

Illinois Middle Level Standards

Standard 1 – Young Adolescent Development

The effective *middle level** teacher understands and respects the unique developmental characteristics of young adolescents (grades 5-9) in the physical, intellectual, social and emotional domains and can apply this knowledge in working with young adolescent students.

Knowledge Indicators: The effective middle level teacher . . .

1A. Understands the major theories, theorists, and concepts that apply to the unique developmental characteristics of young adolescent development – physical, intellectual, social and emotional.

1B. Understands the various components of young adolescent development and culture

1C. Understands the impact of stress on young adolescents’ physical, intellectual, social and emotional development.

1D. Understands young adolescent development with an appreciation of minority, gender, immigrant, and diverse cultures.

1E. Understands issues of young adolescent health and sexuality.

1F. Understands the range of individual differences of all young adolescents and the implications of these differences for teaching and learning.

Performance Indicators: The effective middle level teacher . . .

1G. Creates adapts, and adjusts curriculum and teaching strategies to promote young adolescent learning, develop better study habits, encourage classroom participation and enhance organizational skills.

1H. Assesses student behavior and academic work based on what is developmentally appropriate for the young adolescent.

1I. Creates a classroom environment where young adolescents feel safe and supported and can develop resiliency and coping skills.

1J. Utilizes learning theory, brain research, and knowledge of young adolescent culture to meet middle level learners’ needs.

1K. Treats young adolescents with dignity and respect.

1L. Demonstrates knowledge of current issues relating to young adolescent development in middle level education.

Standard 2 – Middle School Organization

The effective middle level teacher understands and demonstrates how a middle school is organized and is able to function within an *interdisciplinary team** (*core** and/or *encore**) to fulfill student, curriculum, and whole school needs.

Knowledge Indicators: The effective middle level teacher . . .

2A. Understands organizational structure that includes interdisciplinary teaming, disciplinary teaming (core and/or encore), advisor/advisee programs, flexible block schedule, heterogeneous grouping and *regrouping** within the team.

2B. Understands that middle schools are organized into smaller communities which include a common group of teachers and students in a common area with a common block of time.

2C. Understands the benefits and use of *common planning time** among colleagues.

2D. Understands that middle school teams have a team leader and all members play an active role within the team.

2E. Understands team responsibilities, such as planning *interdisciplinary units**, making curriculum connections, developing team goals, and maintaining team records, e.g., agendas, minutes, and follow-up communication.

2F. Understands that middle level students need to feel a sense of belonging to their team, teachers, classmates and staff in order to enhance communication, discipline and shared goals.

2G. Understands that *shared decision-making** facilitates the development of curriculum, the school improvement process and common rules.

Performance Indicators: The effective middle level teacher

2H. Actively participates on an interdisciplinary team (core and/or encore) demonstrating skills such as team building, team goal setting and assessment, maintaining team records, coordinating and assessing curriculum and interdisciplinary units.

2I. Works within a *flexible block schedule** to enhance curriculum connections among disciplines.

2J. Develops and teaches interdisciplinary units.

2K. Maintains lines of communication with students within the team, school and community.

2L. Demonstrates knowledge of current issues relating to middle school organization.

Standard 3 – Advisor/Advisee/Advocacy

The effective middle level teacher serves as both an advisor and an advocate for students.

Knowledge Indicators: The effective middle level teacher . . .

3A. Understands the teacher’s role as an advisor and as an advocate.

3B. Understands how social groups function.

3C. Understands the components of a successful *advisory program**

Performance Indicators: The effective middle level teacher . . .

3D. Demonstrates support of young adolescents and is sensitive to the challenges they face daily.

3E. Develops advisory program activities to engage students.

3F. Develops and maintains a mentoring relationship with students.

3G. Demonstrates knowledge of current issues relating to advisor/advisee/advocacy in middle level education.

Standard 4 – Middle Level Curriculum

The effective middle level teacher understands and demonstrates the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of subject area content and creates integrated learning experiences that develop all students' competence in subject matter and skills at the appropriate developmental levels.

Knowledge Indicators: The effective middle level teacher . . .

4A. Understands district, state and national standards as they apply to middle level curriculum.

4B. Possesses a depth and breadth of knowledge in at least one *content area** that is broad, multidisciplinary, and encompasses the major areas within that *field** (preparation in at least two content areas is strongly recommended).

4C. Understands vertical articulation of curriculum within individual content areas

4D. Understands the instructional strategies necessary to make interdisciplinary connections within and across content areas.

4E. Understands assessment of student learning is integral to curriculum development.

4F. Understands reading as a process of constructing meaning through the interaction of the reader's existing knowledge and experiences, the information suggested by written language, and the context of the reading situation.

Performance Indicators: The effective middle level teacher

4G. Uses applicable district, state, and national standards in designing middle level curriculum.

4H. Designs and implements an interdisciplinary curriculum.

4I. Demonstrates knowledge of current issues relating to curriculum in middle level education.

