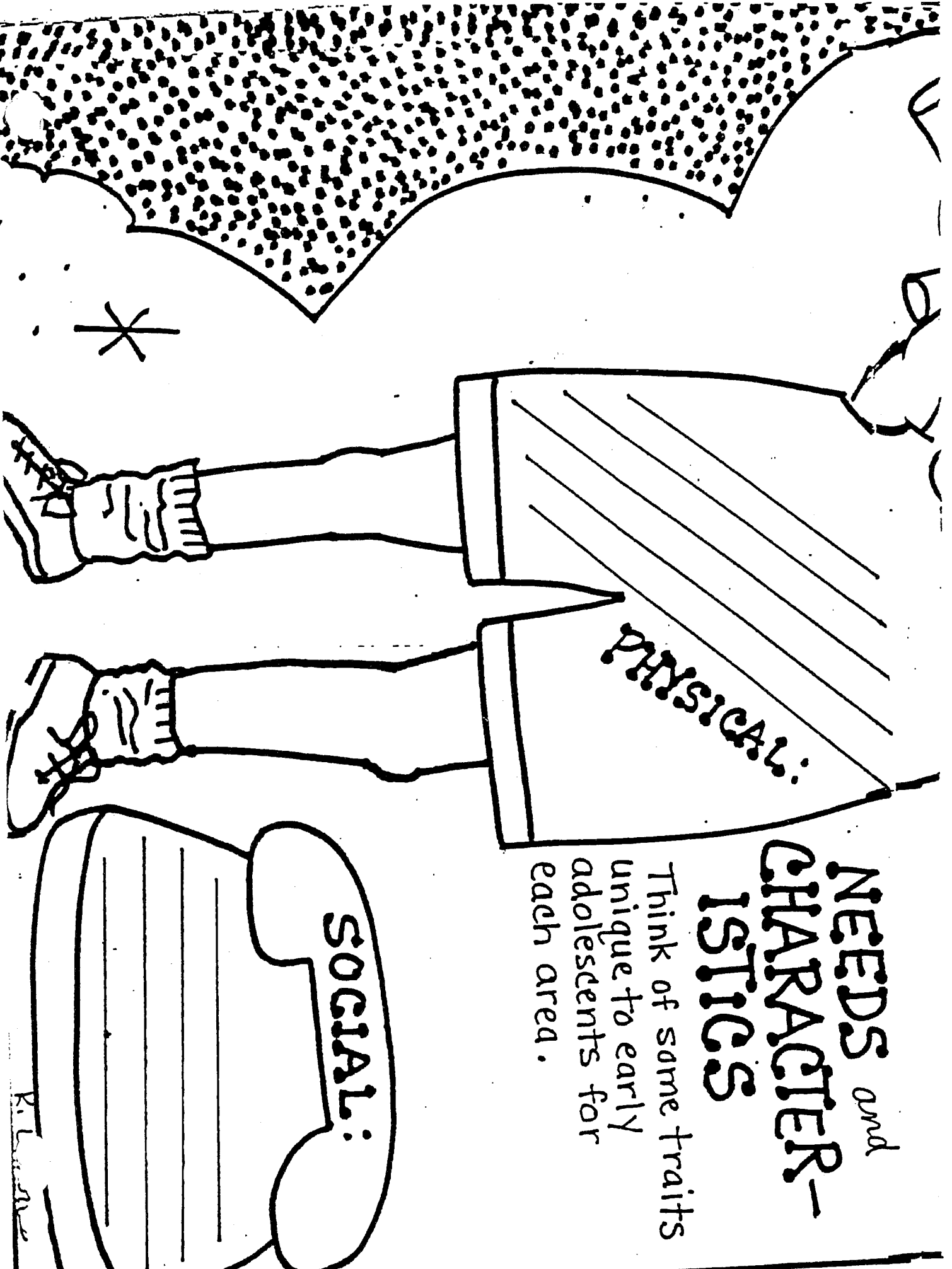


# NEEDS and CHARACTERISTICS

Think of some traits unique to early adolescents for each area.

PHYSICAL:

SOCIAL:



R. L. ...

# ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A TRUE MIDDLE SCHOOL

1. Educators Knowledgeable About and Committed to Transescents  
(Based on unique needs and characteristics of 10-14 year old)
2. A Balanced Curriculum Based on Transescent Needs  
(Balanced between cognitive needs and affective needs)
3. A Range of Organizational Arrangements  
(Organization as a tool and not a master for instruction that includes multi-age grouping, developmental age grouping, homogeneous grouping, block scheduling, heterogeneous grouping, and alternate schedules)
4. Varied Instructional Strategies  
(Small and large group instruction, cooperative learning, independent study, textbook, gaming and simulation, learning centers, lecture, interdisciplinary studies)
5. A Full Exploratory Program  
(Mini-courses, exploratory courses, service clubs, special interest activities, and independent study projects)
6. Comprehensive Advising and Counseling  
(Home base or advisor-advisee programs)
7. Continuous Progress for Students  
(Student goal-setting in accordance with individual's preferred learning style)
8. Evaluation Procedures Compatible with Nature of Transescents  
(Progress reports in combination with student and parent conferences on regular and consistent basis)
9. Cooperative Planning  
(Interdisciplinary team organization and planning among academic team members as well as teacher-pupil planning within the individual classroom setting)
10. Positive School Climate  
(Heavy emphasis on the hidden curriculum along with the formal curriculum)

SOURCE: This We Believe by the National Middle School Association, Columbus, Ohio, 1982.

