

Drake Middle School

A Transition Journey Update

6th-7th-8th Grades

Good Afternoon, my name is Rod Pugnetti, and I am honored to be the Principal of Drake Middle School! As many of you know we will be opening our school to current 5th grade students, for the first time during the 2018 –2019 school year. Let me be the first to say how excited I am to welcome our first sixth grade class. I am also excited to welcome current 6th graders to Drake as well. We are planning for our transition as a school team; the team will face some challenges but is excited for the new opportunities ahead. Next year we will transition both grades into our school, with two thirds of our student body new to Drake. Making this journey challenging, yet exciting because of all the possibilities this move will create for Drake students and teachers.

The purpose of this communication is to begin to answer some of the many questions you may have at this time. I say begin to answer, because we do not have all the answers, but we will as we get closer to next school year. I have started a **Drake Transition Advisory Committee** made up of many stakeholders. This committee is made up of elementary principals who send students to Drake. It is a pleasure to work with such a talented group of caring educators to help us do the best possible work during this transition. With their help, I also have a handful of parents and teachers on the committee representing each school. In addition, I have asked both teachers and parents who represent Drake to be part of this committee. We have 17 members who will attend every meeting and a few more district support staff that will attend as needed. All decisions will be outlined in this and future **Transition Journey Updates!**

1. One important decision that has been made and is now supported districtwide, is all middle schools will be developing a middle school instructional model as best they can; this model is similar to Drake's current instructional model.

- All students will have access to core instruction in Math, Language Arts, Science and Social Studies. Students that need advanced classes will be placed in honors sections. These placements are based on student growth and achievement data.
- We will offer intervention classes to students that need additional support, these placements are also based on growth and achievement data.
- Students will have access to a variety of electives and explore classes. Explore classes are not student choice classes. They are designed as an opportunity to expand their interests.

2. The addition needed to house all three grade levels is in the development phase. We hope to see ground breaking during the month of October. Although I have not been given a firm start date at this point, the building design is awesome. We will be scheduling a community night to show off the plans, as soon as I receive word they are ready. I anticipate these community nights happening in September.

3. On the nights we set for unveiling of the new building, we will also provide tours of the existing building and a Q & A with Drake Administration and the Transition Advisory Committee.

4. School Safety

It is my intent to keep the grades separated as much as possible. It will not always be possible but that will be our approach to building procedures and rules. Each grade level will have their own entrance into the building and will attend most of their classes on the same floor. Their lockers will likely be located in

the same area as their core classes. My current thinking is our 8th grade students will have classes in the addition. All other safety precautions will be in place as they have been each and every year. We do plan on having cameras in all hallways. This will not solve every issue, but it will be a good start in helping us find the right students involved in any unfortunate situations. Drake will continue to have a School Resource Officer (SRO) assigned to support our building from the Jeffco Sheriff's office.

5. We plan on surveying students, parents and staff to gather questions and help plan some informational evenings during this early stage of plan development.

I hope you find this information helpful as we prepare for the 2018-2019 transition. This and all other **Transition Journey Updates** will be sent to you by school messenger from your current school. I know this does not provide you with everything, but please trust we are doing everything possible to make this a smooth, safe and productive move. I will send out additional **Transition Journey Updates** as our plan develops over the coming months.

Thank you,
Rod Pignetti
Principal
Drake Middle School