

Anchor Bay North



IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

January 20-MLK Day-No school
January 22,23,24,- Half Days- Final Exams- Release time 11:29am
January 24-Last day of 1st semester
January 31st- Dodgeball
February 1st- First Day of Black History Month
February 14th-17th Winter break- No School
March 1st- First Day of Women's History Month
March 22nd-March 30th-Spring Break- No School
April 8th- 8th grade PSAT testing
April 10th-April 16th- 8th MStep Testing
April 18th- Good Friday-No school
April 21st- PD Day- No school
April 22nd-24th- 7th grade MStep Testing
April 28th-April 30th- 6th grade MStep Testing
May 1st- May 3rd- 8th grade Washington DC trip
May 6th- Teacher PD day- No School
May 20th- Spring Choir Concert 7pm @ ABHS
May 21st- Band Concert 7pm @ ABHS
May 22nd- Academic Awards
6th- 9:15am, 7th- 2pm, 8th- 7pm. North Gym
May 23rd- 1/2 day of school
May 26th-Memorial Day- No school
May 30th- Reward Trips for 6th and 7th grade
June 3rd- All A's Breakfast
June 5th- SOM Luncheon
June 6th- 8th grade Cedar Pointe reward trip
June 9th, 10th, and 11th Final exams
June 11th- Last day of school

January 8, 2025

Principal's Corner

James Thiede

Anchor Bay North Academic Excellence

We have a long standing tradition of Academic Excellence at Anchor Bay North. We are recognized as a Reward School by the State of Michigan scoring a letter grade of "A" in both student test proficiency and student growth. In State testing our school finished #1 in Macomb county for 6th, 7th, 8th grade ELA, and 6th and 7th Math. We also finished 2nd in 8th grade Math and Social Studies. For our first marking period our students did very well.

62% of our 6th grade students had a GPA of 3.5 or higher for the 1st Marking period. Additionally **80% of our 6th grade students had a GPA of 3.0 or higher** for the 1st Marking period.

55% of our 7th grade students had a GPA of 3.5 or higher for the 1st Marking period. Additionally **86% of our 7th grade students had a GPA of 3.0 or higher** for the 1st Marking period.

51% of our 8th grade students had a GPA of 3.5 or higher for the 1st Marking period. Additionally **75% of our 8th grade students had a GPA of 3.0 or higher** for the 1st Marking period.

All of these percentages have improved in each of the last two years. As I have said many times, EVERYONE in our school has a role to play to SAIL OUR SHIP! These results highlight that teamwork! GREAT JOB SAILORS!

End of the 1st Semester

We hope everyone had a relaxing and enjoyable Holiday Season! January 24th marks the last day of the 1st semester and the official halfway point of the school year. We have had a great year thus far and look forward to the start of 2025!

Final Exams

Our students will take their final exams soon. Final exams are half days for all students. Please see the schedule.

NWEA Testing

All students completed a second round of NWEA testing in December. NWEA testing provides us with important data on our students. This data allows us to identify areas in which our students can improve and guides individualized instruction. I have included information on how to read NWEA reports and a description of the test on page 2. NWEA reports will be sent home by the end of the month.

Second Semester Schedules

Second semester schedules will be finalized and available through parent portal on Friday, January 24th. Please see information on our scheduling process on page 8.

1st SEMESTER HALF DAY SCHEDULE

DAY 1: Wednesday, January 22nd, 2025

1st Hour	8:04 – 9:44 am
2nd Hour	9:49 – 11:29 am

DAY 2: Thursday, January 23rd, 2025

3rd Hour	8:04 – 9:44 am
4th Hour	9:49 – 11:29 am

DAY 3: Friday, January 24th, 2025

5th Hour	8:04 – 9:44 am
6th Hour	9:49 – 11:29 am

SEE PAGE 2



NWEA Information and Reports

NWEA describes its company as follows:

“NWEA is a research-based, not-for-profit organization that supports students and educators worldwide by creating assessment solutions that precisely measure growth and proficiency—and provide insights to help tailor instruction. For 40 years, NWEA has developed Pre-K–12 assessments and professional learning offerings to help advance all students along their optimal learning paths. Our tools are trusted by educators in 145 countries and more than half the schools in the United States.”

