

Anchor Bay North

Principal's Corner

James Thiede



IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

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 Tesring

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

March 2025

State Mandated Testing: M-STEP and PSAT

This spring, our 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students will participate in the M-STEP, Michigan's state-mandated assessment. The M-STEP is an online test designed to evaluate how well students are mastering state standards. These standards, developed by educators, outline the skills and knowledge students need to be prepared for the workplace, career training, and college. According to the Department of Education: "The M-STEP is a 21st Century online test. It is designed to gauge how well students are mastering state standards. These standards, developed for educators by educators, broadly outline what students should know and be able to do in order to be prepared to enter the workplace, career education training, and college. M-STEP results, when combined with classroom work, report cards, local district assessments, and other tools, offer a comprehensive view of student progress and achievement."

Testing Schedule

Our 8th grade students will take the Social Studies and Science M-STEP from **April 10th to April 16th**. Additionally, they will take the **Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)** on **Tuesday, April 8th**.

Our 7th grade students will complete the **ELA and Math M-STEP** from **April 22nd to April 24th**, while our 6th grade students will take the **ELA and Math M-STEP** from **April 28th to April 30th**.

Understanding the PSAT

The PSAT and M-STEP are both state-mandated tests, but they are quite different. Unlike the M-STEP, which has no time limit, the PSAT is a timed exam. The PSAT is aligned with the SAT and measures skills in three categories: **Math, Reading, and Writing and Language**. Performing well on the PSAT helps students gain familiarity with the SAT, which colleges and universities use for admission decisions.

Preparing for Success

Our staff has been diligently preparing students for both exams by incorporating essential skills and content into daily lessons. We encourage parents to support their children by ensuring they get plenty of rest, eat a healthy breakfast, and arrive at school on time during testing days.

Test	PSAT	M-STEP	M-STEP	M-STEP
Grade	4/8	4/10-4/16	4/22-4/24	4/28-4/30
8th	ELA & MATH	Science & Social Studies		
7th			ELA & MATH	
6TH				ELA & MATH

Thank you for your continued support and partnership as we work together to help our students succeed. Please reach out to the school if you have any questions or need additional information.

8th grade students

****Please note**** Tuesday, April 8th will be a 1/2 day for 8th graders while taking the PSAT test. Hours are 8:04am-10:55am. Breakfast will be served from 8:04am—8:17am. Students will be dismissed at 10:55am

6th and 7th grade students

****Please note**** Tuesday, April 8th 6th and 7th grade students **will NOT** have school.



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State Mandated Testing – As our we get closer to our April testing time, I thought I would share with you some information from the Michigan Department of Education. This information includes ways in which you can prepare your son/daughter with practice tests.

Online Practice Samples for M-STEP–

To help familiarize and prepare students to take state assessments, students have access to online M-STEP sample test item sets and PSAT and SAT practice tools.

To access red hyperlinks, hold Ctrl button and click on with mouse.

The online Sample Item Sets are select groups of test items in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Science, and Social studies that encompass different item types, such as multiple choice, constructed response, and various kinds of technology-enhanced items. These sets provide students, teachers, and parents with practice in solving grade-level and content-specific test items aligned to Michigan's academic content standards.

There are two ways to get to the online Sample Item Sets. Anyone can access the Sample Item Sets through the Chrome browser at <https://wbte.drcedirect.com/MI/portals/mi/>.

The directions to access the sample items are the same for both methods.

- a) Click on M-STEP on the left side of the window
- b) Select "Online Tools Training"
- c) Select "Sample Item Sets"
- d) Select the grade
- e) Select the content area
- f) Login with the Username and Password provided to all users on the login screen

Answer Keys for Online Sample Items

[Mathematics, Grades 3-8 Online Sample Item Sets Answer Key](#)

[ELA, Grades 3-7 Online Sample Item Sets Answer Key](#)

[Science, Grades 5, 8, and 11 Annotated Sample Items](#)

[Social Studies, Grade 8 Online Sample Item Sets Answer Key](#)

Middle Years

SEE PAGE 3

In this Principal's Corner edition 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.



Emergency Drills: Keeping Our Students Safe

Safety is our top priority, and to ensure preparedness, the State of Michigan requires all schools to conduct regular emergency drills throughout the year. At our school, we complete **five fire drills, three lock-down drills, and two tornado drills** annually. The dates for these drills are scheduled in the spring of the previous school year.

ALICE Emergency Plan

In recent years, our district has transitioned from traditional lockdown drills to implementing the **ALICE emergency response plan**. ALICE, which stands for **Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, and Evacuate**, is designed to equip students and staff with practical strategies to respond effectively in the event of an intruder or active shooter situation.

