



CALLLED TO THE MIDDLE





## Middle School Educators

“Those special people who relate to middle school students and seek to help them transition from a child to an adult with the least amount of turbulence.”

- Joseph Eidson

# MIDDLE SCHOOL CONCEPT- QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Who Are They?

What Do They Need?



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# A LITTLE HISTORY

*An Historical Introduction to American Education- 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*  
by Gutek

*American Education- A History- 6<sup>th</sup> Edition*  
by Urban, Wagoner, Gaither

*Focus on the Wonder Years- Challenges Facing the American Middle School*  
by Juvonen, Le, Kaganoff, Augustine, and Constant

Professor Dr. Dave Mulder

## WHERE DO THEY "FIT"?

Middle grades have been included in each school level at some point in history:

Elementary- K-6 and K-8

Middle School- 5-8 and 6-8

Junior High- 7-8

High School- 7-12, 7-9

The school name/structure may vary, but the students are at the same developmental characteristics and instructional needs, whether you place them in an elementary, middle school, junior high, or high school building/structure.

# HISTORICAL EDUCATIONAL ERAS

Before 1880s  
K-8  
(1 room)  
9-12  
(secondary)

\*8-4  
structure

1880s-  
1960s  
K-6  
(grade  
school)  
7-9  
(Jun.H)  
10-12  
(Sen.H)  
\*6-3-3  
structure

1960s to  
present  
K-5  
(elementar  
y)  
6-8 (MS)  
9-12  
(HS)  
\*5-3-4  
structure



# 6 TURNING POINTS IN EDUCATION

Old Deluder Satan Act 1647	Common Schools Started 1776-1850	Kalamazoo Case 1874	Committee of 10 1889	Junior High Schools 1910s	Middle Schools 1960s
Puritans-free of modern society and devil	Grammar (K-8) High Schools (9-12)	Tax funding for public education-equal opp. for all- Gr. K-12	Secondary Schools Study-mostly university members	Initially to meet needs. Elem/Sec Cert- mini HS	Developmental needs  Teacher cert-MS
Devil in America, too. Learn to read Bible. Law passed-reading, writing	All civilized communities provide a school- law. For the common good. Westward Expansion	Local community responsible  Greater need for education of citizens in society.	Focus- leaders of society-college, rest-go to work Factory Model (HS- 7-12)	6 <sup>th</sup> added-elementaries - out of space. Many chose to stay in school.	MS Concept (similar to original JH intent) 8 Initiatives



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WHO ARE THEY?  
Young Adolescents

## WHO ARE THEY?

10-15 years old

Growing exponentially \*compared to infancy

Chronological differences and growth rate differences= maturity differences/gaps more apparent

Strong emotions with partially developed decision-making skills- prefrontal cortex.