Our school uses testing data from NWEA to adjust curriculum and offer interventions for our students. We also measure growth from one testing cycle to another. I have listed some information from the NWEA website to help you interpret reports. For further questions, please visit the NWEA website at : <https://www.nwea.org/parent-toolkit/>

What is a RIT Score?

After each MAP Growth test, results are delivered in the form of a RIT score that reflect students' academic knowledge, skills, and abilities. Think of this score like marking height on a growth chart. You can tell how tall your child is at various points in time, and how much they have grown between one stage and another.

The RIT (Rasch Unit) scale is a stable, equal-interval scale. Equal-interval means that a change of 10 RIT points indicates the same thing regardless of whether a student is at the top, bottom, or middle of the scale. A RIT score has the same meaning regardless of grade level or age of the student. You can compare scores over time to tell how much growth a student has made.

How do teachers and schools use MAP Growth Scores?

MAP Growth helps schools and teachers know what your child is ready to learn at any point in time. Teachers can see the progress of individual students and of their class as a whole. Principals and administrators can see the progress of a grade level, school, or the entire district.

Since students with similar MAP Growth scores are generally ready for instruction in similar skills and topics, it makes it easier for teachers to plan instruction. MAP Growth also provides typical growth data for students who are in the same grade, subject, and have the same starting performance level. This data is often used to help students set goals and understand what they need to learn to achieve their goals.

Please click on the link below to view an informational video on the NWEA Test.

<https://www.nwea.org/resource-center/resource/what-is-map-growth/>

Please click on the link below to visit the official NWEA website for more information on NWEA Testing.

<https://www.nwea.org/family-toolkit/>

SEE PAGE 3



Test-Taking Strategy

As students prepare for final exams, you may want to share this test-taking strategy with them.

To do well on a test, you must have good knowledge of the information that is being tested. But you must also have a strategy for taking the test that allows you to show what you know. The DETER strategy can help you do your best on any test. Each letter in DETER reminds you what to do.

D = Directions

Read the test directions very carefully.

Ask your teacher to explain anything about the test directions you do not understand.

Only by following the directions can you achieve a good score on the test.

If you do not follow the directions, you will not be able to demonstrate what you know.

E = Examine

Examine the entire test to see how much you have to do.

Only by knowing the entire task can you break it down into parts that become manageable for you.

T = Time

Once you have examined the entire test, decide how much time you will spend on each item.

If there are different points for items, plan to spend the most time on the items that count for the most points.

Planning your time is especially important for essay tests where you must avoid spending so much time on one item that you have little time left for other test items.

E = Easiest

The second E in DETER reminds you to answer the items you find easiest first.

If you get stuck on a difficult item that comes up early in the test, you may not get to answer items that test things you know.

R = Review

If you have planned your time correctly, you will have time to review your answers and make them as complete and accurate as possible.

Also make sure to review the test directions to be certain you have answered all items required.

Student Drop Off

To keep traffic flow moving, please pull up as far as possible to drop off your son/daughter. Please do not stop in front of the main doors, instead continue forward before dropping off. To speed up the process, please have your child gather his or her belongings and be ready for drop off. Thank you for your help!

Middle Years

In some Principal's Corner articles, and in future editions, you will find information about Middle School-aged children. The information comes from a newsletter called "Middle School Parents" produced by "The Parent Institute". I hope you find the information insightful.

SEE PAGE 4



Middle School Parents

January 2025
Vol. 28, No. 5

Anchor Bay Middle School North

still make the difference!



Help your middle schooler set mid-year academic goals

It's a new calendar year and a great time to help your child establish goals for the remainder of the school year. While your middle schooler should be the one to set goals, your support and guidance will help.

Encourage your child to do these five things:

1. **Be realistic.** If your student has struggled in the past, bringing every grade up to an A in one quarter may not be a realistic goal. Encourage your child to identify specific areas that need the most improvement, and set goals to address them.
2. **Write down goals.** One study found that when people wrote down their goals, they were 33% more successful in achieving them than those who didn't write them down.

3. **Plan.** Accomplishing goals takes vision, effort and time. If bringing up a science grade will take an extra 30 minutes of study each night, your child may need to cut down on time spent on other activities.
4. **Check progress** every few weeks. How is your child doing? What changes, if any, should your middle schooler make?
5. **Review goals** at the end of the next grading period. Your middle schooler should create a maintenance plan for achieved goals and an action plan for those haven't been met yet.

