

Anchor Bay North

Principal's Corner

James Thiede



IMPORTANT 2025-26 DATES

November 4th– Election day– No School

November 20th and 21st– Final exams—1/2 days

November 24th-28th– Thanksgiving break-No School

December 1st– 5th– North Pole Santa Shop

December 6th-Anchor Bay Christmas

December 11th– Band concert @ ABHS 7:30pm

December 22nd-January 4th– Christmas Break-no school

January 19th– Martin Luther King Day– No school

February 13th and 16th– Winter Break– No school

March 5th & 6th– Final Exams

March 6th– End of 2nd Trimester

March 30th– April 6th– Spring Break– No School

November 2025

Anchor Bay Middle School North – #1 in Macomb County!

We are proud to celebrate another outstanding academic achievement at **Anchor Bay Middle School North!**

For the **second straight year**, our school has earned the **#1 overall ranking** among all **40 middle schools in Macomb County** based on state testing results.

During the **2023–24 testing cycle**, North students finished **1st or 2nd in every subject** except Science, which placed 10th. This year, we are thrilled to report that our **Science scores jumped to 3rd place** a remarkable improvement that reflects the hard work of our **exceptional teachers, dedicated students, and the continued support of our parents and community.**

Even with the tremendous changes this year as we transitioned to a 5th and 6th grade building, our mission remains the same: to provide every student with a **first-class education grounded in academic excellence.**

The tradition of high performance at North continues to shine brightly, and we couldn't be prouder of our school community.

For several years, we've been among the **top five schools in the county** and now, we've sailed all the way to **#1 for two straight years.**
SAIL THE SHIP!

Macomb County Rankings

2024-25

Grade	Subject	Rank
6th	ELA	1st
6th	MATH	1st
7th	ELA	2nd
7th	MATH	1st
8th	ELA	1st
8th	MATH	2nd
8th	Social Studies	1st
8th	Science	3rd

Overall Ranking #1

Macomb County Rankings

2023-24

Grade	Subject	Rank
6th	ELA	1st
6th	MATH	1st
7th	ELA	1st
7th	MATH	1st
8th	ELA	1st
8th	MATH	2nd
8th	Social Studies	2nd
8th	Science	10th

Overall Ranking #1



SEE PAGE 2



Red Ribbon Week -

Our counselors, Mrs. Ahedo and Mr. Hickey visited all classrooms during Red Ribbon Week to warn students about the dangers of vaping. Red Ribbon Week is a national campaign held annually to encourage students, families, and communities to live drug-free lives. It began in 1985 to honor DEA agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena, who lost his life in the fight against drug trafficking. Today, Red Ribbon Week serves as a reminder of the importance of making healthy, drug-free choices. Schools and organizations across the country host activities, educational events, and discussions to raise awareness about the dangers of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco and to promote a safe, drug-free lifestyle.

Homework-Free Thanksgiving Break

This year, we're happy to announce a Homework-Free Thanksgiving Break! Teachers will not assign any homework, projects, or studying over the holiday break. We believe that time away from school is just as important as time in the classroom. Breaks allow students and families to rest, recharge, and reconnect. Research shows that adequate rest helps improve focus, creativity, and emotional well-being, all of which support better learning when students return. We encourage everyone to use this time to relax, spend quality time with loved ones, and enjoy the season without the pressure of assignments. Whether it's sharing a meal, getting outdoors, or simply taking a deep breath, we hope all our students, families, and staff come back refreshed. Have a safe, restful, and happy Thanksgiving! ☺

School Security

The safety of our students and staff remains our highest priority. Anchor Bay Schools have implemented several enhanced security measures to ensure a safe learning environment for everyone. All visitors to the main office must follow our updated security protocols. Parents signing out their children will use the two-way communication system located in the main office vestibule and remain there while their child is called down for dismissal.

Anchor Bay North also operates as a closed campus during lunch. Meals from outside restaurants are not permitted for delivery. If parents wish to bring lunch for their child, they may do so by following the main office check-in procedures.

We are also pleased to share that we now have a full-time armed Fortis Security guard, a dedicated hall monitor, and a full-time School Resource Officer (SRO) on site. Combined with our comprehensive camera system throughout the building and regular emergency drills, these measures help ensure that our campus remains a safe and secure environment for all students and staff.

