

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 Testing

May 1st– May 3rd- 8th grade Washington DC trip

May 6th– Teacher PD day– No School

May 20th– Spring Choir Concert 7pm @ ABHS

May 21st– Band Concert 7pm @ ABHS

May 22nd– Academic Awards

6th– 9:15am, 7th– 2pm, 8th– 7pm. North Gym

May 23rd– 1/2 day of school

May 26th-Memorial Day– No school

May 30th– Reward Trips for 6th and 7th grade

June 3rd– All A's Breakfast

June 5th– SOM Luncheon

June 6th– 8th grade Cedar Pointe reward trip

June 9th, 10th, and 11th Final exams

June 11th– Last day of school

February 27, 2025

Building a new SHIP

As we look ahead to the **2025-26 school year**, we are excited to announce a significant restructuring of our middle school. Beginning next year, our traditional **6th, 7th, and 8th grade** model will transition to a **5th and 6th grade building**, with 7th and 8th graders moving to the south campus. While this is a big change, we believe it will bring **valuable benefits** to our students, staff, and overall learning environment.



A Transition That Requires Patience

Change always comes with an adjustment period, and we understand that this shift will require patience and flexibility from everyone—students, parents, and staff alike. **We are committed to making this transition as smooth as possible** and will be providing ongoing communication, support, and resources to help our students adapt to their new learning environment.

How This Change Will Benefit Our Students

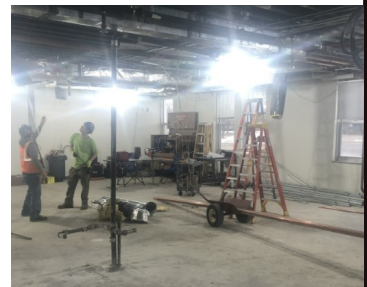
- **Stronger Focus on Developmental Needs** – A dedicated 5th and 6th grade building will allow us to tailor educational and social experiences to meet the specific developmental needs of younger students.
- **Easier Academic and Social Transitions** – By introducing 5th graders into a middle school environment earlier, they will become more comfortable with the structure and expectations before moving on to 7th and 8th grade.
- **Increased Support Systems** – With smaller grade-level groupings, we can provide more personalized attention, additional resources, and stronger academic interventions to ensure student success.

New Opportunities for Leadership and Growth – Our 6th graders will have the chance to take on leadership roles within the building, helping them develop responsibility and confidence before moving into upper grades.

Exciting Bond Construction Updates

In addition to the restructuring, we are thrilled to announce that bond construction has officially begun!

The first phase of this project includes the creation of larger, state-of-the-art classrooms that will provide more space, enhanced technology, and modern learning environments to better support our students and staff. These improvements will positively impact instruction, collaboration, and overall student engagement. We recognize that change can bring both excitement and uncertainty, but we truly believe this transition will create a stronger, more supportive, and innovative learning experience for all of our students. We appreciate your patience and support as we work through these changes together. Please stay tuned for further updates as we continue to move forward with this exciting new chapter for our school!



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North Clubs

School clubs play a vital role in a student's development by offering opportunities to explore new interests, build friendships, and develop important life skills. They provide a sense of belonging, encourage teamwork, and help students discover their passions outside of the classroom. Clubs also teach responsibility, leadership, and problem-solving—skills that will benefit students throughout their lives. Whether students want to stay active, think critically, express creativity, or help the environment, there is a club for everyone. Our Superintendent, Mr. Jankowski, has made a push to give students more opportunities to be involved with our school. Our teachers, staff, and parents have stepped up to begin to offer some creative club opportunities. We currently have the following clubs:

Cooking Club—run by Ms. Beninati and Mrs. Brees

Dungeons are Dragons Club—run by Ms. Turner

Ski Club—run by Ms. Siemaszko

Bridge building—run by Mrs. Massey

Green Team—run by Mrs. Taylor

Weightlifting Club—run by Ms. Balchunas

Fishing Club—run by Mr. Elliot

Chess Club—run by Ms. Hadfield

Band/Choir Practice Club—run by Ms. Kirven

Thank you to our teachers and parents who give our students these GREAT opportunities!



