

Fifth-Graders Get a Taste of IDS Middle School

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Welcome to middle school, fifth-graders. Here you will have two lockers, one for books and notebooks—and one for PE. And when you change classes, you walk yourself to class. Then there's lunchtime—more about that later.

These facts greeted future sixth-graders as they attended a student orientation designed to ease their transition from elementary to middle school.

Making the jump from seasoned elementary fifth-grader to middle school newbie takes students to the next level in their maturity and development. Teachers at Independent Day School - Corbett Campus prepared students for the transition in December by holding an orientation that gave fifth-graders a brief taste of what excitement awaits them in middle school; changing classes, lunch with friends, and great opportunities with electives and clubs.

Fifth-graders spent a half-day getting to know the building, teachers and coursework. They followed a sample schedule that included classes in English, Math, Science, Social Studies and Spanish.

From the moment the future middle schoolers entered the school doors, warm witticisms welcomed the students. Posters created by current sixth-graders lining the hallways declared, "Welcome 5th-graders." And "Good luck!"



"In middle school, we will treat you like young adults," said sixth-grade English teacher Kat Quin, as she gave students an overview of what to expect in her class next year.

She excited students with the use of new vocabulary words, instructed them to stand when speaking, and read a passage from a young adult book that had them engrossed in her presentation. Mrs. Quin explained that succeeding in sixth-grade English means becoming an avid reader, expanding their vocabulary, and using proper grammar to articulate a well-researched argument.

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"My goal is to get you to learn to love to read and write. Seeing a movie in your mind and connecting with a character could add a lot to the way you feel about reading," Mrs. Quinn said. "And knowing how to express yourself is the way to help you get what you want. If you're good at math and science and you can communicate, you can do anything in life."

Fifth-graders read personal letters from current sixth-graders, who shared words of advice about the first year of middle school. Many student letters began with a humorous "Dear Future Inhabitant of my Desk" and included practical posts like; remember your locker combinations, plan how to have all your materials ready for class, and study for tests and quizzes. And, of course, this important observation, "The IDS middle school is great!"



In their abbreviated science classes, students worked on mini-lab lessons that offered a glimpse into next year's science curriculum. Sixth-grade science is split into trimesters covering life sciences, geology, and astronomy. Working in small teams, they learned to navigate the electronic SMART board, observed four different types of rock and studied slides under the microscope.

As the students continued to change for the other classes, it was clear from their comments they were excited about the activities they had experienced so far at the middle school and that learning from these teachers was something they would look forward to in the coming year.

These fifth-graders only have to wait a little longer to experience the stimulating environment filled with excitement and enthusiasm that is created by the IDS middle school teachers.

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