

Anchor Bay North

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

January 12 –Dodgeball
January 15-MLK Day-No school
January 24,25,26,- Half Days- Final Exams- Release time 11:29am
January 26-Last day of 1st semester
February 1st- First Day of Black History Month
February 9th- 7th/8th grade dance
February 16th-19th Winter break- No School
February 27th- Teacher PD-No school
March 1st- First Day of Women's History Month
March 1st- 6th Grade Dance
March 23rd-April 1st-Spring Break- No School
April 9th- 8th grade PSAT testing
April 11th-April 17th- 8th MStep Testing
April 22nd-24th- 7th grade MStep Testing
April 25th-27th- 8th grade Washington DC trip
April 29th-May 1st- 6th grade MStep Testing
May 7th- Teacher PD day- No School
May 21st- Academic Awards
6th- 9am, 7th- 1:45pm, 8th- 7pm. North Gym
May 23rd- Band Concert 7pm @ ABHS
May 27th-Memorial Day- No school
May 28th- Spring Choir Concert 7pm @ ABHS
May 31st- Reward Trips
June 3rd- All A's Breakfast
June 5th, 6th, and 7th Final exams
June 7th- Last day of school

Principal's Corner

James Thiede

January 8, 2024



Anchor Bay North is a REWARD SCHOOL!

It's GREAT to start the new year with good news. Our school has been designated as a "Reward School" by the State of Michigan. This recognition is for receiving an "A" grade in student testing proficiency and an "A" grade in student growth. You only need an "A" grade in one to be a reward school and our school received "A's" in both. We are one of only 3 middle schools (out of over 30) in Macomb County to receive "A" grades in both. As I have said many times, EVERYONE in our school has a role to play to SAIL OUR SHIP! This recognition is a result of that teamwork! GREAT JOB SAILORS!

End of the 1st Semester

We hope everyone had a relaxing and enjoyable Holiday Season! January 26th 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 2024!

Final Exams

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

1st SEMESTER HALF DAY SCHEDULE

DAY 1: Wednesday, January 24th, 2024

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

DAY 2: Thursday, January 25th, 2024

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

DAY 3: Friday, January 26th, 2024

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

NWEA Testing

All students will be completing a second round of NWEA testing in January. 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.

Second Semester Schedules

Second semester schedules will be finalized and available through parent portal on Friday, January 26th. Please see information on our scheduling process on page 8.

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[®]

Anchor Bay Middle School North

still make the difference!



Research-proven strategies boost your child's brain power

Your middle schooler should have a designated place to do schoolwork. But that's not the *only* place your child should study. Research shows that students remember content better if they review material in different places.

To optimize learning and memory, students should:

1. **Study the same information** in different locations. This forces the brain to make multiple associations with the material. When the brain relates the information to more than one background, the information has a better chance of sticking.
2. **Vary the material they study** in a single study session. For example, your child might alternate studying vocabulary words and reading the

history assignment. Concentrating on multiple skills, rather than on one at a time, leaves a deeper impression on the brain.

3. **Space out study sessions** over a period of days. This helps the brain retain the material for longer than a day or two. Cramming for a test the night before may get students a passing grade. But it won't lead to real long-term learning. To the brain, a quick fill leads to a quick empty.
4. **Write down a few notes** after each class. This forces them to recall the information they learned.

Source: "Applying Cognitive Psychology to Enhance Educational Practice," Bjork Learning And Forgetting Lab, UCLA.

Nutrition makes a difference to school success



Years of studies show that healthy diet can help students stay alert during class and retain information.

Unfortunately, simply stocking your home with nutritious foods doesn't necessarily mean your middle schooler will eat them—especially if you aren't home during the day to offer them.

So what's the solution? Help your child become an informed eater who knows how to make responsible food choices independently. Here's how:

- **Expose your child** to a variety of foods. Plan weekly meals together and set a goal of trying one new healthy food each week.
- **Remove temptations.** Get rid of soda and junk food. If all the foods you offer are healthy, your child will make better choices.
- **Make it easy to drink water.** Hydration is vital to brain function. Give your child a large water bottle to drink from throughout the day.
- **Insist on breakfast.** Offer foods high in fiber and low in added sugar. A whole-grain bagel and a banana is a fast and easy breakfast option.



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Improve your child's readiness to learn by reducing stress



Students under excessive stress are at risk of having difficulty focusing in class and remembering what they learn.

To help manage stress, suggest that your middle schooler:

- **Take several deep breaths.** It may sound simple, but it works surprisingly well. Taking time to stop and think calmly about a problem may help your child put it into perspective and discover a solution.
- **Focus on health.** Twenty to 30 minutes of exercise can relieve tension and clear your child's head. Eating right and getting adequate sleep every night also helps keep stress under control.

