WMRSD Leaders and Learners – Your Community Connection
White Mountains Regional School District

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The White Mountains Middle School is off and running as the school welcomes its first 7th- and 8th-grade students to campus this fall. More than 155 middle school students have found a new home in the North Wing of White Mountains Regional Middle High School, and the energy and excitement throughout the first few weeks have been outstanding.

Students begin each day in their Spartan Squads, a structured advisory program designed to build relationships, strengthen connections, and create a sense of belonging. Students also have time built into their day for Spartan Block, which provides opportunities for academic support, enrichment, and exploration of student interests. Current enrichment opportunities include Yearbook, YLTA, Student Council, Chess Club, and Chorus.

Middle school students are exploring new interests with the tremendous support of high school staff. White Mountains is also collaborating with the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) to offer a unique Trail Building middle school elective. Thanks to support from the Barr Foundation, White Mountains is able to bring AMC staff, along with their trail-building tools and expertise, to campus to work alongside science teacher Mike Maras. Together, they are providing students with hands-on experience while introducing them to valuable skills that can serve as a foundation for future trades and career pathways.

The Trail Building elective is one of many exciting opportunities being offered to middle school students. High school staff are also opening their classrooms to middle school students through electives including Lifetime Fitness, Middle School German, Middle School Hospitality, Middle School Culinary, Rock Band, Chorus, Leadership I, Grow Your Own Food, Art, and Physical Education.

Middle school electives rotate quarterly, allowing students to experience a variety of courses and discover new interests throughout the school year. These opportunities are an important part of the 7–12 model, creating educational connections between middle school and high school while giving students an early look at the many pathways available to them at White Mountains.

The goal is to provide students with opportunities to explore, create, build, perform, and learn by doing. Along the way, these experiences will help middle school students begin thinking about what their own high school educational pathway might look like.

Middle school students also jumped right into the full week of Homecoming activities. From daily dress-up days and creating a Homecoming float for the parade to Friday morning's pep rally, middle school Spartans were actively involved throughout the week. Approximately 60

middle school students participated in the Homecoming parade, and Ms. Daly's Spartan Squad earned the Spirit Stick after collecting the most team points throughout the week.

Saturday was another great opportunity for middle school students to experience the excitement of being part of the White Mountains community. Students and families came out to support the Spartans as field hockey, cross country, and boys' and girls' soccer competed against Berlin on the high school fields.

Behind the scenes, the middle school teaching staff put in countless hours throughout the summer preparing classrooms, curriculum, schedules, and day-to-day operations for the opening of the new middle school. Their hard work and commitment helped create a welcoming environment for students from day one.

On August 26, staff welcomed students and families to an Open House. The turnout was amazing as students met their teachers, found their lockers, explored the North Wing, and began to understand the expectations and opportunities that come with being part of the new White Mountains Middle School.

There is still a lot of work ahead as the school continues building a strong and coherent 7–12 school model, but the first few weeks have been an exciting start. Middle school students and staff are already making their mark on White Mountains.