Middle School Parents

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.



The Truth About Vaping: What Middle School Students Need to Know

Vaping has become more common among young people, and it's important for middle-school students and parents to understand the real risks. While it may look harmless, vaping can seriously affect a young person's health and development.

THE RISKS

Nicotine Addiction: Most vapes contain nicotine, the same addictive chemical found in cigarettes. It can quickly lead to dependence and make quitting very hard.

Brain Development: Nicotine affects areas of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, and self-control. Since the brain develops into the early 20s, middle-schoolers are especially vulnerable.

Hidden Chemicals: Even "nicotine-free" vapes can contain toxic substances, heavy metals, and flavoring chemicals that can damage the lungs.

Gateway to Smoking: Teens who vape are more likely to start smoking traditional cigarettes later on.

HOW COMMON IS IT?

According to the **CDC**, in 2024 about **3.5% of middle school students** (around 410,000 kids) reported using e-cigarettes in the past 30 days — a number that hasn't gone down in recent years. Many students don't realize how quickly vaping can lead to addiction and long-term health problems.

WHY KIDS VAPE

Appealing flavors like fruit, mint, and candy

Peer pressure and social media trends

Misbelief that vaping is safer than smoking

HOW PARENTS AND SCHOOLS CAN HELP

Talk Early and Often: Have open, honest conversations about what vaping is and why it's harmful.

Set Clear Rules: Make sure your child knows your expectations about staying vape-free.

Teach Refusal Skills: Help them practice ways to say "no" when offered a vape.

Encourage Healthy Choices: Promote hobbies, sports, or other ways to manage stress.

Watch for Signs: Secrecy, unfamiliar devices, or frequent bathroom breaks can be warning signs.

Support Quitting: If a child is already vaping, encourage them that it's never too late to stop. Resources like **teen.smokefree.gov** offer free help.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Vaping is not harmless. Staying vape-free protects a young person's brain, lungs, and overall health — now and in the future. Talk with your children about making safe, healthy choices.

November 2025
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Middle School Parents

Anchor Bay Middle School North

still make the difference!



Regular family meals boost well-being & school success

Families are busy. Many wonder if gathering for a meal together is really worth the effort. When it comes to middle schoolers' overall well-being, however, the answer is a clear yes.

Research shows that regular family dinners can positively contribute to middle schoolers' wellness and academic performance. In fact, studies reveal that children who share four or more family dinners a week are less likely to experiment with cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana—and they tend to achieve more in school.

To make family meals work for you:

- **Don't beat yourself up** if you can't eat every meal together. Try to have meals together a few times each week.
- **Include your child** in mealtime conversations. Ask a few specific

questions. Instead of the standard "How was your day?" ask for specifics. "What's one interesting thing that happened at school?" Then, try to keep the conversation going.

- **Keep it pleasant.** Don't use mealtime as an opportunity to argue or interrogate your child.
- **Laugh.** Humor makes mealtime fun for everyone.
- **Be flexible.** If evening meals are hard to schedule, share breakfast together. You'll have the same chance to connect.
- **Go low-tech.** Don't try to compete with digital devices for your middle schooler's attention. You'll lose. Turn off the TV and keep phones and tablets away from the table.

Source: "Benefits of Family Dinners," The Family Dinner Project.

Help your child rebound from low grades



It's natural to be upset if your child brings home a low grade. But showing your frustration and anger

won't result in better performance. A more effective approach is to:

- **Put grades into perspective.** Low grades can drain students' confidence. Make sure your middle schooler knows that grades are *not* a measure of a student's worth.
- **Focus on the positive.** Talk about what your child has done well—in an academic subject or an extracurricular activity. Ask, "What are you most proud of?"
- **Look behind the grade.** Low grades indicate a problem. What does your child think the problem is? Sometimes it's not academic ability, but poor study habits or test anxiety.
- **Set realistic goals** for improvement. Don't expect all A's if your child is currently getting all C's.
- **Contact teachers.** Sometimes, students try their best and still fail. Or, they blame teachers for their troubles. Gather more information by asking teachers for their opinion about what's happening.