Source: M. Price-Mitchell Ph.D., "Goal-Setting Is Linked to Higher Achievement," *Psychology Today*, Sussex Publishers, LLC.

Physical activity is linked to academic gains



Exercise helps middle schoolers build the strong bodies they need for good health. And research links

exercise with other benefits that support performance in school.

Studies show that students who are active perform better in school than students who move less.

Exercise can help:

- **Increase the flow of oxygen** and blood to the brain. This can help your child stay alert and concentrate on learning.
- **Enhance mood.** Exercise is known to increase positive feelings and reduce stress. Stress and anxiety work against school progress.
- **Increase energy** so your child has more stamina to study.
- **Reinforce habits** that help your child do better in school. This is especially true if your child is on a sports team. Sports require players to follow rules, control their bodies and take turns. These actions are also associated with school success.

Source: A. Barbosa and others, "Physical Activity and Academic Achievement: An Umbrella Review," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*.

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Supervised after-school activities can keep middle schoolers safe



Some families think middle schoolers don't need to be supervised when they are home alone. But studies show that kids with too much unsupervised time on their hands have a higher risk of substance abuse.

One study found that eighth graders who were unsupervised for 11 hours a week were twice as likely to use drugs and alcohol as those under some form of adult supervision.

Where can families find after-school supervision for their kids? Here are some suggestions:

- **Youth organizations.** Scouting, 4-H and many other student organizations have programs designed specifically for middle school students.
- **Volunteer work.** Your child can gain job skills while making

the world a better place. Visit dosomething.org for ideas.

- **School activities.** After-school sports and clubs keep kids involved in positive activities.
- **Community centers.** Check out programs for preteens.
- **Neighbors.** Perhaps a neighbor or relative who is home during the day would be willing to check in on your child every few hours.

Source: "Family Checkup: Supervision," National Institute on Drug Abuse and "Keeping Kids Safe and Supported in the Hours After School," *MetLife Foundation Afterschool Alert*, Afterschool Alliance.

"It's much easier to stay out of trouble now than to get out of trouble later."

—Warren Buffett

Promote lasting learning by encouraging note-taking



Experts agree that taking class notes can benefit students in many ways. Students might forget what the teacher says in

class, but they will remember if they have a written record. Reviewing class notes is also an effective way to study for tests.

To get the most from note-taking, your child should:

- **Focus on important information.** Rather than writing down every word the teacher says, your middle schooler should listen for names, dates, times of events and other key facts. And if the teacher writes something on the board, your

middle schooler should definitely include it in the notes.

- **Review and revise notes** at home. Notes taken in a hurry are often sloppy and missing information. Reviewing them allows your child to fill in any gaps and clarify so the notes will be understandable later on. Reviewing notes also helps your child retain the information.
- **Enlist a friend.** If a classmate also takes notes, your child and that classmate can compare notes to ensure nothing was missed.
- **Stay organized.** Encourage your child to keep notes in a binder or notebook with a different section for each class.

Do you know how to talk about the tough issues?



Middle schoolers often face some sticky situations—from being offered alcohol to feeling pressured by a friend

to skip a class. Are you helping your child make good choices under pressure? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below to find out:

___1. **Do you talk about** the difficult situations your child may face *before* they occur?

___2. **Do you role-play** different ways to say *no*? "My mom would kill me!" is a favorite standby.

___3. **Have you told** your child you expect honesty—especially about serious issues?

___4. **Do you communicate** your values to your child? Remember: Values are *caught*, not *taught*.

___5. **Do you create** everyday opportunities to talk with your child? Casual conversations often pave the way for more serious talks.

How well are you doing?

Mostly *yes* answers mean you are having positive talks with your child about tough issues. For *no* answers, try those ideas.

Middle School
Parents
still make the difference!

Practical Ideas for Parents
to Help Their Children.

For subscription information call or write:
The Parent Institute, 1-800-756-5525,
P.O. Box 7474, Fairfax Station, VA 22039-7474.
Fax: 1-800-216-3667.

Or visit: www.parent-institute.com.