Our local law enforcement agencies have played a crucial role in supporting and guiding the implementation of ALICE training and drills. Their expertise helps ensure that our practices are both effective and aligned with current safety standards.

Why ALICE?

The goal of ALICE training is to empower individuals with the knowledge and skills to make informed decisions during an emergency. By practicing these drills, students and staff gain confidence and are better prepared to respond in a crisis. We understand that discussing and practicing these scenarios can be challenging, but it is essential for the safety and well-being of our school community. If you have any questions or would like more information about our emergency procedures, please do not hesitate to contact the school office. Thank you for your continued support in keeping our students safe.

ALICE stands for:

- Alert:** Use concise language to convey the type and location of the event. Listen carefully when given instructions.
- Lockdown:** Go to and/or remain in a secure area until it is safe to evacuate.
- Inform:** Precise communication allows for good decision making.
- Counter:** Distract, confuse and gain control (applies to students with the ability to comprehend and respond). Anchor Bay School District's dedicated instructional and non-instructional staff will undoubtedly respond to the best of their ability and put students' safety first.
- Evacuate:** As soon as it is safe to do so, evacuate.

Band and Choir News-

Congratulations to the 7th Grade Band, 8th Grade Band, and Choir on their outstanding performances at District 16 MSBOA/MSVMA Festival! The 7th grade band earned a Superior Rating (I) from all four adjudicators, and 8th grade band earned a Superior Rating (I) overall. Choir earned a Superior Rating (I) and will advance to State Choral Festival in April. Congratulations to all of our amazing musicians!



Anchor Bay North

Principal's Corner



Cancer Awareness Month: Join Us in the Fight Against Cancer!

We are excited to announce that MJHS will be hosting **Cancer Awareness Month** from **March 31st through May 2nd**! Although it's a bit longer than a month, the timing works out perfectly to maximize our impact. Our goal is to **raise funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society** while engaging students in meaningful and fun activities.

Winning groups will be announced on the Broadcast each week, and prizes will be awarded on Mondays.

Planned Activities

Week 1 (March 31 - April 4): Music for a Mission

Students will raise money during lunch periods to have music played at the end of the week. The lunch group with the highest total will win!

- **Music Day:** Monday, April 7

Week 2 (April 7 - April 11): Candy Grams

Candy Grams will be sold during all lunches and delivered to 6th-hour classes on **Monday, April 14**. Students can purchase sweet messages to send to friends and teachers.

Week 3 (April 14 - April 17): Spirit Week

Get ready to show your school spirit with these fun themed days:

- **Monday:** Neon Day
- **Tuesday:** Superhero Day
- **Wednesday:** Twin Day
- **Thursday:** Team Up for Cancer (Sports Day)

There will be no reward for Spirit Week—just lots of fun and community spirit!

Weeks 4 & 5: Bucket Boost (April 24 & April 28)

During track meets, we will pass donation buckets through the stands to collect contributions. Student volunteers will be supervised throughout the event.

All Month: Light the Night Memorial Wall

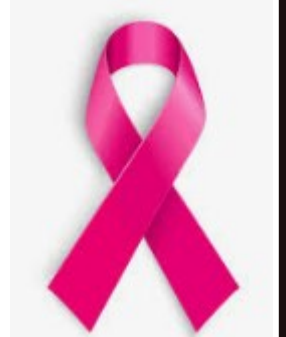
Throughout the month, students will create a **memorial wall** in the Commons as a tribute to those affected by cancer. Each student will receive a handout to decorate and add to the wall, and all classes are encouraged to participate. This is a **no-cost project** aimed at fostering community connection and reflection.

Weekly Recognition and Prizes

We will display the **Anchor Trophy** to recognize the weekly winners. The trophy will serve as a symbol of our collective efforts throughout the month.

We believe that by working together, we can make a significant difference while raising awareness and showing support for those affected by cancer. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or suggestions.

Thank you for your continued support!



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Middle School Parents

March 2025
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still make the difference!



Four strategies can boost your child's motivation to learn

Families and teachers know that students' attitudes can affect their learning. Students who believe that intelligence can grow over time tend to do better than those who think that people are just born smart or not.

So you'd think that praising your middle schooler's effort would help promote this attitude toward improvement. However, research reveals that in kids this age, focusing praise only on students' effort can backfire.

As students reach middle school, they often admire others who seem to succeed without much effort. So when they get praised only for their effort, they can feel put down.

Putting effort into learning improves results. But your child may be more receptive to the message if you also:

1. **Reinforce the value of mistakes.** If your child earns a disappointing grade, brainstorm together about what went wrong—and what can be learned from it.
2. **Emphasize progress.** Thinking about the progress made in a tough class can boost your child's self-confidence.
3. **Help your child think** about the specific things that led to success. Encourage your child to try those things again.
4. **Support positive friendships.** Being friends with other kids who want to do their best can give your child the motivation needed to succeed.