Standard 5 – Middle Level Instruction and Delivery

The effective middle level teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies to support student learning.

Knowledge Indicators: The effective middle level teacher

5A. Understands district, state and national standards as they apply to middle level instruction.

5B. Understands the teacher's role in the school improvement process.

5C. Understands how to enhance learning through the use of a wide variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary materials and resources.

Performance Indicators: The effective middle level teacher

5D. Uses district, state, and national standards in the delivery of middle level instruction.

5E. Uses a wide variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary materials and resources to enhance young adolescent learning.

5F. Demonstrates knowledge of current issues in middle level education relating to instruction and delivery.

Standard 6 – Assessment

The effective middle level teacher understands and uses formal and informal assessment to evaluate and support the continuous physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development of young adolescents.

Knowledge Indicators: The effective middle level teacher . . .

6A. Understands multiple approaches to assessment and evaluation of learning based on research and exemplary practice.

6B. Is knowledgeable about a variety of assessment and evaluation tools that can be used to diagnose student learning and to modify plans and instructions strategies.

6C. Understands the use of a variety of assessment tools to evaluate how young adolescents learn and to determine what they know and are able to do.

Performance Indicators: The effective middle level teacher

6D. Uses multiple approaches to assessment and evaluation of learning based on research and exemplary practice.

6E. Uses student assessment results to diagnose student learning and to modify plans and instructional strategies.

6F. Uses varied assessments that evaluate the application of the full range of thinking skills.

6G. Demonstrates knowledge of current issues in middle level education relating to assessment.

Standard 7 – Collaborative Relationships
The effective middle level teacher understands the community’s role in education and develops and maintains collaborative relationships with colleagues, family, and the community.
Knowledge Indicators: The effective middle level teacher . . .
7A. Realizes the benefits of and techniques for working collaboratively within the school environment.
7B. Understands the value and practice of <i>service learning</i> * as an educational tool.
7C. Understands the relationship between the community served and the teaching and learning environment of the school.
7D. Recognizes the continuum of the education process across all levels of schooling, i.e., elementary, middle, secondary.
Performance Indicators: The effective middle level teacher
7E. Seeks input and shares ideas and resources with school support personnel.
7F. Establishes collaborative relationships with elementary and secondary educators to ensure a smooth transition into and out of the middle grades for learners.
7G. Communicates in a professional manner with other adults.
7H. Demonstrates knowledge of current issues in middle level education relating to collaborative relationships.

Glossary of Terms

Advisory program – a teacher-based guidance effort that provides every student with one adult advisor who serves as an advocate and a small group leader. The group meets frequently on a regular basis and typically focuses on personal/social development, educational advisement, school-wide communication and home-school-community relations.

Broad , multidisciplinary, and encompasses the major areas within that field – content area preparation that meets this criterion would include examples such

as science preparation that addresses physical science, earth science, and life science. An example in mathematics would include preparation that addresses problem solving, mathematical concepts, reasoning, probability, algebra, geometry, etc.

Common planning time – a period in the daily schedule when the teams of teachers who work with the same group of students are given time to plan together.

Content area – fundamental learning areas as defined in the Illinois Learning Standards, e.g., science, math, social studies, language arts, music, art, physical education, industrial technology, etc.

Core team – a group of two or more teachers from different subject areas, such as mathematics, science, social studies, language arts, or reading, who have a common group of students, a similar schedule with common planning, and who share the same part of the building.

Early adolescence – a distinct developmental stage of life usually defined as ages 10 to 15, grades 5 through 9.

Encore team – a group of two or more teachers from different subject areas such as music, art, physical education, family and consumer sciences, industrial technology, foreign languages, computers, who share responsibility for teaching all students in the building at some point during a school year, who have a similar schedule with common planning, and who may share the same part of the building.

Flexible block schedule – a flexible time arrangement, characteristic of middle grade schools that allows teams of teachers to schedule instructional time in flexible time periods to better meet the academic and social needs of the students.

Interdisciplinary team – a group of two or more teachers from different subject areas who have a common group of students, a similar schedule with common planning, and who share the same part of the building.

Interdisciplinary unit – a curricular unit of study developed to reflect multiple subject areas and skills in an integrated manner.

Middle level – grades six through eight.

Regrouping – a strategy for grouping students that remains flexible and changes as the need arises for different arrangements of students such as grouping for the purpose of accommodating different interests, varied abilities physically, intellectually, socially, emotionally, or for the differentiation of instruction for any other purpose.

Service learning – an instructional strategy designed to enhance learning through the integration of community service, reflection, and study.

Shared decision-making – the practice of including not only the principal, but the teachers and other school personnel, in school management.

Transescent (Young adolescent) – a young person in transition from childhood to adolescence usually defined as ages 10 to 15, grades 5 through 9.

*Some of these definitions were adapted from **Middle Grades Task Force Report: Last Best Chance**, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1991.*

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