- **Keep a journal.** Some kids find that it's easier to write down their feelings than to talk about them. This is a great way to relieve stress.
- **Take a break from screens.** Unplugging from the digital world gives your child time to relax, read a book, listen to music or daydream.

Source: S. Vogel and others, "Stress Affects the Neural Ensemble for Integrating New Information and Prior Knowledge," *Neuroimage*, Elsevier.

"It's not the load that breaks you down, it's the way you carry it."

—Lou Holtz

Consider tutoring to address ongoing academic struggles



If your middle schooler has been struggling in school, it may be time for some one-on-one learning support.

Getting a tutor could be the answer to your child's academic problems—especially if:

- **Schoolwork** has become a daily battle.
 - **Your child's grades** are slipping more by the day.
 - **The entire family** is feeling the stress of school difficulties.
- Ask your child's school counselor to recommend in person and online tutoring resources.
- Then, to help your middle schooler get the most from tutoring sessions:
- **Stand back.** Whether sessions are virtual or in-person, don't pitch in. Give the tutor space to do the job.

- **Provide a distraction-free setting.** Be sure there is a quiet, well-lit place for your child and the tutor to work.
- **Set reachable goals.** Don't expect your middle schooler to earn straight A's right after beginning tutoring sessions. Instead, set realistic short-term goals, such as raising your child's English grade a few percentage points per month. Meeting these goals may be your best indicator as to whether the tutoring is working.
- **Don't be afraid to make a change.** Not all tutor-student relationships work out. If your middle schooler isn't meeting goals after a few months, it may be time to try someone or something new.

Source: J. Schumm, Ph.D., *How to Help Your Child with Homework*, Free Spirit Publishing.

Are you helping your child focus on the future?



Middle school students aren't quite ready to begin filling out college or job applications. But they are ready to begin thinking

about their future. To find out if you are helping your middle schooler plan for the future, answer *yes* or *no* to the following questions:

- ___ **1. Do you talk** about your child's interests and hobbies to help uncover talents and passions?
- ___ **2. Do you recommend** your child find extracurricular activities that align with strengths and interests?
- ___ **3. Do you encourage your child** to talk to people about their jobs and what they like best about them?
- ___ **4. Do you discuss** careers your child might like to pursue in the future and the educational requirements to qualify for them?
- ___ **5. Do you help** your child find mentors or volunteer opportunities in fields of interest?

How well are you doing?

Mostly *yes* answers mean you and your child are preparing a strong foundation for the future. 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.

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Middle school years are key for preventing substance abuse



Drugs change brains. So once people become addicted to drugs, it will always be harder to stop using them.

Brain researchers know the best way to prevent drug abuse is to keep people from ever using illicit drugs. The middle school years are a time when prevention messages are critically important.

People are more likely to turn to drugs in times of transition. Adults facing job loss or divorce may use drugs to feel better. For adolescents, the challenge of changing schools and adapting to new learning environments can make drugs seem appealing.

Middle schoolers also want to try new things. Drugs and alcohol may seem to offer new experiences. Since middle schoolers' judgment and decision-making skills are still

developing, they may not see the risks associated with their use.

What can you do as a parent?

- **Ask about** what your child has learned in school about substance abuse. Reinforce those messages at home.
- **Send clear messages.** Say your child should avoid illicit drugs, including alcohol and nicotine products. Also talk about the life-threatening problem of misusing prescription drugs.
- **Set clear rules and enforce them.** Praise appropriate behavior. Families who are consistent find they don't have to be punitive.
- **Build a strong relationship** with your child. Do things together as a family. Enjoy spending time on shared activities.

Source: "Preventing Drug Abuse: The Best Strategy," National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Foreign language study builds key skills for learning and more



Today, fewer students in the U.S. are learning to speak a language other than English. But research shows there are significant benefits to learning another language.

When students study foreign languages, they enhance their:

1. **Memory skills.** Language students must learn and remember lots of new vocabulary. They find that strengthening their memory is like strengthening a muscle. The more they use it, the stronger it gets.
2. **Understanding** of their first language. Students start to figure out how language works. That understanding helps them improve

writing, reading, and even testing skills. Students who speak a second language consistently score higher on standardized tests.

3. **Problem-solving skills.** Studies show that students who speak two languages also do better in math and science.
4. **Sense of achievement.** Learning another language is a challenge. As students master it, they see they can tackle difficult subjects.
5. **Ability to get a job.** Many employers want to hire people who can speak more than one language.