Source: J. Aramamiya and M. Wang, "Why Effort Praise Can Backfire in Adolescence," *Child Development Perspectives*, Society for Research in Child Development.

Maintain limits middle schoolers need to thrive



Middle schoolers are navigating a complex period of growth and development. While they may exhibit more

mature behaviors, it's important to remember that they still need guidance and support from the adults in their lives.

To maintain a healthy parent-child relationship:

- **Expect your child** to be respectful to you and other adults. Don't continue a conversation if your child is being rude. Walk away and agree to talk when your child is ready to speak respectfully.
- **Insist that your child** follow your rules. Middle schoolers don't need a long list of rules—just a few important ones that *must* be followed at home and elsewhere.
- **Don't try to be the "cool parent."** You should be kind and caring to your child's friends, but you are not "one of the gang." Children lose respect for adults who act like children.
- **Do not make decisions** based on what would please your middle schooler and friends. It's important to always trust yourself as the adult and make decisions accordingly.



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Show your middle schooler how to build time management skills



Self-management skills are essential for academic success. Learning to manage time, prioritize tasks and stay organized helps

students do their best.

Self-management skills help students take responsibility for learning. They also lead to:

- Better grades.
- Higher test scores.
- Increased likelihood of graduation.
- Stronger interpersonal skills.
- Higher self-esteem.
- Reduced chance of risky behavior.

Time management time is an example of one self-management skill that can be challenging for middle schoolers.

To make it easier:

- Encourage your child to make daily checklists of tasks that must be completed.

- Teach your child to use small amounts of spare time. Your child could study flash cards on the way to an appointment, or review a few math problems in the car.
- Show your child how to break down large assignments into smaller parts and schedule due dates for each part.
- Look for time wasters. In many homes, digital devices are terrible time thieves. By limiting passive recreational screen time, your middle schooler will have hours free for productive activities.

"Time is the most valuable thing a man can spend."

—Theophrastus

Keep communication flowing between you and your child



Remember that chatty elementary schooler you used to know? Well, that child has turned into a guarded preteen.

Suddenly, talking with your middle schooler feels like navigating a minefield. Ask one wrong question, and your child may explode or clam up.

To help keep the lines of communication open:

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 willing to listen.** Your child probably opens up occasionally. When that happens, it's crucial that

you be there to pay attention—and to *really* listen.

3. **Take your child seriously.** Even if your middle schooler's problems seem minor to you, they are *major* to your child. Dismiss 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 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 child depends on.

Are you helping your child handle academic issues?



For many students, one class offers more of a challenge than others. Perhaps the teacher isn't their favorite. Perhaps the subject is more complex. Whatever the issue, their grades begin to suffer.

If your middle schooler is struggling in a class, are you taking effective steps? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below to find out:

- ___ 1. Have you talked with your child about the class? What does your child think the problem is?
- ___ 2. Have you encouraged your child to spend time studying for this class every day? Minds are like muscles that get stronger with practice.
- ___ 3. Have you encouraged your child to talk with the teacher to develop a plan for improvement?
- ___ 4. Have you helped your child explore resources for help?
- ___ 5. Do you celebrate every sign of your child's progress?

How well are you doing?

More *yes* answers mean you are helping your middle schooler overcome struggles. For *no* answers, try those ideas in the quiz.

Middle School **Parents** *still make the difference!*

Practical Ideas for Parents
to Help Their Children.

For subscription information call or write:
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Share useful tips to help your child master reading material



In middle school, your child is required to read complex material. Fortunately, reading is a learned skill and, like

any other skill, it can be improved with practice.

To help your middle schooler do better with reading assignments:

- **Encourage reading for pleasure.** Frequent reading develops the ability to read smoothly and accurately. This is called *fluency*, and it is an important step toward reading comprehension.
- **Share active reading strategies.** Looking at the words on a page isn't enough for many students. They need to be focused and engaged with the content. Taking notes while reading

is the perfect activity to suggest. Just the act of taking notes often improves reading comprehension. It's even more effective if your middle schooler studies the notes after reading. Encourage your child to write a summary of the day's reading.

- **Focus on vocabulary.** One reason middle-school level texts and fictional works are challenging is that they introduce unfamiliar vocabulary. While reading, suggest your child to write down any unfamiliar words. After finishing each section or chapter, your child should look up the unknown words and write down their definitions.

Source: "Middle School Reading: Improving Your Seventh and Eighth Grader's Reading Comprehension," Math & Reading Help, American Library Association.

