“Don’t agonize; Organize.”

I am sure that many parents and students at Prince Avenue can relate to this quote. The question “Where did you leave it last?” has been asked in many houses come evening homework time. It can be agonizing for middle school parents and students to keep all the classes, assignments, and due dates straight. Organization for middle school students can seem unattainable for some, but please know you are not alone! Many strategies exist to help middle school students get organized, and I would like to share just a few with you that I have seen work with middle school students over my ten years in education:

1. **A morning and afternoon routine** - Having your student create a routine can help prevent a surprise crisis, especially when you need things to move smoothly to ensure you get out of the door on time. Getting the backpack ready the night before with everything your student needs for the next day is an easy way to simplify a morning routine. A morning or evening routine will not prevent the unexpected from happening, like a car problem or spilling breakfast on a uniform, but it can help you deal with the unexpected because all other things are in order.

2. **A list of upcoming assignments** - Renweb is another wonderful tool for organizational strategy. Taking some time during the weekends to sit down with your middle school student and write out the upcoming assignments listed in Renweb is an effective way to plan for the coming school week. Also, write down in the student’s planner the books needed for homework each day of the week. By writing this in the planner, the end-of-the-day pack up time can become smoother, and you may avoid a trip back to school to retrieve the forgotten book.

3. **A study environment conducive to learning** - It is true that different students prefer different environments in which to study. Some like to have background music on while others need complete quiet. Differences are okay and normal among students, but some common distractions are best to avoid while studying. Visual and auditory distractions from the TV being on in the background can hinder productivity. The impulse to check social media- wanting to see the latest post from a friend- or texting can also break your student’s concentration while studying. Environments in which cell phones are out of reach during study time will help cut back on distractions. Room lighting can even affect studying; a too dark or too bright space can cause issues. I have also found that having a specific time each night to study helps students. For some this might be right as the student gets home before dinner, while for others it might be right after dinner and before the evening routine ends.

These are just a few ideas I have found worked well for students and families over the years. By no means is this an exhaustive list of strategies that can help your child, but hopefully, it is a start to move from agonizing to organizing!

If you would like to read more about organizational strategies for your student, please click here or click here.

Thank you for taking the time to read this article and investing in the education of your student!

Blessings,

Daniel Head
Middle School Principal