



What is Middle Years Learning?

Middle Years Learning refers to education offered to students between the ages of 10-15. Current research acknowledges these years as being critical years in keeping our students on the path to high school completion and success in post-secondary and/or their future careers.

In the Calgary Board of Education (CBE), we believe the following to be at the heart of middle years learning:

- Students are engaged in active, purposeful learning;
- Educators are specifically prepared to work with this unique age group, ensuring every student has an advocate and every student has access to developmentally appropriate and intellectually engaging learning opportunities;
- Curriculum is challenging and exploratory, ensuring that every student learns and every student is held to high expectations;
- Leaders are courageous and collaborative, ensuring organizational structures foster purposeful learning and positive relationships; and
- Schools partner with families, businesses, and community groups to actively involve them in the support and development of the “whole” child.



The CBE offers various grade configurations to meet the needs of students in this age group. All schools provide a safe, student-centered environment that articulates a clear understanding of the learning and developmental needs of early adolescents while providing Alberta Education’s mandated minimum of 950 hours of instructional time per year.

Given the significant changes students go through at this time, middle years teaching must be dynamic and provide developmentally appropriate opportunities and challenges. Regardless of the grade configuration, all CBE middle years teachers and administrators understand the complex and unique learning needs of this age group.

“Staff members understand the unique brain development of adolescents and plan for it in our teaching and learning. The result is a highly-engaged, hands-on learning environment.”

Principal, Grade 5-9 School

Middle Years Learning is developed with a strong awareness of the following five domains:

- Emotional – students are provided with an environment that is emotionally safe at a time when emotions can run high.
- Physical – students experience many physical changes during this time period (ie. growth spurts) and mature at different rates, leaving students vulnerable to negative peer influences if not supported by caring adults.
- Cognitive – students begin to transition from concrete thinking to abstract concepts.
- Social – students begin to develop their unique personalities and build an identity outside their immediate family.
- Behavioural – in this age group students switch between a demand for independence and a need for direction and regulation. Flexible, yet supportive environments help students make good choices.

What Is Different For Students?

- Students entering middle years learning environments gradually make the transition from one teacher to multiple teachers.
- Student leaders in the higher grades often serve as mentors for younger students.
- Students will begin to create personalized learner pathways as the new Career & Technology Foundations Program of Studies is integrated into their daily learning. This will allow students to explore possibilities and interests that will prepare them to make informed decisions with regards to their high school options and extend beyond to post-secondary and the world of work.
- Students will have the opportunity to make course selections in the areas of second languages and the Fine and Performing Arts.
- Students will have increased opportunities for intramural, extra-curricular and co-curricular activities.
- Support systems are in place to assist students as they transition from elementary to middle school and then from middle school to high school.



“Our teachers plan integrated learning activities together and seek leadership opportunities for students to mentor each other.”

Principal, Grade 6-9 School

Within our existing middle years learning settings, the CBE also offers a number of programs designed with a specialized learning focus in mind. All middle years learning environments are designed to enrich the lives of our students and to promote quality learning. They also recognize the many diverse ways of learning and the many interests and abilities that our students have today.

“Students feel very passionate about having the opportunity to explore their interest areas when they are younger so they can begin to narrow choices when they enter high school.”

Principal – K-9 School

How Parents Can Be Involved?

- Talk to your child about the differences they may experience as they transition to their new school.
- Attend the school orientation sessions for incoming students and their families.
- Volunteer at your child’s school, meet teachers, attend school meetings or events and read school newsletters.
- Encourage the use of traditional or electronic agendas for homework and check them for assignments. Successful students have a good foundation at home.
- Set a regular time and place for homework to be done. Give and reinforce clear expectations.
- Visit the school’s website to learn more. Write down any questions you have.
- Make an appointment to visit the school and meet the principal or assistant principal to get a sense of how the school is prepared to support student success. Ask questions.