Simple activities can reinforce your child's academic skills



Learning doesn't happen *only* during school. You can reinforce your middle schooler's academic skills any time! Here's how:

- **Have conversations** with your child about everything. Ask what your child thinks about a wide variety of topics.
- **Ask about** what your child is doing in classes. Say you are interested in your child's perspective on school.
- **Have your child teach you.** Pick a concept and ask your child to teach it to you. By explaining concepts to you, your child will gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter.
- **Let your child help you.** For example, the next time your phone starts giving you trouble, hand it over and see if your child can figure out a solution.
- **Help your child** engage in critical thinking. Discuss the similarities and differences between classes. Ask how your child would handle a particular problem.
- **Give your child** meaningful responsibilities. If you have a pet, have your child help with its care. Teach your child how to prepare simple meals, do laundry and other chores to help the family.
- **Expose your child** to new things. Every experience your child has, from a walk around the block to a trip to a store, impacts learning. Ask your child questions such as, "Does this remind you of anything you are learning in school?"

Q: My children just don't get along. They fight constantly and I always get caught in the middle. How can I teach them to treat each other respectfully and resolve their conflicts peacefully?

Questions & Answers

A: You aren't alone! Even the friendliest of siblings have times when they don't get along—and many families feel like they have to act as referees.

Instead of getting in the middle of every squabble, teach your kids some basic strategies for resolving conflicts peacefully and respectfully. These strategies will also help them when they face conflicts at school.

Teach your children to:

- **Talk about problems** *before* they become conflicts. When little things are ignored, they tend to grow into big disputes.
- **Use "I-messages."** Encourage your children to talk about their feelings, not the other person's mistakes. Instead of, "YOU always steal my supplies," try, "I feel angry when you take something without asking to borrow it first."
- **Avoid the "blame game."** If there's a problem, it probably doesn't matter whose fault it is. Help your kids focus their attention on fixing the problem, not placing the blame.
- **Listen.** Your children will never understand another person's point of view if they don't listen to what that person has to say.
- **Cooperate and compromise.** If two people have a conflict, they each have a problem. To solve it, they'll probably both have to make some changes.

It Matters: Study Skills

Studying while listening to music hinders learning



Some students listen to music almost non-stop. But should your child listen while studying?

One reading comprehension study says *no*.

Researchers in Cardiff, Wales set out to find answers to several questions: How does listening to music affect learning something new? Does it matter what type of music students listen to while studying? Would it make a difference if the music had lyrics?

Students were divided into groups. They were asked to learn new material under different conditions. Then, they took a test on what they had learned. The answers were clear and consistent. Students who studied in silence did much better. Their grades were up to 60 percent higher than those of students who listened to music.

Whether students heard pop, rap, hip hop or heavy metal made almost no difference. It's not the type of music—it's the act of listening. When students are listening, their brains don't focus efficiently on learning.

The students who studied in silence said they had fewer distractions. It was easier for them to concentrate on the task at hand.

There are times when listening to music can be helpful. It might relax your child before a test. But mastering new content is hard. It takes focus and attention. So to make the most of study time, make sure your child turns off the music.

Source: N. Perham and H. Currie, "Does listening to preferred music improve reading comprehension performance?" *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Preparation is the key for test success in middle school

Many middle schoolers suffer from test anxiety. Fortunately, the cure for most test anxiety is simple: Preparation. When teachers announce an upcoming test, encourage your child to:

- **Find out the purpose** for the test. What does a high score—or a low one—mean for your child? Is the test multiple-choice? True or false? The more students know what to expect, the more relaxed and confident they may feel.
- **Ask the teacher** about the best ways to prepare. Are there practice tests your child can take? Websites to visit? Would reviewing certain textbook chapters help?
- **Remain calm.** Discuss the studying your child has already done. Then, provide perspective: One test grade won't change your student's entire future.



- **Focus on physical well-being.** Insist that your child get plenty of sleep the night before test day. Offer a healthy breakfast in the morning, and remind your child to dress comfortably in layers.

Source: J.S. Schumm, Ph.D., *How to Help Your Child with Homework: The Complete Guide to Encouraging Good Study Habits and Ending the Homework Wars*, Free Spirit Publishing.

Five test-taking strategies help students improve scores



The next time a standardized test looms, share these test-taking strategies with your middle schooler:

1. **Answer easiest questions first**—if the test format allows it. After getting past those, your child can go back and focus on the tricky ones.
2. **Read the entire question.** If the test is being timed, your child may be tempted to race through each question. Remind your child to slow down and read them carefully.
3. **Pick out key words in questions.** Your child should note words like *including*, *except* and *compare*. They help define what's being asked.
4. **Consider each available answer.** Even if your child feels certain that the first answer is correct, suggest reading through the rest. It's possible that another answer is stronger.
5. **Make an informed guess.** Your child should eliminate answers that are obviously wrong and then choose from the remaining options.