

**Memorial Middle School
Fair Lawn, New Jersey
Grades 6–8**

Common Ground

Memorial Middle School developed Common Ground to welcome new students. Designed to ease the transition from elementary to middle school, the program encourages new students to see the middle school experience with wonder, excitement, and curiosity. The name, Common Ground, represents the driving force for this initiative, which is to recognize and celebrate that all share common experiences that connect all human beings. Common Ground provides direction and makes students feel welcome, significant, and part of a community. Prior to orientation, the principal, along with current students and teachers, visits sending schools to establish open communication to help the transition. On orientation day, student event staff and Peer Assistant Leader Service members (PALS) serve as ambassadors, taking fifth graders on guided tours, answering questions, and conducting interviews. Students are introduced their PALS, namely those assigned to them for their first year. PALS are trained to be like siblings, peer counselors, and teacher liaisons. Together, students participate in cooperative outdoor activities that foster teamwork, encourage listening, and promote mutual respect.

CONTACT

Laurianne Brunetti
Character Education Coordinator
(201) 704-5470
lbrunetti@fairlawnschools.org
www.fairlawnschools.org