

Checklist for Organizing Your Classroom

- Desks are arranged in clusters** so three or four students can work together.
- Each cluster has only three or four seats.** Bigger groups can be hard for both teachers and students to manage.
- Tables, if you use them, are spread out evenly,** with no more than four students at each table.
- Pathways between clusters are clear** and wide enough for middle schoolers' bodies.
- Students know how to move furniture as needed.** If you choose to place desks in rows, model and practice with students how to move furniture into clusters for small group work and then back again.
- Frequently used materials are labeled, stored neatly, and accessible.**
- Infrequently used materials are tucked away from view.** This eliminates clutter and removes potential distractions.
- Student work is displayed,** both finished and in-progress work. Show every student's work at some point, not just that of the same few "star" students. Change displays frequently to reflect new learning.
- Students know to use anchoring supports and tools.** These help create routines and predictability.
- Students know where work is collected.**