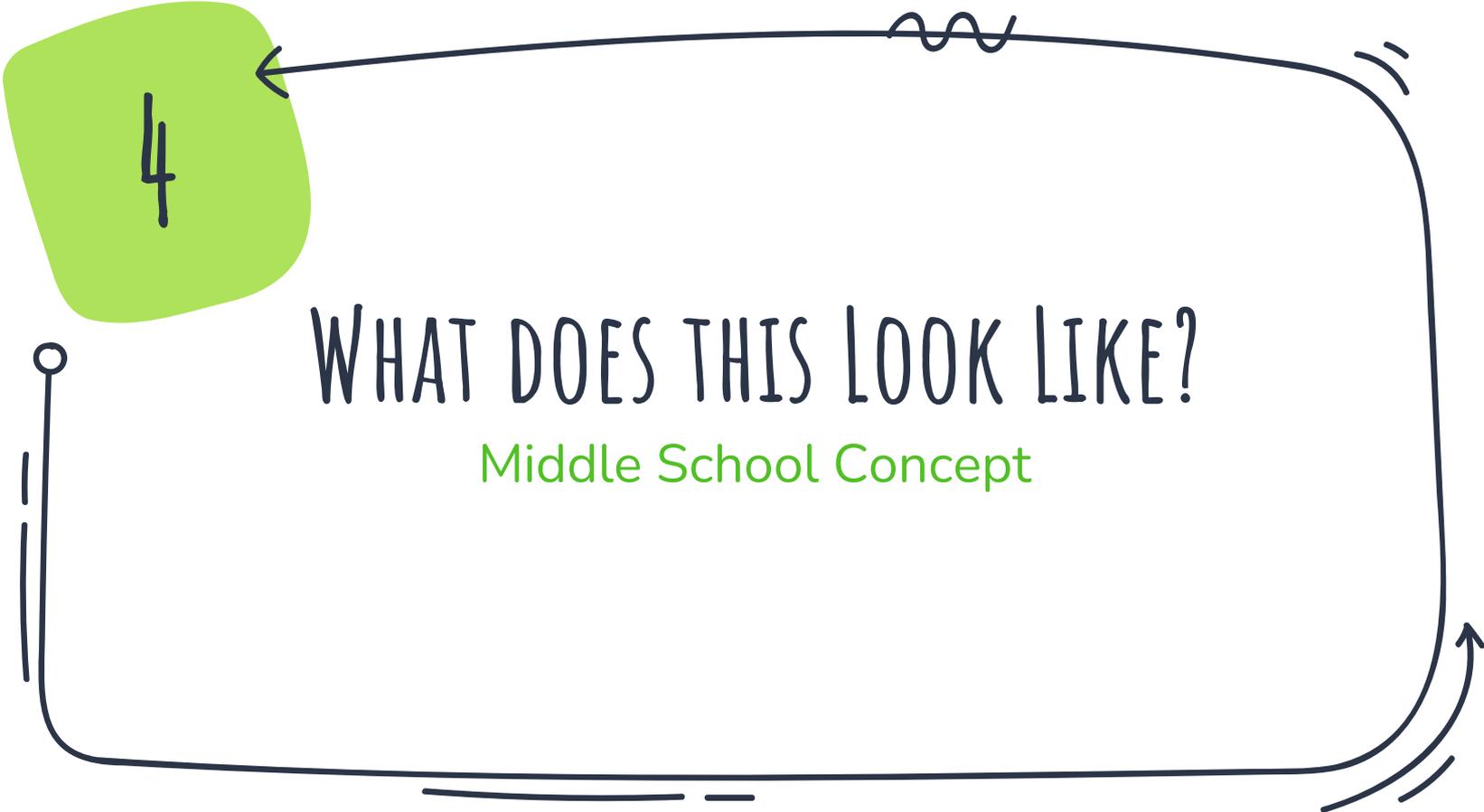
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# WHAT DO THEY NEED?

As Imagebearers, As Adolescents, As Learners

Physically	Cognitively	Socially	Emotionally	Spiritually
Rapid growth	Abstract thinkers- partially	Desire for connections	Need to be seen, valued, and heard	Known and loved as an image bearer, uniquely designed Identity in Christ
Sleep pattern changes	Executive function- mental processes- organization, planning, attention to details, working memory, etc.	Desire input in learning activities, classroom rhythms and structures.	Strong emotions	Spiritual plasticity- emotional and cognitive stage.
Puberty indicators	Choice in learning tasks/ approaches	Increased importance of peer groups- insecurities where they "fit"	Justice seekers- real work, real needs opportunities	*Prime time to invite students into God's Story/personal relationship with God.
Choice in meeting needs				

Note Impacts on Development: Adverse Childhood Experiences/Environment and Epigenetics



