



K-8 vs. Middle School

Advantages of both structures for providing an education for middle grade students



The Research

- There is no conclusive quantitative research on the academic advantages of a K-8 or Middle School structure
- Quantitative research is focused on the core subjects, which can be taught effectively in either structure
- The advantages listed in this presentation are from qualitative and descriptive studies



Advantages of K-8 Structure

- **Curriculum and Instruction**

- Vertical articulation between 5th/6th grade

- **Social Issues/Student Services**

- Smaller 6th-8th grade learning environment
- 6th-8th graders not exposed to as many negative influences; less peer pressure
- Positive role modeling by 6th-8th graders
- No major transition between elementary and middle school



Advantages of K-8 Structure

- **Other**

- Consistency of up to 9 years at the same school
- Parental involvement is typically strong
- Siblings attend school together for more years
- Typical smaller learning environment and community feel



Advantages of Middle Schools

Curriculum and Instruction

- Wider variety of both core and elective classes; differentiated levels of courses
- Honors program available in some core subjects
- High school credit possibilities; articulation with high school programs
- Increased elective opportunities –
 - More kids = more choices



Advantages of Middle Schools

- Site administrators can specialize in middle school curriculum and instruction
- Need for advanced courses easier to accommodate
- More teachers means more opportunity to match students and teachers' teaching/learning styles
- Fidelity in horizontal curriculum easier to achieve with teams of teachers at one school teaching one subject



Advantages of Middle Schools

Social Issues/Student Services

- More students in one location can lead to more special education services available
- Counseling/support services focused on 6-8
- Separation of 6th-8th graders from K-5 who have different social issues and needs
- Increased variety of clubs, activities



Advantages of Middle Schools

Teacher Issues

- Would be part of a department of teachers in each subject for collegiality and collaboration
- Could ensure highly qualified teachers in core subjects
- Professional development that addresses pedagogy and adolescent development
- True professional learning communities for 6th-8th grade teachers
- Fewer traveling teachers



Questions?