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## Westglades middle school teachers

Middle school, in most districts, covers students in grades six to eight, although this may vary in some places. Teachers in middle schools fill the same educational needs as those teaching other grade levels; they present lessons, degree papers, keep parents upset about their children's progress and maintain discipline in the classroom. Middle school students often present challenges that do not manifest in elementary school, and have been corrected by high school. Effective middle school teachers therefore possess certain characteristics and characteristics that complement their teaching abilities. In the book, *Keeping Good Teachers*, Mark F. Goldberg observes that it's hard to be a good teacher without being comfortable with the student age group. Some teachers are drawn naturally to students in kindergarten and first grade, the years when students are only exposed to the world of learning. Other teachers prefer to teach high school as the students approach maturity and usually require less nurturing. Large middle school teachers are comfortable facing the challenges their students pose. In 2003, the National Middle School Association released its list of the qualities it considered essential for middle schools to achieve academic excellence. One quality dealt with the ability of teachers to change their teaching styles to accommodate students with different levels of performance, past academic history and skills. The best teachers also have high expectations of each student and the ability to engage students in learning through dialogue and interaction. O-Net Online recommends middle school teachers have knowledge of psychology and sociology. Understanding psychology can help teachers recognize issues that may require additional assistance if the student performs well academically. It also helps teachers acknowledge differences in motivation, and the best ways to deal with each individual student. Sociology can help teachers understand group psychology, and the dynamics and behaviors that can manifest in a classroom. Some teachers seem to be born with the understanding needed, but others acquire the skills through formal education or training. Effective middle school teachers possess a natural empathy for their students. They are sensitive to what their students need and how they feel when faced with threatening or unknown experiences. Teachers should be able to maintain their self-control, stay composed in difficult situations and not respond with aggression or anger. A certain amount of stress is inherent in the work, and middle school teachers should be able to cope with the pressures of the profession. Middle school teachers earned a median annual salary of \$56,720 in 2016, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. On the low end, middle school teachers teachers A 25th percentile salary of \$45,370, meaning 75 percent earn more than this amount. The 75th percentile salary is \$71,850, meaning 25 percent earn more. In 2016, 630,300 people were employed in the U.S. as middle school teachers. Since being declared a global pandemic in March, COVID-19 has offered teachers a variety of new challenges. And with the 2020 back-to-school season on the horizon, educators are forced to find ways to tackle distance learning or make their classrooms socially remote-friendly while working to ensure learning experiences aren't dilapidated. And that's on top of all the regular prep that every school year goes in. Most teachers can always use — and earn completely — a little help, but the 2020-2021 school year is going to be an unprecedented one, so here's a list of ways you can support teachers right now. Buy supplies from teachers' Amazon wish lists Ahead from back-to-school season, reach out to the teachers in your life, and ask if they have Amazon wish lists. Since it's a relatively easy and fast way to get supplies and keep an eye on the items they want for their classrooms, it's a popular tool among teachers. Once they've shared the link, select the items you want to buy for them, skip purchase, and they'll be sent directly to your teacher friend. As Amazon carries a wide range of products, teachers can get everything they need to propose for a school year moving forward amid a pandemic, from books to pencils and paper to cleaning supplies and masks. If your teacher friends don't have to share Amazon wish lists, you can still help them the supplies they need by sending gift cards to Amazon as well as Target, Walmart, Staples, Office Depot, Michaels, and local office, school, and art supply stores. Since teachers often have to spend their own money on classroom supplies, they may be less likely to treat themselves so gift cards can behave to other places as a reminder that they deserve some TLC as well. Send the teachers in your life a gift card to their favorite café for a caffeine solution that will help them get through classroom preparations or the first day of school. Or shoot over a gift card to a restaurant or food delivery service for lunches or dinners during that first busy week back. Even if you don't know any teachers in person what you can send gift cards or buy supplies for, you can still help teachers prepare their classrooms by donating to nonprofit organizations dedicated to supportive educators. DonorsChoose is one such organization. The website empowers public school teachers to so ask for materials and experiences for their students and introduces individuals to donate directly to those classroom projects. You can use DonorsChoose to help classrooms all year long because the organization can also sign you up to give a monthly gift. It will charge you once month, and you can manually select the projects you want to support. Attend local school board meetings By Do research to find out if your local school board holds virtual meetings that are open to the public. By attending these meetings, you can get an understanding of education spending and other decisions are made in your district. They also provide opportunities for you to publicly express your support for teachers in the various issues discussed at these regular meetings. Ask teachers what they need Since every district handles back-to-school a little differently this year, teachers' needs will surely differ as well. If in doubt, go directly to teachers and ask how you can best support them during this particularly difficult