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Cohort 6
Middle School Developmental Project
Implications for Practice

Understanding the developmental stages and behaviors of middle school adolescents is crucial to meeting the needs of each student. It is important for our teachers to be able to understand and recognize the various cognitive, social and emotional indicators of the students that they serve. As a building leader, there may be times where I have to call upon developmental information to make sound decisions for a student.

I have had the experience of teaching students K-12. While the difference between a kindergarten student and a high school student are vast, the difference between a 6th grade student and a 7th grade student may seem more subtle. Teachers and parents are the adults that students are most likely to interface with. Teachers need to understand the developmental stages of the children in their room. This is even truer for teachers who have changed grade levels or content areas. As a leader, it would be a good practice to remind teachers of the developmental stages of the students in their classrooms. It might even be a good idea to ask teachers to hone in on a few students and try some different approaches based on their developmental understanding.

Report card pick up, breakfast with a parent and open house are a few examples of events that give schools opportunities to communicate with parents. As a leader, we can take these times to build relationships with our parents. We can let parents know that our school is a resource should they have any questions. If couched appropriately, we can even offer information regarding the different developmental stages that their child will progress through. A child's middle school education will be filled with rapid growth and change. Using tools like the observation rubric can help remind us of what to expect along this journey. As a leader, I would take the time to study even further the grade levels that I am leading. Knowledge is

power. The more preparation we can do as a leader the better equipped we will be to help students, teachers and parents.