated
- more confident and better able to advocate for themselves
- more independent, self assured
- taking more initiative
- dramatic physical development, more strength (puberty)
- more self conscious
- mood swings, especially with the girls
- some girls more aggressive, bossy, assertive and interested in the opposite sex
- more fatigue
- more focus and determination
- good sense of humor

Dr. Gold then advised parents of where there kids are:

1. Physically, which affects everything at this age
2. Cognitively, early phase of understanding the abstract.
3. Socially, changes in friendships and circle of friends.
4. Emotionally, puberty, mood swings.
5. Morally, they know right from wrong but doing the right thing all the time is challenging. Kids are learning at this stage that not everything is black and white

There will be two Challenge Days again this year, in January, for seventh grade (two days to accommodate all of the students in the class). This is a full day of activities designed to improve the school climate, reduce teasing, increase empathy and understanding. There are large and small group activities which have a powerful impact on students. This year will be the 4th year Del Mar has had these.

The question was asked if kids have an issue whom they should see and the answer is anyone they feel comfortable with (perhaps a trusted 6th teacher at this point, school secretary, Dr Gold, Advisor, Ms. Pearson, Dr. Vann Gardner).

Dr Gold also advised that it is not too early to start exploring high school options and suggested that those who may be interested in private school take the SSAT this year.