

Anchor Bay North

Principal's Corner

James Thiede



October 2023

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

September 18-Oct. 6th-
NWEA Testing

October 6– High School
Homecoming

October 13th-6th grade Mix-
er Dance 3-5pm

October 26-Picture re-takes

November 7– No School

Nov. 10– 7th/8th Dance

Nov. 15-7th grade Vision
Screening

November 20-21-No School-
Teacher PD

November 22-24—No School
Thanksgiving break

December 14 & 15– Holiday
Choir Concert

December 19-Holiday Band
Concert

December 23-Jan.2-
Christmas break-No School

January 15-MLK Day-No
school

January 24,25,26,– Half
Days– Final Exams

January 26-Last day of 1st
semester

Parent/Teacher Conferences

For the last two years our district restructured the way Parent-Teacher Conferences were held. The format was adjusted last to put a greater focus on teachers meeting with parents/guardians of students with grades of a D+ or lower. The district will continue this process for our upcoming conferences. Teachers will email parents/guardians of struggling students to set up either a Video or a Phone Conference. The fall conference window will be from October 16th through October 27th. **If you receive an email from your child's teacher, please make sure that you sign up ASAP.**

While the focus of conferences is to help struggling students, we welcome any parents who would still like to meet with their son/daughter's teachers. Please contact any teacher you would like to meet with via email.

As always, parents/guardians of students can contact their child's teachers for questions or concerns at any time outside of conferences. Please continue to check Parent Portal for the most up-to-date grading information.



SEE PAGE 2

Anchor Bay North

Principal's Corner



Sailor Stroll- 2023!

I want to thank our school community for your wonderful support for our Sailor Stroll Walk-a-thon we raised over **\$25,000!**

Through the years, fundraising dollars have allowed us to purchase interactive projectors, document cameras, a portable sound system, new broadcasting equipment, and laptop computers. We have also used money for classroom materials for STEM Project Lead the Way, Art, Life Skills, Technology, Physical Education, and various academic classes.



Thank you to Mrs. Kessel-Glassford, Mrs. VanHeusden, and Mrs. Beninati for all their hard work planning and organizing this great event! Thank you to everyone who donated to our fundraiser! Thank you for your loyalty and support!



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.



NWEA Testing

Our students began our yearly NWEA testing cycle on September 18th and will conclude on October 6th. Please see information below describing what NWEA testing is used for.

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.



October is National Bullying Prevention Month. I thought it would be a good time to review some of the things we do here at NORTH to ensure a positive school climate for our students.



Bullying Interventions Portfolio

Positive interactions among students and staff in school are an important part of our school culture. Showing respect for everyone in school must be a basic foundation of what we do. There are many challenges to ensure a positive experience for everyone. Educating our students about how to interact and show respect is an ongoing process. We developed this portfolio to highlight the many different initiatives we have put in place in order to promote a warm and friendly learning environment:

Direct Interventions

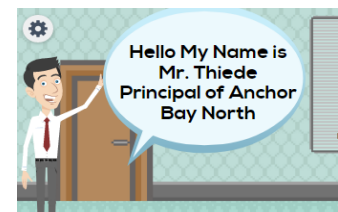
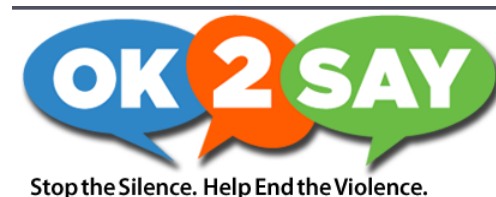
- **Bullying Hotline** – Established to allow people with specific knowledge of bullying to report it to school officials anonymously. The Bullying Hotline is 586-648-2500 ext. 1715 and is monitored throughout the day
- **Incident Reporting** – Any student can notify any staff member to report bullying in person, or by filling out an Incident Report from the counseling center. Information received is immediately reviewed and reported to appropriate personnel. Each report is investigated by counselors and/or administration. If a bullying incident is confirmed, parents are notified and discipline is enforced.
- **OK 2 SAY** – is a State of Michigan program designed to empower Michigan students, parents, school personnel, community mental health service programs, and law enforcement to share and respond to student safety threats. It is a confidential way for students to report anything that threatens their safety or the safety of others. State of Michigan Representatives speak to all of our students by visiting classrooms and reviewing the program.