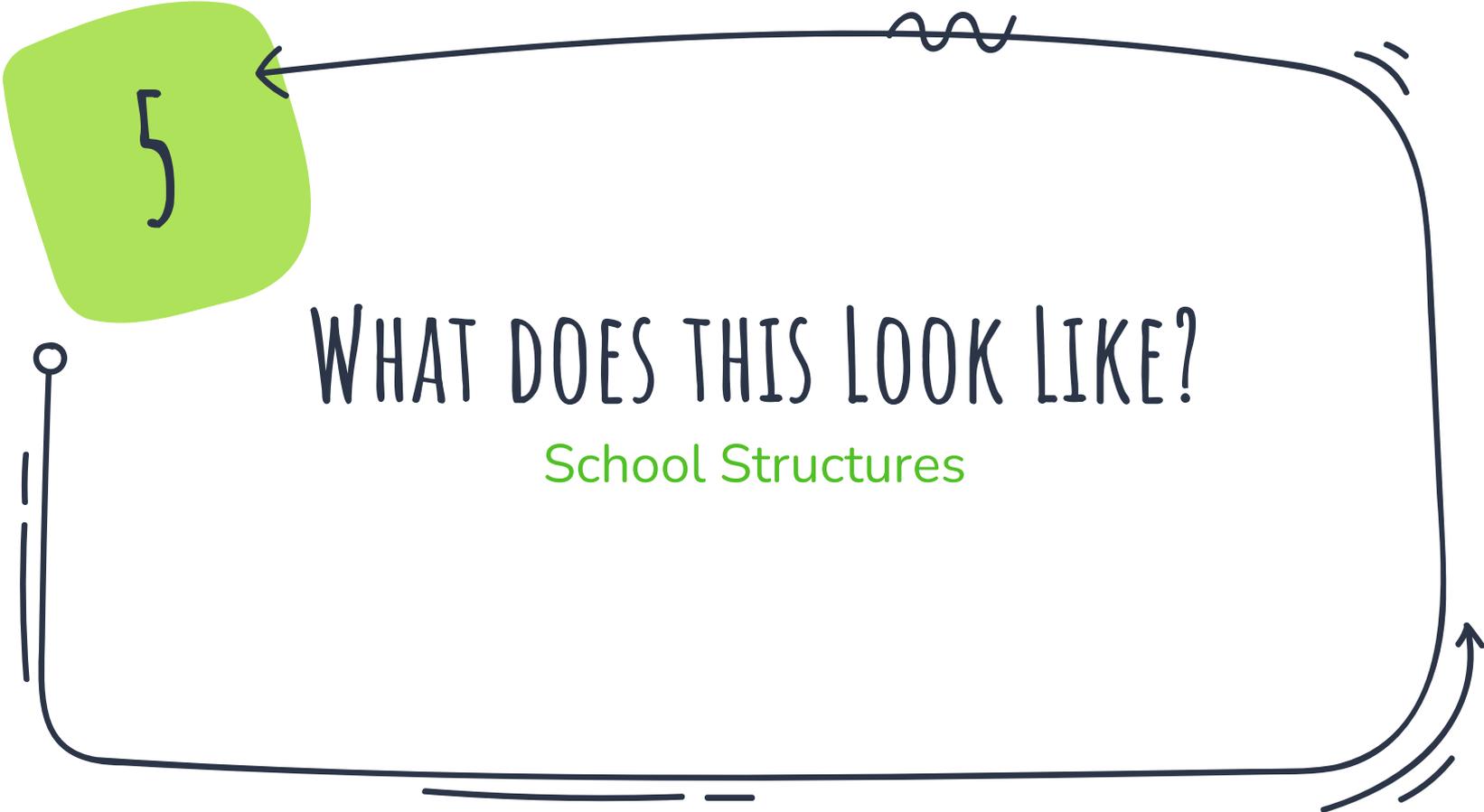
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WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?