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Make the most of parent-teacher conferences in middle school



If you have questions or concerns about your middle schooler's progress in school, don't hesitate to request a parent-teacher conference. Then:

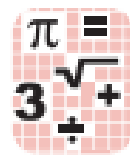
- **Make a list of things you'd like to discuss ahead of time.** Include questions and information about your child that you'd like the teacher to know.
- **Be prompt.** Teachers often schedule conferences back-to-back. Arriving late may reduce the time you have together.
- **Keep an open mind.** Your goal is to work as a team with your child's teachers. Even if a teacher says something you disagree with, listen carefully before stating your view.

- **Clarify and summarize as you go.** If you don't understand something the teacher says, just ask.
- **Ask the teacher how you can support your child.** If your student is doing well, ask what you can do to keep things on a positive track. If there are problems, ask what you can do to help.
- **Take notes.** This will help you remember what you discussed.

"Unity is strength ... when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved."

—Mattie Stepanek

Help your child study effectively for math and science classes



Studying for math and science often requires different skills than studying for other subjects. These subjects

are like building blocks. To do well, your child needs to understand the basic ideas really well.

To study math and science effectively, encourage your child to:

- **Schedule extra time,** especially if the topics are challenging. Your child should block out time to work on these subjects every day.
- **Begin each study session** by reviewing what the teacher covered in class. Then, your child can move on to new material.
- **Check understanding.** Your child should look for sample questions in the reading and answer them. If

your child can't answer all of them, suggest rereading the text.

- **Draw a picture.** Making a diagram of something can help students see how things fit together.
- **Answer all of the questions.** Some teachers may assign only select problems on a worksheet. However, solving *all* the problems will give your child more practice.
- **Use different resources.** Sometimes a textbook explanation just doesn't click. Encourage your child to look for other ways to understand the topic, like watching a video online, looking at a different book, or asking an older sibling for help.
- **Teach it to someone else.** If your child can explain a concept to you or even a pet, it shows they truly understand it.

Are you stressing the value of your child's effort?



Every student is capable of their own "personal best." Answer yes or no to the questions below to find out if you are

encouraging your child's best effort:

- ___ **1. Do you point out effort?** "I'm impressed that you added additional examples to your paper. It's much clearer now."
- ___ **2. Do you encourage your child to take pride in having a strong work ethic?** "It must feel great to know that you worked so hard on your project."
- ___ **3. Do you point to effort as the reason for your child's successes?** "That extra 30 minutes of studying each night has really paid off."
- ___ **4. Do you celebrate progress and not just final results when you see your child is trying hard?**
- ___ **5. Do you model consistent and diligent effort?** "I am working on my report for work each day this week so I can get it completed by Friday."

How well are you doing?

If most of your answers are yes, you are encouraging your child to put effort into doing well. For *no* answers, try those ideas.

Middle School Parents
still make the difference!

Practical Ideas for Parents to Help Their Children.

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Remind your child that there is no such thing as online privacy



Social media platforms are increasingly popular among middle school students, who use them to share their thoughts, photos and videos. While these platforms offer ways for children to connect and express themselves, experts caution families about potential downsides.

Adolescents are prone to risk-taking and often have low impulse control. This makes it crucial for you to be aware of what your middle schooler is seeing and posting online. To help your child make smart choices on social media:

- **Discuss** how nothing posted online can ever be completely removed. Once your child posts something,

readers or viewers can easily take a screenshot or download the content. That content can then be re-shared countless times.

- **Find out who can view** your child's social media. Make sure accounts are private and only visible to people your child actually knows and trusts.
- **Apply values to online behavior.** If your child wouldn't do or say something in real life, it's not OK to do or say it online.
- **Stress safety above all.** Students should never post information that would allow someone to locate them in real life, or arrange to meet anyone they met online without you present.

Source: V.J. Dunckley, M.D., "Why Social Media is Not Smart for Middle School Kids," *Psychology Today*.

Organization is the key to staying on top of schoolwork



Middle schoolers may have assignments in six or more classes, after-school activities and busy social lives.

That's why organization isn't just helpful—it's essential for achieving academic success.

To help your child get organized:

- **Have a weekly planning meeting.** Dedicate five minutes each Sunday to sitting down with your child and mapping out the upcoming week. This simple routine can ensure smoother days and fewer forgotten tasks. Discuss assignments, appointments and social plans together.
- **Make sure your child is using a planner** to keep track of schoolwork and activities. Encourage your student to check it before leaving school to see which materials to bring home.

