

**WEST ESSEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**West Greenbrook Road, North Caldwell, NJ 07006**

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January 2, 2012

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Beginning with the 2012-2013 school year, West Essex Middle School will be initiating a new approach at the seventh grade level for placing students into their respective academic courses. The Middle School will introduce heterogeneous grouping, as opposed to tracking, as the primary placement process.

Tracking students during their middle school years is a subject of great controversy. Tracking versus heterogeneous grouping has been the source of over 500 studies, more studies than any other topic in education. The results of these studies provide data which supports our move to heterogeneous grouping. Nonetheless, since this change in the placement process will impact almost every child entering the Middle School, it warrants a night when parents can ask questions and receive the District's rationale for the change.

As a result, I urge all parents to attend Sixth Grade Parent Orientation Night on Thursday, January 19, 2012 at 7:00 P.M. in the West Essex Middle School Auditorium. We will begin the evening at 6:15 with student led tours of the Middle School facility. At 7:00 P.M., Middle School Guidance Counselors, Theresa Imhoff and Lisa Hulse, will discuss the vital communicative role Guidance Counselors play with parents and students. Finally, a PowerPoint presentation and a question and answer session will be implemented to discuss the introduction of heterogeneous grouping.

Several resources will be present and available at this meeting to assist parents in developing a fuller understanding of heterogeneous grouping and the overall West Essex program of courses. Ryan Gupta, the new Director of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction, and all Instructional Supervisors will be available to discuss the impact of heterogeneous grouping within their disciplines. The West Essex Regional District's Program of Studies, a comprehensive booklet outlining all courses offered throughout a student's secondary education, will also be available to all parents.

Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to invite all current sixth grade parents to Parent Orientation Night on Thursday, January 19 at 7:00 P.M. in the Middle School Auditorium. A snow date, Thursday, January 26 at 7:00 P.M., has also been scheduled. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this meeting, please feel free to call or email me at the number and address listed above.

Sincerely,

*David Montgomery*

Principal  
DM:sf