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Share this system to help your child prepare for unit tests



Some students tend to study by the “seat of their pants” whenever an end-of-unit test approaches. Instead,

help your middle schooler develop a system for studying texts and other materials—one that can be used anytime a test looms.

Suggest that your child:

1. **Start by reading** the first section of the unit. Students are often tempted to race through and finish the whole thing, but tell your child to resist the urge. Students remember more by studying one section at a time.
2. **Imagine what questions** the teacher might ask about the material in that section. Your child should write down each question on a separate

index card and write its answer on the back of the card.

3. **Proceed section by section.** If one section is particularly long or tricky, or if your child can think of several questions the teacher may ask about it, suggest breaking that section into smaller parts.
4. **Identify new vocabulary words.** After making “question cards” for each section, have your child go back through the material and look for unfamiliar words and words in boldface. Your child should write each one on the front of an index card and its definition on the back.

Once your child has a unit’s worth of information-packed cards, it’s time to use them to study for the test. Better yet, you can use them to quiz your middle schooler!

Five strategies for improving communication with your child



Remember that chatty elementary schooler you used to know?

Well, that child has likely turned into a guarded preteen. Suddenly, talking with your adolescent may feel like navigating a minefield. Ask one wrong question, and your middle schooler may explode or clam up.

To ensure you are keeping the lines of communication open with your middle schooler:

1. **Keep your questions brief.** To stay on top of what’s happening in school, avoid *yes-no* questions. Instead, ask open-ended ones: “What are you studying in science this week?”
2. **Be available.** Your child probably opens up occasionally. When that

happens, it’s crucial that you be there to pay attention—and to *really* listen.

3. **Don’t be condescending.** Even if your middle schooler’s problems seem minor to you, they are *major* to your child. Belittle them, and your child will be even less likely to share next time.
4. **Offer alternatives.** Encourage your child to talk to another trusted adult if you aren’t available. Whether it’s a teacher, a coach, a relative or a friend’s parent, your child needs to talk about school and life with someone you both trust.
5. **Never give up.** These temperamental years won’t last forever, so hang in there. Stay optimistic, and keep being the reliable presence your middle schooler depends on.

Q: My eighth-grader is late for everything. This child turns in assignments late and stars projects at the last minute. How can I help my middle schooler break this self-sabotaging habit?

Questions & Answers

A: Unfortunately, time management doesn’t come naturally to most middle schoolers. Instead, families must teach them how to plan ahead.

Show your child how to:

1. **Get organized.** Insist that your middle schooler keep school bags and study spaces tidy. A child who can’t organize belongings is likely to have trouble organizing thoughts and actions as well.
2. **Prioritize.** Encourage your middle schooler to list tasks under one of three headings: *Must Do*, *Would Be Nice to Do* and *Can Skip This*. Remind your child that items on the must-do list (like schoolwork) have to come first.
3. **Make a schedule.** After your child sets priorities, it’s time to figure out when to complete those “must-dos.” That’s where a schedule comes in. Some students can plan ahead and draw up a schedule for the whole week. Others need to make a schedule every day.
4. **Stick to the schedule.** This may be the hardest step of all. Few middle schoolers want to spend a Saturday at the library doing research for an upcoming paper when five of their friends are planning to go see a movie together. Encourage and praise your middle schooler for staying on track. And don’t forget to leave some time in your child’s schedule for fun!

SEE PAGE 7



It Matters: Emotional Intelligence

Family meetings teach leadership and cooperation



To be successful in school and the workplace, children need to know how to communicate,

listen, cooperate and solve problems with others. Family meetings are one effective way to help your middle schooler practice these skills—while making family life run more smoothly.

For productive meetings:

- **Establish a schedule.** Choose a regular time and place and keep meetings brief.
- **Plan an agenda.** Between meetings, ask family members to write down issues they'd like to address.
- **Set ground rules.** Remove any distractions and have everyone turn off their devices.

During your meeting:

1. **Highlight** family members' accomplishments and positive news. Share compliments.
2. **Encourage participation.** Give each family member a chance to talk uninterrupted. Ask one person to take notes.
3. **Brainstorm solutions** for any family concerns. Consider everyone's ideas.
4. **Discuss expectations** and set weekly goals.
5. **Coordinate schedules.** Review your family calendar and discuss who is doing what this week.
6. **End with a quick team-building activity.** Play a game, or make up a story or sing a song.