- The OK 2 SAY Hotline is **800.815.8477**
- Submit online – <https://ok2say.state.mi.us/>
- Text message – 652729

Educational Interventions

Social Media Parent Help – Parents can get information on Social Media by watching a presentation on the different types Social Media and how they work. The presentation also includes ways to access additional information. Please click on the following links to access helpful tools:

- <https://www.powtoon.com/c/gcvfeMdfCaO/1/m>
- <http://www.connectsafely.org/>



Anchor Bay North

Principal's Corner



Educational Interventions

- **Health Class** – Part of our Health class curriculum includes Bullying Awareness. Students learn how to advocate for themselves as well as for others. Students have placed posters around the school that give examples of bullying and how to stop it.
- **Staff Trained in Recognizing Bullying** – All Anchor Bay NORTH staff has been certified through “Safe Schools” by participating in a training program that focuses on recognizing signs of bullying.
- **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)** – teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding. The purpose of school-wide **PBIS** is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm. Reward trips (Cedar Point, CJ Barrymore’s), Student of the Month, and Sailor Salute are some examples of PBIS at NORTH.
- **National STOP BULLYING DAY** – On Wednesday, October 11th we are asking our staff and students to wear BLUE to bring awareness and stop bullying.
- **Anchor Bay Director of Security, Amanda Depape Presentations** – she will speak about bullying and social media. She will offer ways to seek help and outline consequences for negative behaviors.



STOMP OUT BULLYING

New Student Luncheon

We are very lucky to welcome new students to Anchor Bay North this school year! On Tuesday, September 26th, we hosted a special lunch for the new students who joined our school this year. We introduced our new students to staff and students, played games, and had a pizza party. It was a nice event for our new students to get to know each other and make new friends. Welcome new SAILORS!





Start with HELLO-

Social isolation is an individual’s perceived or real separation from a group of peers. It is a feeling that you do not fit in, that you don’t belong, or that you have been left out. When we conducted a survey of some of our students, they were asked if they see isolation happening and where they witness social isolation in our school. The results were:

1. Lunch room
2. Classrooms during group work and when asked to pair up with a partner
3. The hallways at school in the morning
4. On the bus

In an effort to help end social isolation in our school, we adopted the National Campaign of Start with Hello. It is a prevention program that teaches children and teens how to be more socially inclusive and connected to each other. In an effort to educate our students on social isolation and how to recognize it and what to do, we will be holding a spirit week with Start with Hello activities.



Monday, October 2	START WITH HELLO Tip your HAT and say “Hello!” to at least 3 people you don’t know 
Tuesday, October 3	TEAM UP Tuesday Wear your favorite team and team up with someone new 
Wednesday, October 4	Wear GREEN Wednesday Green is the color of promise and inclusion, in this school there is no exclusion 
Thursday, October 5	Throw KINDNESS like <i>Confetti</i> Wear <i>Te Dye</i> and give 3 people you don’t know a compliment
Friday, October 6 AB Homecoming!	Make it a <u>commitMINT</u> To wear RED and white and say HELLO at the game tonight! 

SEE PAGE 6

Anchor Bay North

Principal's Corner



Math Tools

I wanted to remind you of a couple of online tools available to help strengthen math skills. Both online tools are linked to the middle school math series the district adopted last year.

The first online tool available is found at www.aleks.com. Students have the opportunity to work on any skills that might need some extra practice. Students initially take an online assessment of about 30 questions. The program is computer adaptive, so the difficulty of the questions adjusts based on the student's response to previous questions. Once the student has completed the assessment, the computer-adaptive program will determine which skills the student could benefit from practicing. Students are then shown the process to solve each practice problem and then are asked to correctly answer additional problems consecutively, in order to move on to the next skill. If the student answers the problem incorrectly, he/she can check how the problem should have been solved. After working on the program for a certain amount of time and mastering a number of skills, the student is given another assessment focusing on those learned skills to make sure he/she fully understands the concepts learned. Each student has a username and password for the ALEKS program. Please check with your student's math teacher if you, or your student, need a reminder of the username and password.