Middle School Concept

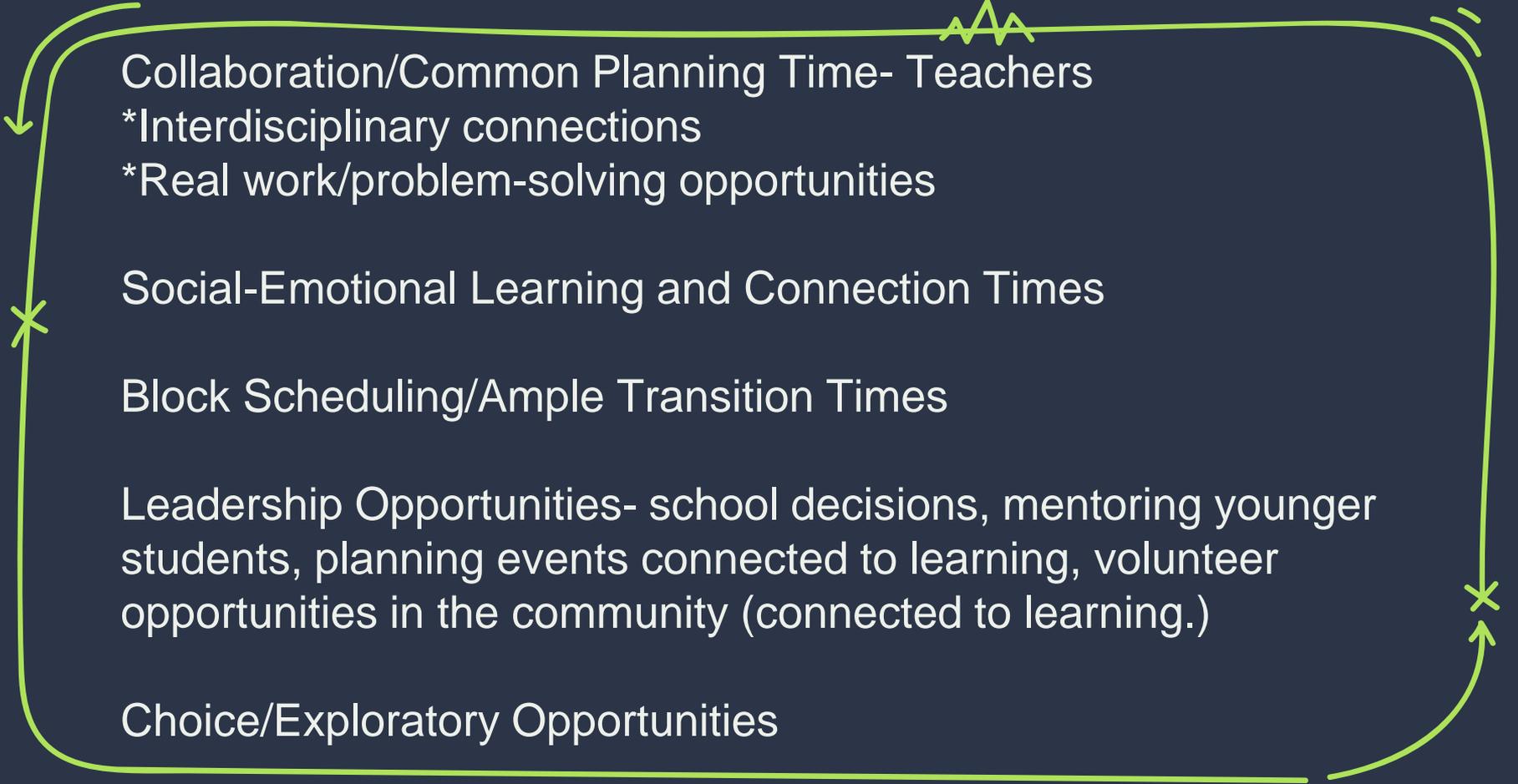
## Essential Attributes

- Responsive
- Challenging
- Empowering
- Equitable
- Engaging
- Handout- The Successful Middle School: This We Believe (AMLE)  
- Middle School, Not Junior High (Wormeli)



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WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?  
School Structures



Collaboration/Common Planning Time- Teachers

- \*Interdisciplinary connections

- \*Real work/problem-solving opportunities

Social-Emotional Learning and Connection Times

Block Scheduling/Ample Transition Times

Leadership Opportunities- school decisions, mentoring younger students, planning events connected to learning, volunteer opportunities in the community (connected to learning.)

Choice/Exploratory Opportunities



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WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?

Classroom Structures/Strategies

## MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER TRAITS

Love being with young adolescents- class, lunch, recess, transition times, recognition outside of school.

Advocate-Expert in student needs

Desire to connect with students- their interests, gifts, etc. \*Healthy boundaries \*Thick skin with their attempts to connect with you.

Ability/Desire to collaborate with colleagues to meet student needs.

# CLASSROOM STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES

Personal Reflection:

X What is one way your classroom structured to meet middle school needs?

What is your favorite strategy to do with your middle school students?

# CLASSROOM STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES

Questions to Consider:

X What is one way you might adjust your classroom structure to meet middle school needs?

What is a new strategy you may want to do with your middle school students?

## CLASSROOM STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES

- Collaborative Activities- structured
  - \*assign groups, scaffold work expectations
- \*-Variety in best practices and protocols
  - \*reflective, ownership in learning, everyone participates
- Choice/Exploratory Opportunities
- Interdisciplinary connections
- Real work/problem-solving opportunities

## CLASSROOM STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES

-Create a safe emotional atmosphere- all students are a valued part of the class- seen, value, heard.

-SEL rhythms throughout the day.

-Remove clutter and distractions from immediate site lines

-Book bag/locker cleanout weekly

## CLASSROOM STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES

-Clear purpose for learning/provide lots of modeling and examples of final products/provide lots of attempts to continue to improve performance or demonstration of the learning. \*Not yet.

-Display learning targets and refer to them often throughout the learning.

-Show progress towards learning goals visibly and often. Provide effective, constructive, frequent descriptive feedback.

-Opportunities to develop executive function skills:

- exercise daily
- analyze and break down tasks
- confirm and reconfirm plans and expectations
- communicate changes in plans
- practice transitions

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# RESOURCES

Called to the Middle by Joseph Eidsen

This We Believe by Association for Middle Level Education

Crazy Good Stuff I Learned About Teaching by Rick Wormeli

Middle School, Not Junior High by Rick Wormeli

The Stewardship of Sacred Time by Simon Jeynes

CREW model- EL Education

Protocols- EL Education