- **Have your child make a daily checklist** of tasks when starting schoolwork at home. Suggest making checklists for long-range projects that outline the steps and their deadlines.
- **Choose places to keep specific belongings**—especially things that get misplaced frequently. School notebooks and other items to bring back to school might be kept in a box by the front door.
- **Expect your child to put things away** in their designated spots. Set an example by doing this with other household items.
- **Declutter regularly.** Set aside time once a week for a quick study space and backpack clear-out. This prevents clutter from accumulating and makes it easier for your child to find important papers and supplies.

Q: My middle schooler does not enjoy writing at all. When given a writing assignment, my child just stares at the blank page. Is there anything I can do to help?

Questions & Answers

A: Middle schoolers are often reluctant writers. Many simply freeze with fear at the thought of writing. They worry that what they write won't be any good, or that they'll be made fun of.

To help your middle schooler overcome writer's block:

- **Explain** that professional writers have difficulty writing sometimes, too.
- **Talk through ideas together.** Encourage your child to brainstorm and make a list of as many ideas as possible.
- **Suggest writing down ideas** just as they come. Later, your child can edit for flow, grammar and spelling.
- **Encourage** using a computer to write if possible. This makes it easier to make revisions.
- **Suggest free writing.** Your child should write anything that comes to mind, no matter how silly. Or, ask your child to write about something enjoyable.
- **Offer constructive feedback.** If your child asks you to review writing, note what you like first. Focus on what your child is trying to say. Suggest ways your student could strengthen it.
- **Don't fix mistakes** for your child. This won't boost self-confidence. Instead, it will send the message that you don't think your child is capable of fixing them independently.
- **Be patient.** Allow your child to express frustration. It takes time to become a strong writer.

It Matters: Reading

Find the value in different types of reading material



You might not see your middle schooler buried in a novel on a regular basis, but that doesn't mean your child isn't

reading. Many middle schoolers don't read a lot of traditional books, and that's OK.

Nearly every type of reading has value—from graphic novels to articles and online forums. When you see your child reading, no matter what it is, encourage it!

When middle schoolers read:

- **Articles**, they learn the value of reading for pleasure and interest. As long as the material is age-appropriate, this is a constructive activity your child. Share articles you think your middle schooler may enjoy.
- **Sports scores**, they learn to read for information—and that news outlets are valuable resources. Ask your child questions that require a bit of research.
- **Nonfiction books**, they build fluency, comprehension and vocabulary skills. Consider giving your child a biography of a person you both admire.
- **Instruction manuals** or how-to books, they learn that reading can teach practical skills. Help your child look for how-to books on topics of interest.
- **Text messages**, they learn to use reading and writing to communicate. But if texts are the *only* things your child reads—it's time to introduce a bit more variety!

Source: D. Booth, *Reading Doesn't Matter Anymore... Shattering the Myths of Literacy*, Stenhouse Publishers.

Your middle schooler can still benefit from read-aloud time

Middle schoolers are too old to be read to, right? Absolutely not. Most young middle schoolers are still better at *listening* than they are at *reading*.

When you read aloud to your child, you introduce new concepts, ideas and vocabulary. The key is to keep it short and to the point.

Here are some strategies to try:

- **Follow the news.** Choose a news article to read aloud to your child at breakfast. Have your child do the same for you after dinner.
- **Share what you are reading.** Read a funny or surprising piece aloud. Watch for signs of interest in your child. If they appear, read a little longer.
- **Select a book to read together.** Choose a genre that neither of



you is familiar with. Consider science fiction, historical fiction or a biography and read for a few minutes each evening.

Three ways to boost your child's reading comprehension



In middle school, academic success will depend on your child's reading comprehension. Your child will

be expected to understand the meaning of a passage, based on what is implied as well as directly stated.

To build reading comprehension, encourage your child to:

1. **Make connections.** When children read something that reminds them of something they have seen or done, the reading material has more meaning and it will make them think. Help your child look for books or articles that are linked

to some favorite things, places or memories.

2. **Read often.** The more your middle schooler reads, the easier it will become. And the easier reading becomes, the more energy and interest your child will have left over to focus on the meaning.
3. **Think about the reading.** Encourage your child to write a summary after reading that answers questions, such as: *Who is the main character? What kind of personality does he have? How can you tell? Does he remind you of anyone you know? How do you think the book will end?*