After a few meetings, let family members take turns being the meeting leader.

Promote self-reflection by encouraging journal writing

Students are able to make better decisions in school and in all areas of their lives when they are aware of their emotions, thoughts and behaviors.

Writing in a journal is one effective way for middle schoolers to express their feelings and process their emotions. Encourage your child to write or draw in a journal for a few minutes every day.

If your middle schooler can't think of something to write about, offer these prompts:

- *What's the most fun thing you did today?*
- *What did you learn that was new?*
- *Did anything make you angry? Sad?*
- *What do you like to do when you feel this way?*
- *If you had the power to help anyone in the world, who would you help, and why?*
- *List four true sentences that start with "I will always remember..."*



Teach your child to recognize and address bullying behavior



In the social structure of middle school, bullying is often difficult for students to recognize. That's because middle

school students tend to be much more forgiving if the bully is one of the "popular" kids.

Talk about bullying and encourage your child to:

- **Focus less** on *who* is bullying and more on *what* is happening. Are the actions dangerous or hurtful? Are the words mean or meant to cause a person sadness, fear or embarrassment? If so, it's bullying—even if the person who is doing it is

someone everybody likes, and the person being bullied is someone who doesn't have many friends.

- **Think about** how it would feel to be in the bullied child's place. When kids "walk in another's shoes," they begin to develop empathy.
- **React appropriately.** Your child should *never* be a bystander. Standing by and watching—or worse, laughing along with the bully—is almost as harmful as the actual bullying itself. Your child should ask the bully to stop, or slip away and tell an adult immediately.

Source: *Bullying—Engaging Parents, Students and Staff in Your Anti-Bullying Program*, The Parent Institute.

Anchor Bay North

Principal's Corner



Scheduling

As you can imagine, scheduling six different classes for over 700 students represents a challenge. We are pleased to report that over 90% of our students were able to get courses that they chose during enrollment in the spring of last year. Some courses that your son/daughter may have selected will appear on their schedule for the 2nd semester. The process used to schedule our students begins with their request forms in the spring. From that information, our district establishes staffing to fulfill the needs of our schools. This staffing may involve teachers moving to another school within the district, or in extreme circumstances, reducing a teacher to part-time, or even being laid off. Therefore, our ability to function as a school and a district relies on establishing and following certain guidelines for scheduling. While we make every effort to satisfy the needs of our students, schedule changes are at times difficult to make, and in some cases, not possible.

Changes in scheduling for our Honors Program are even more difficult. Our Honors Program has strict guidelines for entrance into the program and continued enrollment once admitted. We believe that potential Honors students should have fulfilled multiple measures to ensure fairness in the selection process. The guidelines are outlined below:

To request Honors class—Student must meet ALL four requirements

Grade Requirement—at least an A- or higher in Regular class or B- or higher in Honors class

Standardized and District testing requirement—High scores in M-Step and NWEA testing

Teacher Recommendation—Subject area teacher recommends Honors

Students who request Honors and meet the guidelines listed above are placed on a list for approval. Once the list is finalized, sections for the course are set and teacher staffing is arranged. This occurs at the end of each school year. After this process is concluded, there can be no additions.

Once in an Honors course, students must maintain the following guidelines to remain enrolled in the class:

Students must have and maintain a B+ or better within ALL grade categories (i.e. Assessments, Homework, Participation, etc.) within each Honors course. The student's grades will be evaluated at the following intervals:

First Quarter Progress Report	End of the First Quarter
Second Quarter Progress Report	End of the Second Quarter
Third Quarter Progress Report	End of the Third Quarter
Fourth Quarter Progress Report	End of the Fourth Quarter
1st Semester Grade	2nd Semester Grade

If a student falls below the grade requirements, he or she will be placed on Academic Honors Probation for the remainder of the year in the honors course(s). The student has until the next grade evaluation to raise and maintain his or her grade to a B- (80% or better) within ALL grade categories. If the student does not maintain the required average, he or she will be removed from the particular Honors course(s) and placed into the regular curriculum. I hope this information is useful and gives you a better understanding of our scheduling process.