time and beyond. You can also reach out directly to local public schools or local teachers' unions to get a handle on what teachers in your community need the most. In March, the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and the Collaborative For Academic, Social and Emotional Learning surveyed 5,000 American teachers about their emotions during the COVID-19 crisis. The survey found that the five most mentioned feelings among all teachers were anxious, terrified, overwhelmed and saddened, with anxiety by far the most mentioned emotion. With many schools set to resume personal classes this fall, teachers still remain concerned — recent reports show that some are so afraid to get back to work during the pandemic that they are preparing by working on their wills. With all this in mind, sending emotional support to teachers during this time by simply asking how to help, it can go a long way. Let them know they are appreciated and you are here keeping them any way you can. Michigan Middle School Teacher, Cossondra George Winnipeg Eighth Grade Teacher, Miles MacFarlane Interview with Cossondra George, Michigan Middle School Teacher Cossondra George recently set aside time from her hectic day to talk to us about her experiences as an educator in Michigan. During her twenty years in the classroom, Cossondra taught social studies, math, American history and technology to middle school students. Today she is a mathematics, language arts and resource room teacher for seventh by ninth-grade students. Cossondra attended Northern Michigan University, where she earned a BS in Education, with minors in social studies and math, as well as an MA in Special Education, focusing on learning disabilities. During our exchange, Cossondra described her average day in the classroom, as well as what she knows today that she went known as a starting teacher. Please describe what your typical workday is like as an educator. Although there is no such thing as a typical day for a are not, some things are predictable. I arrive at school about 45 minutes before our contracted time, over hour before students start to arrive in the halls. I use this quiet time to prepare for my day, both mentally and physically. Lessons often require certain materials to be pre-set up, so I make sure everything is as ready as can be. The rest of this time is spent planning for next week's lessons, completing special education paperwork, or talking to other teachers about students we share. When students start showing up, a crowd tends to gather in my classroom, want to chat, get help with homework, or just hang out. Once the first warning bell rings, I make sure I'm in the saddle, greeting students as they enter and reminding them of material they need. The day races through in a blur of students and classes. Being a special teacher are the hats I wear a lot. Part of the day I have students in my own classroom for math classes. Other hours are academic support hours where students come to my room with assignments from other classes on which they need help. These hours are the most hectic, with up to 15 students, all of them often working on different assignments, with diverse support needs. Some may just need a point in the right direction, others need a quiet place to end independently, but most of these students need as close to one-on-one help as I can manage. Another hour of day, I co-learn a language art class. This hour I work with another teacher to teach a class consisting of both regular education students, as well as some of the students on my caseload. We share the duties of teaching, some days she leads while I support. Other days, I'm the principal teacher, with her circulating, providing additional help to struggling students. We can divide the class into two sections and take one group to another classroom for more direct instruction, or keep them all together. I get one hour of prep time. This hour is when I schedule all parent meetings, Individual Education Plan team meetings, or other informal meetings. Days I don't have scheduled meetings are spent working on special education paperwork, rating papers, planning, copies, and more. After my last class of the day, I make sure my room is ready for the next day. I always write hour-by-hour on the board what the day's goals are, as well as listing the materials students need to bring to class on a smaller plate in the hallway. I make sure my desk is relatively cleaned, and I can easily detect any material I need for the next day. What aspects of your work are most challenging and how do you overcome them? The most challenging aspect of my job is motivating students. Work with special I often find that through middle school they've given up on themselves, sure they're stupid. I need to find ways to motivate them individually, help them experience success and bridge what they can do about where the curriculum expects them to be. I find that by making an effort to know my students as human beings, learning their interests outside of school and acknowledging things they're good at, I can encourage them to push themselves to try new things. It's a constant uphill battle, with plenty of backward slides. What do you most enjoy about being a teacher? The kids. I love the unpredictable nature of middle schoolers: their humor, their wisdom, and their fresh take on life. I particularly enjoy the opportunity to have students for various school years, watch them learn, grow and mature. Can you share any time management advice for teachers who strive to create a balanced professional and personal life? Get organized. It sounds trite, but it's the only way you'll survive. I have three lists going all the time: #1 Must Do Today, #2 Need to Do This Week, and #3 Dream List (things like cleaning desk loading, organizing files, etc...) Also, never notice degrees and paperwork. Once you're behind, it's overwhelming and it becomes too much to overcome. Take the time every day to complete your Must Do Today list. Finally, take time to reflect on your work, your lessons, your students and your own journey as a teacher, whether in a blog or an old-fashioned journal. The process of writing will help you clear your mind, formulate solutions to problems and give you a running record of how far you've come. What do you know now that you wish you would have known during your first year of teaching? I wish I'd known my students would change me so deeply. From them I learned patience, endurance, tolerance and