# GLOSSARY

## OF TERMS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLS

1. **Early Adolescence:**

The stage of development between ages 10-14 when student begins to achieve puberty.

2. **Transescence:**

The stage of development which begins prior to the onset of puberty and extends through the early stages of adolescence.

3. **Advisor/Advisee:**

A regularly scheduled period each day/week in which students interact with peers/teachers about both personal and school related concerns.

4. **Block/Flexible Schedule:**

Organization of the school day into large units of time that may be utilized in varied and productive ways by the school staff.

5. **Exploration:**

Regularly scheduled curriculum experiences designed to help students discover and/or examine learning related to their changing needs, aptitudes, and interests. Often referred to as the "wheel" or mini-classes.

6. **Interdisciplinary Team:**

An instructional organization of two to five teachers representing varied disciplines that pool their resources, interests, expertise, and knowledge of students to jointly take the responsibility for meeting educational needs of a common group of students.

7. **Interdisciplinary Program:**

Instruction that integrates and combines subject matter ordinarily taught separately into a single organizational structure.

8. **Core Curriculum:**

The basic subject areas of math, science, social studies, and reading/language arts.

9. **Interscholastic:**

Athletic activities or events whose primary purpose is to foster competition between schools and school districts. Participation usually limited to students with exceptional athletic ability.

# GLOSSARY

## OF TERMS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLS

continued

10. **Intrascholastic or intramural:**

Athletic activities or events held within the school day, or shortly thereafter, whose primary purpose is to encourage all students to participate regardless of athletic ability.

11. **Metacognition:**

The process by which individuals examine their own thinking processes.

12. **Mini-Courses:**

Special interest activities of short duration that provide learning opportunities for students based on student interest, faculty expertise, and community involvement.

13. **Common Planning Time:**

Regularly scheduled time during the school day in which a given team of teachers who are responsible for the same group of students are available for joint planning, parent conferencing, or lesson preparation.

14. **Team House:**

Designated self-contained section or area of the school that contains a team of teachers and their assigned students to maximize feeling of team identity and minimize unproductive movement of students from class to class.

15. **Heterogeneous Grouping:**

Grouping of students that does not divide learners on the basis of ability or academic achievement.

16. **Homogeneous Grouping:**

Grouping of students that does divide learners on the basis of specific levels of ability, achievement, or interest. Sometimes referred to as tracking.

# 25 NEEDS/CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY ADOLESCENTS

## INTELLECTUAL NEEDS

1. Are highly curious
2. Prefer active over passive learning experiences
3. Relate to real life problems and situations
4. Are egocentric
5. Experience meta-cognition

## PHYSICAL NEEDS

1. Experience irregular growth spurts in physical development
2. Experience fluctuations in basal metabolism causing restlessness and listlessness
3. Have ravenous appetites
4. Mature at varying rates of speed
5. Highly disturbed by body changes

## PSYCHOLOGICAL

1. Are often erratic and inconsistent in behavior
2. Are highly sensitive to criticism
3. Are moody, restless, and self-conscious
4. Are optimistic and hopeful
5. Are searching for identity and acceptance from peers

## SOCIAL NEEDS

1. Are rebellious towards parents and authority figures
2. Are confused and frightened by new school/social settings
3. Are fiercely loyal to peer group values
4. Are often aggressive and argumentative
5. Need frequent affirmation of love from adults

## MORAL AND ETHICAL NEEDS

1. Are idealistic
2. Have strong sense of fairness
3. Are reflective and introspective in thoughts and feelings
4. Confront moral and ethical questions head on
5. Ask large, ambiguous questions about meaning of life

If I could...

Use your imagination to complete these "If I could" statements.

1. If I could do anything I want for one school day I would \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ because it \_\_\_\_\_.

2. If I could do anything I want for a week, I would \_\_\_\_\_.

3. If I could have any person I know do exactly what I want for a day I would \_\_\_\_\_.

4. If I could be any person in the world for a day, I would be \_\_\_\_\_.

5. If I could have any job in the world for a day, I would be a/an \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

6. If I could go anywhere in the universe for week, I would go to \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_.

