

Spring 2011 8th Grade Parent Meeting
May 19, 2011
Dr. Allan Gold, Psychologist, Dr. Alan Vann Gardner, Principal

AGENDA:

- 1) Advice from parents of graduating eighth graders to parents of entering 6th graders.**
- 2) Comments on Vision of the Del Mar graduates – how are they doing as engaged citizen and balanced individuals/best selves**
- 3) Parenting Issues and Concerns as our children make the transition to high school**

Advice from Eighth Grade Parents to Entering Sixth Grade Parents

- Keep your children physically active through organized sports and activities
- Help them get organized and learn to prioritize
- Help them get independent – back off some
- Keep in the know through Powerschool, websites, etc.
- Have fun; family time is important
- Don't overprogram them
- Don't "recreate the wheel;" ask parents who have experience
- Expose them to a wide variety of healthy experiences
- Drive them around and listen quietly while you're driving; you'll learn a lot
- Be true to your family values
- Focus on your child's interests
- Keep a balance between advocating for your child and teaching them to advocate for themselves

How Are We (DM) and Our Children Doing in Reaching the Del Mar Vision

What's Going Well

- Teachers and staff at Del Mar have modeled empathy and ethical behavior; this is reported and seen at home
- Science project is tied in to community service
- The history rap song project promoted creativity
- Much improvement in self-advocacy
- Kids have a better perspective on work at the end of the year and are better able to manage stress
- Speakers have been positive in promoting diversity understanding
- The kids have developed a sense of who they are and where they're going

Areas for Improvement/Helpful Ideas

- Clarity regarding Community Service: who manages – school or home; checklist for expectations would be helpful; a volunteer website with links would be useful

- Work on empathy and respect with substitute teachers
- More work can be done on reducing meanness and accepting diversity
- Communicate to parents about speakers and other school events to foster more dialogue as families
- Drug and alcohol is beginning to be a problem – some parents are aware of this, others not – need for more communication and education for both parents and students

Parenting Issues/Concerns in Parenting as our 8th Graders Move to 9th Grade

How set are kids with their values vs. being influenced by peer pressure? What is the parental role as they get older?

Developmentally and cognitively, our kids are not finished...we need to stay involved. We hope they have a strong set of values to fall back on, but they can still be influenced by peer pressures.

Kids are going to say they don't want us around, but they still need us. They need lots of opportunities for conversations. And it's best to have other adults they can talk with as well, other than just parents.

If there is a party, call ahead to find out how it will be supervised, show up if necessary...you can't abandon your role as a parent. It is a delicate balancing act, and it's a big job. But it's important to know where kids are. Use role-playing in conversations and discuss consequences. Let kids know that you will pick them up wherever they are if they feel uncomfortable or in danger. Texting is good in these situations, or code words so kids can communicate with you without feeling judged by others.

The kid's job is to separate and test us, but we can't set them free. Kids need to know what we expect in terms of ethical behaviors and standards.

There will be a tug-of-war between curiosity and trying things (drugs, alcohol, etc.), but it's important that kids aren't trying things as an escape from larger problems (parental conflict, divorce, unreasonable academic expectations, depression).

Keep in touch with parents of our kids' friends, especially as they enter high school and they are making new friends. Don't hesitate to make contact with parents of new (non-Del Mar) friends. Get to know their values, attitudes about supervision, freedom. You will not be the only parents who still will be involved and knowledgeable about your children's lives.