humor. In my teaching career, I was focused on what I could teach my students. Now I realize they have a lot more to teach me than I'll ever be able to give back in return. We thank Cossondra for having shared her diverse experiences and sincere wisdom with us and wish her all the best with the rest of the school year. To connect with Cossondra, visit her blog, Middle School, Day by Day. Read on how to become a teacher in Michigan Interview with Miles MacFarlane, Winnipeg Eighth Grade Teacher We recently had the great fortune to interview Miles MacFarlane, a middle school teacher in Winnipeg, with 22 years of experience in the field of education. Miles obtained a BEd in Secondary English from the University of Newfoundland and began his career education in a remote, fly-in First Nations Reserve. He lived there for five years and was also vice-principal before taking a three-year temporary assignment as coordinator of education technology for 35 remote schools. During that period, Miles pursued a Master's degree in Education and Human Development with a in Education Technology Leadership of George Washington University (GWU). After the temporary assignment was completed, he settled in Winnipeg and graduated fifth for years in a primary school. For the past eleven years, he has taught eighth graders all subjects at a middle school that Miles describes as incredible and progressive. Please describe what a typical day looks like for you, Miles. My very early on. Because the rest of the day has jobs, family and community commitments, I get up between 4:30 and 5 a.m. for Ms Time. I sit at the living room window with the iPad and a cup of coffee and read my RSS feed, connect to my professional learning network on Twitter, my friends and family on Facebook, and write for my blog. At 6:30 p.m. -m, I get breakfast and lunches ready for my wife and nine-year-old son as I listen to the morning news on the radio. Before school, I like to start spending time with colleagues in the staff room over the crossword. This time is a mix of trivia, catch-up and professional sharing. Because I am responsible for all subjects and I have the same group of students for the whole day, we have tremendous flexibility over our day. This lends itself to fully integrated, project-based learning experiences where, apart from PE and Applied Arts Programs, the designations on our roster are arbitrary. The students and I look at what projects and activities are underway, look at deadlines and project goals and then set an agenda for the day. At any given time, students can work on different things in different places. Much of what I do during the day is help students with short- and long-term goal setting, project management, and resource tracking. Managing the online learning spaces (Edmodo and student blog) occupies time throughout the day to provide a context for conversations with students and become the student's portfolio. I tend to eat lunch in my classroom and invite students to visit, continue their projects or get help during the lunch break. It's a nice and comfortable, low-pressure time that goes a long way toward creating community. After school, mainly family is focused: sitting around the house, visiting, eating dinner together, and reading or writing in the evening with time for school or committee work as needed. I recently re-enrolled in the GWU Ed Tech program so coursework will change the nature of my nights and my time. What aspects of your work are most challenging and how do you overcome them? There are so many cool and interesting things to do and try as a teacher, but there's not enough time to do it all. My strategy is serial innovation in which I see an idea, get excited, do initial research to implement, reflect and understand the issues related to the idea and then move on to the next one. The only problem with that strategy is that I usually don't stick to the same thing long enough to develop mastery, but I can be useful to other teachers since they want to What do you do you do enjoy being a teacher? Watching a busy room with kids who interact, explore, learn, create, interrogatory, interrogative, is a thrill. I like to experiment with technology myself and throw a new technology tool/app into the mix with some visions of what it can do, and then seeing students pick it up and run with it is exciting. What best practices can you share to integrate technology into classroom activities? I don't know if this is the best practice, but here are some thoughts: Don't expect technology to be perfect. Consider technology trouble part of the learning experience. As students learn content, they also learn the tool. Collectively, in your classroom, you probably have all the technology knowledge you need to get things up and running. Blur the line between teachers and learners and capitalize on the skills in the room. You don't have to be an expert with the technology. Know what it should be able to do and use that understanding to spur creative thinking in your students. They can search tutorials on how to use them and teach others when they find solutions. (I'm sure one of your curricula somewhere will have something about identifying needs, creating a strategy for detecting, synthesizing and applying information.) Teaching students how to learn is much more valuable. Can you share any words of wisdom with recent graduates preparing to start a teaching career? I'm full of spicy words related to teaching. Here are those who best define my own beliefs and attitudes about teaching: Take what you have and get on with it. Everyone in the room is a learner, including yourself. Don't teach, help students discover. Your students have lives outside of school. So should you. Take time to understand motivations that manage behavior. Manage the workload — formative assessment: writing on children's work as you circulate, it only takes home if you need to, — summative assessment: use criteria, columns and self-assessments, it focuses on feedback. — mark the hell out of the first few paragraphs and then focus on content. (Thanks for this advice, MJ!) Get connected to educators online. Twitter and blogs are valuable sources of professional learning. If you can't find anything positive in a situation, you have to look harder. We thank Miles for set aside time from his hectic day to share his valuable suggestions for new teachers. Connect with him via Twitter @milesmac. @milesmac.

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