# Advocate This!

## Simply The Best:

### High-Impact Advisory Routines from Across the Continent

- **Monday: Focus on the Week** - First thing Monday advisories preview the team's calendar for the week and chat about the weekend's high (or low) points. (Oklahoma)
- **Tuesday: Musical Performance Day** - students are scheduled to present a musical performance of a number that is either at a recital stage or a work in progress. This can be adapted to include any artistic or hobby presentation. (Illinois)
- **Wednesday: Guest Speakers** - local "celebrity" speakers are invited to address the group, team, or school about their careers. (Kansas)
- **Thursday: Agenda Tune-Up Day** - Student all bring their *Agenda* books (or other assignment books) for a session that combines making sure the book is up-to-date, organizing work, and even locker hygiene. (North Carolina)
- **Friday: Breakfast** - student pairs and advisors take turns bringing in something simple to eat and drink each Friday to celebrate a week's work well done. (New Jersey)
- **Reading Days** - Advisor reads selected pages or passages from favorite books. Readings may focus on a theme, a message, or beloved stories. (Ohio, Alberta, Texas, Massachusetts, California)
- **Game Day** - A regular time set aside to play a favorite indoor game; e.g. Trivial Pursuit or Outburst. (New York)
- **Advisory Challenges** - As an example, one group challenges another group to see who will bring in the most cans for the food drive, culminated by a volleyball or warball match. (New Mexico)
- **Town Meetings** - Meetings of the team (during advisory time) to do celebrations and work on rules and team operation—participatory democracy in action. (Vermont)
- **Four Corners** - Students respond to a statement such as "School uniforms are a good idea," by moving to one of four position points: Strongly Agree, Mildly Agree, Mildly Disagree, Strongly Disagree, and then defend/debate their positions. Works best with paired (double-sized) advisory groups. (Colorado)



# Distinctions of Effective Advisories

**Vision** - Known Purposes; the basic aims of advisory are well known and can be easily stated by everyone in the school.

**Priority** - Integral Placement; advisory activities are scheduled as integral components of both the day and of the learning process; the most successful advisories are team-based.

**Efficacy** - Knowledge/Autonomy; advisors are well prepared for the task and have wide latitude in selecting appropriate activities; advisors frequently pair-up and new advisors are always paired with experienced advisors.

**Commitment** - Assertive Leadership; successful advisories are found in schools where principals are actively engaged in advisory and "champion" the advisory cause.

**Feedback** - Tangible Results; quantitative and qualitative data are collected regarding the outcomes of advisory; e.g., attendance on days with major advisory events, grade improvement, service projects performed.

## Three Models

**Structural** - Leawood Middle School • Daily - meets first thing every a.m. for 25 minutes • Multi-faceted - relationships, service, and exploratory • Differentiated - advisees meet in 3 different configurations • Highlights - weekly guest speakers; numerous service projects

**Organizational** - Konawaena Middle School • Twice Daily - meets first thing and at midmorning break • Multi-faceted - relationships, academics, community • Differentiated - students meet in set groups only first thing • Integrative - exploratory wheel is a non-group extension • Highlights - students teach expos; mid-morning lunch option

**Foundational** - Shoreham Wading River Middle School • Daily - meets first thing every a.m.; advisees/advisors share lunch • Integrative - 2-teacher teams for 50-60 kids plus two more advisors • Longitudinal - 6<sup>1</sup>s become 7<sup>1</sup>s, who become 8<sup>1</sup>s • Highlights - school is built upon advisory; communities of learners

# Distinctions of Effective Advisories

**Vision** - Known Purposes; the basic aims of advisory are well known and can be easily stated by everyone in the school.

**Priority** - Integral Placement; advisory activities are scheduled as integral components of both the day and of the learning process; the most successful advisories are team-based.

**Efficacy** - Knowledge/Autonomy; advisors are well prepared for the task and have wide latitude in selecting appropriate activities; advisors frequently pair-up and new advisors are always paired with experienced advisors.

**Commitment** - Assertive Leadership; successful advisories are found in schools where principals are actively engaged in advisory and "champion" the advisory cause.

**Feedback** - Tangible Results; quantitative and qualitative data are collected regarding the outcomes of advisory; e.g., attendance on days with major advisory events, grade improvement, service projects performed.

## Three Models

**Structural** - Leawood Middle School • Daily - meets first thing every a.m. for 25 minutes • Multi-faceted - relationships, service, and exploratory • Differentiated - advisees meet in 3 different configurations • Highlights - weekly guest speakers; numerous service projects

**Organizational** - Konawaena Middle School • Twice Daily - meets first thing and at midmorning break • Multi-faceted - relationships, academics, community • Differentiated - students meet in set groups only first thing • Integrative - exploratory wheel is a non-group extension • Highlights - students teach explos; mid-morning lunch option

**Foundational** - Shoreham Wading River Middle School • Daily - meets first thing every a.m.; advisees/advisors share lunch • Integrative - 2-teacher teams for 50-60 kids plus two more advisors • Longitudinal - 6<sup>1</sup>s become 7<sup>1</sup>s, who become 8<sup>1</sup>s • Highlights - school is built upon advisory; communities of learners