



# Omar N. Bradley Middle School

14819 Heimer Road San Antonio, TX 78232 (210) 491-8300

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Incoming Bradley 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Families,

Congratulations on the completion of elementary school! We are excited to welcome you to Bradley Middle School, "Home of the College Bound Bears". You are joining a wonderful family of students, parents, teachers, administrators and staff. For parents who are transitioning their first child to middle school, it can be quite an anxious transition. We do not want you to worry. Bradley is a fantastic school and we are preparing all summer for your arrival.

Below is an article from the National Middle School Association with tips for parents and students transitioning to middle school. I find the tips quite helpful and reassuring. Please take a few minutes to read it and try some of the ideas included. Also, attached is a flyer for our 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Camp. Mark you calendar for this date!

See you in August!

*Justin Oxley*  
Principal  
Bradley Middle School

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*"One extra degree...makes all the difference"*

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## Smooth Transitions to Middle School

Whether middle schools start in the sixth or seventh grade in your community, moving from an elementary to middle level school can be an especially trying time for parents and students alike. While the elementary setting is comparatively secure with a single teacher, basically the same classmates all day, and only one classroom, middle school brings changes. These changes are likely to result in greater learning opportunities-both academically and developmentally-but they are changes, and that can confuse 11 and 12 year-olds.

Among the beneficial changes students and parents will find are:

- Different teachers for different subjects, meaning that mathematics will be taught by a teacher who is particularly trained and experienced in math, science by a science by a specialist, etc. Students are likely to receive more activity-oriented instruction in the several subjects.
- Most middle schools have adapted some form of team approach in which a group of students stays together for their core subjects-English, mathematics, science and social studies under the direction of two, three, or four teachers. These teachers have their planning time together during which they discuss the best ways to meet the learning and developmental needs of the young adolescents on their team.
- Expanded opportunities to participate in students' activities and enrichment and exploratory programs. While the major goal of middle schools is to provide high quality academic programs, they offer many more learning opportunities appropriate for students this age who now have increased interest and curiosity. Students have the chance to learn to work together by participating in band, student council, after-school clubs, or sports programs. Developing the skills necessary to be part of a team will help prepare them for today's workplace. Exploratory options allow students to find areas, such as music, that interest them and can become lifelong vocations.



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While there is much excitement attached to ways middle schools can expand a student's learning opportunities, there are also questions that come into a young adolescent's mind. Here is where parents can play a big role. Questions that students frequently ask as they approach this transition period include:

- What will it be like going to school with older kids?
- Will I be able to find my locker and remember the combination to my lock?
- Will I have enough time to get to my next class between periods?
- Will I remember what my schedule is?
- Will I get lost in this much larger school?
- Can I handle all the increased homework and projects?

Here are some tips parents can consider now and during the summer to help make the transition smoother for their young adolescent:

- Share with students your own experiences when you went to middle school or junior high school. Talk about the things you enjoyed that made school more interesting, including your fears and how you overcame them.
- Find a parent who has a child at your middle school or call the middle school. Call that person and discuss concerns you may have as a parent. If you are uncomfortable with the transition, your child will sense that concern. Make sure you understand everything you can about the new school and project a positive attitude.
- Most schools host a day when incoming students can visit the middle school, see the lockers, try using the combination locks, and learn about the academic programs and other offerings. If such a program is not available, call the school and see if you can arrange a visit with your child during the summer and obtain copies of the schedule and other pieces of student information to review with your child over the summer.
- Make sure your child can use a combination lock. Practice at home.
- Spend time during the summer giving your child manageable tasks that will help him or her develop the organizational skills to complete homework and other assignments in an orderly manner.
- Toward the end of the summer, discuss with your child how his or her time will need to be organized to complete work. Develop a homework and project log or poster so your child can keep track of when assignments are due and when they are completed. The school may require every student to have and maintain what has come to be called "an agenda" in which assignments and related notes are recorded.
- See if there is a middle level student in your neighbor who could talk about the new school with you child and encourage such discussions. Invited that older child to your home for pizza.
- Encourage your young adolescent to try new things and to regard failure as a necessary part of learning and growing. Point out mistakes that you have made and how you have grown from them.

The middle school helps meet young adolescents' need to develop social skills, to strengthen communication skills, and to gain advanced knowledge in the basic subjects. With an understanding of the "whys" and "what's" of middle school, the transition should and can be a positive adventure.

*For more information on helping students make a smooth transition from elementary to middle school contact National Middle School Association at 800-528-NMSA*