Source: "What Does Research Show About the Benefits of Language Learning?" American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Q: My middle schooler mopes around a lot and seems very unhappy. How can I know if my child is just sad or truly depressed?

Questions & Answers

A: Middle schoolers are known for their mood swings. Because of hormonal changes, they can be up one day and down the next.

Poor mental health among adolescents has been a widespread problem, so you are wise to be on the lookout for depression.

Here are some facts: Kids who have a depressed parent are at greater risk of getting it. So are kids who are under stress, have a learning disorder, or are experiencing a loss.

Your child might be depressed if one or more of the following signs persist for a few weeks:

- **Frequent sadness,** crying, anger or irritability.
- **Loss of interest** in school or formally favorite activities.
- **Feelings of worthlessness** or guilt.
- **Difficulty sleeping,** or problems oversleeping.
- **No energy.**
- **Loss or change in appetite** or weight.
- **Poor communication.**
- **Difficulty concentrating.**
- **Frequent headaches** or stomachaches.
- **Preoccupation with death** or suicide.

If you suspect your child is depressed, seek professional help immediately. It may take persistence to find an available provider—but keep trying. In the meantime, be available to discuss any concerns your child might have. Listen. Show respect and let your child know you are here to help.



It Matters: Responsibility

Help your middle schooler develop leadership skills



Many people think of a leader as someone who gives direction. To some extent, that is true. But true

leadership has just as much to do with listening, learning, planning and being an example.

The qualities that make effective leaders can also help children be better students. To promote leadership traits, encourage your middle schooler to be:

- **Caring.** Effective leaders are always ready to offer help to anyone who needs it.
- **Open to new ideas.** Leaders know they don't know it all. They listen and consider input from others.
- **Organized.** Leaders plan ahead. They know that leaving projects to the last minute usually produces poor results.
- **Flexible.** Leaders don't get stuck in the rut of doing everything the same way every time. They are willing to negotiate and try new things.
- **Optimistic.** Leaders trust the people they work with. They are enthusiastic. They expect things to go right, and because of their leadership, things usually do.
- **Resilient.** Leaders know how to handle losses and move forward when things don't go as planned.

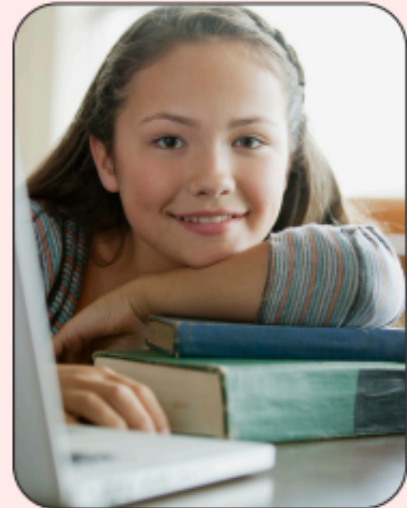
In addition to encouraging specific leadership traits in your child, set a positive example by leading your family with compassion and fairness.

Source: B.A. Lewis, *What Do You Stand For? For Teens: A Guide to Building Character*, Free Spirit Publishing.

Expect your child to keep promises and commitments

It's important for students to keep their commitments. It teaches them to take responsibility for their actions and to follow through on what they start—which helps them develop a strong sense of self-discipline and responsibility.

- Encourage your child to:
- **Think before agreeing to do something.** It's great to take on new responsibilities, but only if your child feels capable and has the time. Whether it's agreeing to tutor a friend in math or helping a neighbor shovel snow, your child should always plan to follow through.
 - **Avoid making excuses.** After missing a commitment, your child needs to be accountable. Encourage your middle schooler to acknowledge the mistake, apologize and ask how to make it up to the person.



- **Honor personal commitments.** Setting a goal and creating a plan to achieve it is like making a promise. Living up to that promise will boost your middle schooler's self-confidence, productivity and happiness.

Facing consequences & solving problems builds responsibility



Middle schoolers aren't always responsible. But some have never *had to be*. Whenever those kids face a problem, their families try to fix it. That may solve some problems today. But it will create bigger problems in the future.

To foster accountability, help your middle schooler:

- **Solve problems independently.** If your child earns a grade that seems "unfair," encourage your

student to talk to the teacher about it. Don't immediately contact the teacher on your child's behalf.

- **Consider the consequences.** Ask questions to help your child think about potential results of an action before taking it.
- **Learn from experience.** Your child can't learn from mistakes if you always come to the rescue. So if that project isn't completed on time, let your middle schooler experience and learn from the consequences.

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.