

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL MATTERS PROJECT

A Partnership Between Pflugerville ISD, Hays CISD, and The University of Texas



Parents' Frequently Asked Questions

What is Middle School Matters?

Middle School Matters is an initiative founded by the George W. Bush Institute and implemented by The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk at The University of Texas at Austin. Since 2012, Middle School Matters has developed a suite of online instructional materials for middle schools and provided support to more than 100 schools around the nation. The Institute of Education Sciences, which is part of the U.S. Department of Education, recently awarded a grant for researchers at The University of Texas to further develop the Middle School Matters professional development and instructional materials with a focus on reading throughout the content areas.

How will Middle School Matters help my child's teachers?

Middle school science, social studies, and English language arts/reading teachers will learn how to embed **high-impact reading comprehension practices** (e.g., main idea, question writing) into their regular instruction. Researchers from The University of Texas will provide teachers with high-quality professional development and ongoing training to improve their instruction during the 2019–2020 or 2020–2021 school year. All materials and support are provided at no cost to the school.

How will the project help middle school students?

Students will learn and practice these reading strategies during their science, social studies, and English language arts/reading classes. These practices have been proven to improve students' reading comprehension and content knowledge in the middle grades and beyond.

What does participation mean for my child?

All students will receive the district curriculum for science, social studies, and English language arts/reading and participate in the Middle School Matters assessments at three time points (beginning of year, middle of year, and end of year). Your child's teacher may use the Middle School Matters evidence-based reading practices during the 2019–2020 or 2020–2021 school year during their instruction.

If you agree to let your child participate in our study, we will collect your child's scores on the assessments (e.g., STAAR reading scores), as well as demographic information about your student (e.g., date of birth, race/ethnicity). **If you do not wish for your child to participate**, your child will still receive the instruction in the class, but The University of Texas will not collect their assessments or demographic information. Your child's campus may choose to use your child's assessment data to inform future instruction.

Does my child have to participate?

No, your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or withdraw at any time. You can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later. This project will take place during regular classroom activities; however, if you do not want your child to participate, neither tests nor demographic information will be collected by researchers.

How will my child's privacy and confidentiality be protected?

The research team will protect your child's privacy and confidentiality by removing any personally identifying information. This means that the data will be de-identified so that it cannot be tied back to your child's name.

How can I learn more about the project?

Visit our website at www.GreatMiddleSchools.org/pilotstudy

If I have additional questions, who can I contact?

Elizabeth Stevens, Ph.D.

Co-Principal Investigator and Project Director

elizabeth.stevens@utexas.edu

913-707-1450

Christy Murray

Co-Principal Investigator

christymurray@austin.utexas.edu

512-517-9993

MIDDLE
SCHOOL
MATTERS
INSTITUTE

 The Meadows Center
FOR PREVENTING EDUCATIONAL RISK