



## Middle School Update

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There are many, many joys to being a teacher, but the very best one has to be the former student who returns to share that something you said to them was remembered and impactful. In fact, I clearly remember the very first students who returned from college when I was a younger teacher who shared that I had made a difference in their lives. I remember primarily because it's the greatest feeling a teacher can have, but also because I was very confused at first in the disparity between what I thought had been impactful versus the moments of importance that they shared with me. Surely that creative classroom idea, the brilliant moment of literary discussion, or the hours of work together developing a college essay would be the moments that made the difference. But inevitably kids would share a brief conversation in the hallway, or an offhand comment in class discussion, or other almost random interaction during the day as being "The Moment" when some bit of humor or wisdom had found its way into the foundation of their thinking.

Now I'm a veteran teacher of 28 years. Visits from former students whom I impacted continue to be the highlight of any day. And if they do share a special moment that meant a lot to them, I'll admit to you (but not them) that I rarely have the same memories that they do. Our relationship is why they stay in touch or want to visit, but the moments that created that meaningful relationship for them are almost always different from what I remembered being special and important. With two sons in college, I'm having a similar experience as a veteran parent. We've done a lot of great things as a family, but inevitably the most memorable and impactful experiences have been unplanned and spontaneous.

Job applicants for teaching positions are asked to share their philosophies of education. A recent hire addressed this important topic with wonderful understanding when she wrote, "This burden and responsibility must be acknowledged and embraced by educators. We must recognize that how we teach and interact with children and families *makes a difference in their lives*. We must then stay grounded in this power, not letting it feed our egos but instead, keep us humble: we are imperfect and we hold great power—and we must tread lightly."

John Lennon said, "Life is what happens when you are busy making other plans." As we begin the sprint from spring break to summer, trimester three is often our busiest and most meaningful. Overnight trips in grades 6-8, the talent show, Honors Day, and multiple special events at each grade level will be planned, organized, and anticipated with excitement and nervousness. All of these events will be significant and meaningful, but inevitably the most impactful memories will be created in unexpected moments. As always, thank you for trusting and respecting the efforts of our teachers as they carefully plan for the events of every special day in Middle School while they also skillfully identify and make the most of the spontaneous moments that can become foundational to our students' understanding of themselves.