Additionally, each student using the Glencoe Math series from McGraw-Hill has access to the textbook (eBook) through the publisher's website that is used in class. Students should visit <https://my.mheducation.com/login>. Each student has a username and password. Once the student has logged on to the site, the textbook will be available as well as tutorial videos for most lessons that walk the student, step-by-step, through the process to solve example problems that go along with the lesson. In addition, most lessons also have solutions for problems from the independent practice for the students to look over when completing the independent practice. Both resources could be helpful when completing work outside of the classroom. The site also has a vocabulary tab and self quizzes students can use to check understanding of lessons and concepts.

I hope these online math opportunities will further strengthen your student's understanding of math. Please contact your student's math teacher if you have questions or need further assistance using either site.

Important Cell Phone Reminder—Pictures, Videos, and Cell Phone Calls

In the past, some students have faced disciplinary suspensions and/or action from local law enforcement agencies for inappropriate use of social media. While some activities were meant to be lighthearted and funny, others were created with the intention to mock, bully, and shame other students. Even if your child isn't the one creating accounts or posting pictures, if he/she is "following" the account or liking posts, it contributes to the problem.

So, in an effort to protect everyone and make our school a safe place where bullying/shaming is NOT tolerated at all, I wanted to take this time to remind you that according to our handbook policy, students are prohibited from taking **photos, videos, and making cell phone calls during school hours**. This rule is meant to help prevent inappropriate social media issues. Your child may not be affected by this, but when a problem could affect one of our students, it is everyone's responsibility to be proactive and contribute to the solution. We are a community, and we need to respect and protect everyone here at Anchor Bay NORTH.

Please support us at home by having a conversation with your child about appropriate and safe phone usage. Reminder of Anchor Bay North Cell Phone Policy: Students caught using the video or camera capabilities during the school day without prior approval of the administration, teacher, and or staff member will be subject to discipline up to suspension from school. The administration reserves the right to accelerate consequences, as necessary. This policy can be found in our student code of conduct.

SEE PAGE 7



Middle School Parents

October 2023
Vol. 27, No. 2

Anchor Bay Middle School North

still make the difference!



Promote a sense of duty, self-reliance and persistence

Of course you want your child to become a responsible person. But not all middle schoolers know what that means. To help your child understand what responsibility looks like, talk about the traits that responsible people share, and suggest ways to model them.

For instance, responsible people usually demonstrate:

- **A sense of duty.** They do what is necessary—even if they don't feel like it. For your child, that might mean getting ready for school on time, completing assignments on time and doing chores.
- **Self-reliance.** Responsible students do as much as they can for themselves. True, your middle schooler

is too young to be completely self-reliant. But your child can take a big step in that direction. Empower your child to handle some tasks independently, such as making a simple meal and packing a school lunch.

- **Persistence.** They don't give up, and they don't abandon goals that seem out of reach. Your child can demonstrate persistence by hanging in there when the going gets tough. If your student doesn't earn a spot on a school team this year, for example, your child can swork on sharpening skills and try again next time.

Source: M.S. Josephson and others, *Parenting to Build Character in Your Teen*, Boys Town Press.

Connect with teachers to boost learning



While parent-teacher conferences are often brief in middle school, they are still worthwhile. To make the most of

these important meetings with your child's teachers:

- **Talk with your child** beforehand. Does your child have any concerns about a teacher, a class or a large project?
- **Make a list.** Don't assume you'll remember everything you want to talk about with teachers. Write down your questions and notes about topics you'd like to cover.
- **Start on a high note.** Begin the meeting by saying something positive. "My child enjoyed the last project for your class." An upbeat start sets a positive tone for teamwork.
- **Keep an open mind.** If a teacher has concerns about your child ask for specific examples of the problem. Share information the teacher may not have about your student.
- **Develop a plan.** If one of your child's teachers mentions an issue, ask for strategies to help address it. Problems are easier to solve when teachers and families work together.



Prior knowledge helps kids understand and relate to text



Research shows that children's ability to understand and relate to what they read is linked to what they know before they start reading. This is called *prior knowledge*.

Having some knowledge before reading means students won't have to try to figure out the text only from the information in front of them. Prior knowledge of a topic may also keep students more engaged in what they're reading.

To increase this knowledge:

- **Encourage your child to read news articles.** They offer exposure to topics and themes that your child will likely encounter in schoolwork.

- **Expand your child's world.** Watch educational programs and visit historic sites. These experiences may connect to something your child reads in the future.
- **Share your experiences.** Talk with your child about places you have been or jobs you have had.

Source: K. Allan and M. Miller, *Literacy and Learning: Strategies for Middle and Secondary School Teachers*, Houghton Mifflin.

"Develop a passion for learning. If you do, you will never cease to grow."

—Anthony J. D'Angelo

Teach your middle schooler to focus on six key areas of writing



It can be hard to help middle schoolers with their writing. They're often sensitive to criticism and resistant to

suggestions for improvement.

Try offering guidance *before* your child begins writing. Encourage your student to focus on these six key areas:

1. **Ideas and content.** Your child's writing should be interesting to read and should stick to the topic at hand. The reader should be able to understand and follow what your child is trying to say.
2. **Choice of words.** Strong writing should "paint a picture." When your child describes something, the reader should be able to visualize it. Words should add value or meaning, not simply take up space.
3. **Organization.** Solid writing has a clear beginning, middle and ending. It clearly presents a main idea. Other sentences give details that support the main idea.
4. **Sentence structure.** Writing should be clear and understandable. The sentences should have a natural flow, similar to a conversation. Each sentence should be distinct. Your child should avoid repeating word patterns. For example, one or two sentences may begin with "I feel" or "This is" but the others should all begin differently.
5. **Voice.** Your child's writing should represent your child's personality, feelings and tone.
6. **Mechanics.** Your child should proofread work and use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Do you help your child work with tough teachers?



Sooner or later, every student encounters a tough teacher. Are you helping your child rise to this challenge?

Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below to find out:

- ___ 1. **Have you explained** how your child will need to work with all kinds of people throughout life?
- ___ 2. **Have you discussed** your child's goals for the class?
- ___ 3. **Have you brainstormed** together about things your child can do to improve the relationship? Encourage your child to ask the teacher about strategies for learning the material.
- ___ 4. **Have you said** that you believe your child is a capable student who works hard and can be successful?
- ___ 5. **Will you encourage** your child to talk with the counselor if problems persist?

How well are you doing?

Each *yes* means you are helping your child learn how to constructively address issues with teachers. For each *no* answer, try that idea in the quiz.

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.

Published monthly September through May.
Copyright © 2023, The Parent Institute,
a division of PaperClip Media, Inc.,
an independent, private agency.
Equal opportunity employer.

Publisher: Doris McLaughlin.
Publisher Emeritus: John H. Wherry, Ed.D.
Editor: Rebecca Hasty Miyares.



Outdoor activities can lower your child's stress and boost learning



The benefits of outdoor learning extend far beyond early childhood, when your child was probably fascinated by rocks and butterflies. Research shows that being outside is a natural stress reliever—and the wonders of nature can motivate kids to learn.

Here are a few outdoor learning activities for your child to try:

- **Go on a photo scavenger hunt.** Suggest that your child make a list of things to photograph. Examples might include a cumulus cloud, a spider web, a reflection in water and a tree's shadow.
- **Create a map of a park or nature area.** Include trails, streams, water crossings, fallen logs, etc.
- **Identify plants and animals** using a field guide or an app like Seek. Then, go outside at night to identify

planets, stars and constellations. Your child can use a star chart or an app such as Sky Map or Night Sky.

- **Write a poem inspired by nature.** To get started, have your child find a nice spot outdoors and sit quietly for 10 minutes. Your child can make a list of sights, sounds and scents, then use the list to write a poem.
- **Use the sun as a tool for science and engineering.** Encourage your child to research how to make a sundial with sidewalk chalk. Or have your child look up how to turn a pizza box into a solar oven!
- **Make art.** Encourage your child to create sun prints by arranging leaves on colored construction paper and leaving the project in the sun for a few hours. Your child can also squash berries to make paint.

Source: K. Weir, "Nurtured by Nature," *Monitor on Psychology*, American Psychological Association.

Help your child see mistakes on tests as learning opportunities



Most middle schoolers know that a test is an assessment of what they have learned. But many don't know that a test is also a way to learn.

To learn the most from tests, encourage your middle schooler to:

- **Jot down thoughts** about the test as soon as possible after taking it. Your child should answer questions such as, "What did I struggle with? What did I know best?"
- **Keep the test** if the teacher gives it back. Some teachers require students to correct their tests. If the teacher doesn't, your child should correct it anyway, and

save it to use as a study guide for midterms or finals.

- **Think about types of mistakes** your child made. Did your child make careless errors? That is a warning to pay closer attention when answering. Did the errors result from a lack of knowledge? Suggest that your child come up with ways to study more effectively next time—such as by taking notes on assigned readings or making a study guide. If your child doesn't understand a concept, watching a video explanation online could help.

Source: W.R. Luckie and W. Smethurst, *Study Power: Study Skills to Improve Your Learning & Your Grades*, Brookline Books.

Q: My middle schooler is hanging around some not-so-nice kids this year. I'm afraid my child will give into peer pressure and decide to be not-so-nice, too. What should I do?

Questions & Answers

A: Definitely talk to your child, but not necessarily about any one friend. Instead, have a conversation about friends in general. Ask your child questions such as:

- **What interests** do they share?
- **What does your child** enjoy about hanging out with them?
- **What values** do they share?
- **How does your child feel** when around them?

It could be that these friends make your child feel more mature. Or it could be that, like you, your child isn't really comfortable with the way they act, but doesn't really know what to do about it.

Beyond that first conversation, here's how to guide your middle schooler through this tricky area:

- **Avoid critical comments.** Belittling friends or insulting their upbringing, families, etc. may make your child feel the need to defend them.
- **Ask guiding questions.** "It sounds like Erin was pretty rude to the teacher today. How did that make you feel?" This kind of broad question may encourage your child to open up.
- **Support your child.** Understand that your child isn't weak when affected by peer pressure. These issues can be tricky, so say you will help your student figure them out.
- **Be firm.** If you have real misgivings about certain friends, then it's time to step in. Supervise the time your middle schooler spends with them.



It Matters: Schoolwork

Share effective study habits with your child



Students need strong study skills to be successful in middle school—and you can help your child develop them. The study skills your student learns now will help today, in high school and beyond.

To lay the groundwork for academic success:

- **Encourage your child** to break down large projects into smaller pieces. Middle schoolers often get rattled by long-term assignments. Smaller parts are less intimidating. Have your child set a deadline for each part.
- **Have your child estimate** how long an assignment will take and plan time accordingly. Then, have your child use a timer to see if estimates were accurate. This will help your student make adjustments for future assignments.
- **Increase self-awareness.** Recommend doing schoolwork when your child is most alert. If your child needs to let off some steam, encourage a run or a brisk walk before sitting down to work.
- **Create flexible learning spaces.** Allow working where your child is the most comfortable—whether that's at the kitchen table or on the couch. Just make sure that the space has adequate lighting and is free from distractions.
- **Promote organization.** Help your child create a system to keep track of important assignments. It might be a planner, an app or a desk calendar.

Help your middle schooler be prepared for learning

Middle schoolers are old enough to start taking responsibility for their learning. Here are three things students can do to make sure they're prepared for class:

1. **Show up.** Students won't learn the day's lesson if they aren't in class. Your child should only miss school for illness or emergency.
2. **Read ahead.** By skimming over the next day's lesson or chapter ahead of time, your child will be familiar with the topic. Reading ahead may also help your student ask better questions and participate more in class.
3. **Review class notes.** Even when there's no assignment in a certain class, your child should still look



over the day's notes at night. It's a quick, easy reminder of what's being taught.

Boost thinking skills to make study time more productive



In middle school, students must think deeply to work effectively. During study time, encourage your

child to:

- **Answer six key questions.** Your child should always ask: *who, what, when, where, why* and *how*. The answers will lead to a basic understanding of many reading assignments. They will also help your child write an outline.
- **Learn vocabulary.** Students struggle with assignments when they don't understand the language in it. Encourage your child to look up the definitions of unfamiliar words in the dictionary.
- **Weigh information.** Many assignments will require your child to understand the difference between central ideas and details. Practice this with your child: "John dropped tears on his blue shirt as he walked up to the house." What is more important, the fact that John had a blue shirt on or that he was crying?
- **Compare and contrast.** Can your child tell how things are alike and how they are different from one another? This skill will help with several subjects, particularly English and history. Ask, "How are a cat and a dog alike? How are they different?"