Ski Club

Students who join the Ski Club will experience the thrill of hitting the slopes while learning the fundamentals of skiing and snowboarding. Whether they are beginners or experienced skiers, this club provides a great way to stay active during the winter months, build confidence, and enjoy the outdoors with friends. Ski trips allow students to develop perseverance, balance, and an appreciation for winter sports.



Weight Lifting Club

The Weight Lifting Club is perfect for students looking to improve their strength, endurance, and overall fitness. Guided by proper techniques and safety measures, students will learn how to set fitness goals, track their progress, and build confidence in their physical abilities. This club promotes healthy habits, discipline, and personal growth, helping students develop a lifelong appreciation for fitness.



Dungeons and Dragons Club

Creativity, teamwork, and strategic thinking come to life in the Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) Club. Students will embark on imaginative adventures, solve complex challenges, and collaborate with their peers in a fun and engaging role-playing game. This club fosters problem-solving skills, storytelling, and critical thinking, all while allowing students to make new friends and build a strong sense of camaraderie.



Chess Club

Chess Club is the place for students who love strategy, logic, and mental challenges. Whether they are beginners or advanced players, students will develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills while competing in friendly matches. Chess improves concentration, patience, and decision-making, skills that are useful in academics and everyday life.

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Fishing Club

For students who love the outdoors, Fishing Club provides hands-on experiences in fishing techniques, water conservation, and outdoor safety. Members will learn patience, persistence, and respect for nature while enjoying peaceful time on the water. This club offers a great balance between relaxation and skill-building, creating memorable experiences for all participants



Bridge Building Club

The Bridge Building Club is perfect for students who enjoy engineering, design, and problem-solving. Members will work on constructing model bridges, testing their strength, and learning about physics and structural integrity. This hands-on club encourages creativity, teamwork, and innovation, giving students a deeper appreciation for architecture and engineering.



Green Team

Students in the Green Team take an active role in making the school and community more environmentally friendly. Members will participate in projects like recycling programs, campus clean-ups, and sustainability initiatives. This club teaches responsibility, environmental awareness, and leadership, helping students make a positive impact on the world around them.



Cooking Club

Cooking Club is a fun and interactive way for students to develop essential life skills in the kitchen. Members will learn about nutrition, meal preparation, and cooking techniques while creating delicious dishes. This club encourages teamwork, creativity, and an appreciation for healthy eating, all while allowing students to enjoy the satisfaction of making their own food.



Band & Choir Practice Club

Do you love music and want extra time to improve your skills? The **Band & Choir Practice Club** is the perfect place for students who want to refine their musical talents in a supportive and fun environment. Whether you play an instrument, sing, or just want extra practice time, this club offers a space to work on technique, learn new music, and collaborate with fellow musicians. Join us to build confidence, enhance your musical abilities, and prepare for performances—all while having fun with friends!



Encourage your child to join a club and explore new interests, build friendships, and gain valuable skills that will benefit them for years to come!

Middle Years

Included in this Principal's Corner is 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.



Navigating the Dangers of Social Media, Cell Phones, and AI: A Message to Parents

In today's digital world, social media, cell phones, and AI have become a central part of our students' lives. While these tools can be beneficial for communication, learning, and creativity, they also present serious risks—especially when used inappropriately. Unfortunately, **we continue to see issues related to social media misuse, cyberbullying, and inappropriate online behavior** here at our school and across the nation.



Despite multiple efforts—including **information sent to parents, presentations from our School Resource Officer (SRO), teacher-led discussions, and school-wide lessons**—these challenges persist. Most recently, we conducted a **school-wide lesson in all social studies classes**, and we are planning **another session next month with our SRO**, who also led an anti-bullying presentation in October. While we remain committed to educating students about responsible technology use, **the most effective guidance begins at home.**

Understanding the Risks

Misuse of social media, cell phones, and AI can lead to:

- **Cyberbullying:** Hurtful messages, threats, or online harassment can cause emotional distress.
- **Legal Consequences:** Sharing inappropriate images, engaging in threats, or impersonating others online can lead to serious legal trouble, including law enforcement involvement.
- **Privacy Violations:** Many students unknowingly expose personal information, making them vulnerable to online predators or scams.
- **AI Misuse:** Tools like AI chatbots and image generators can be used to spread misinformation, create harmful content, or even manipulate others.

How Parents Can Help

Supervising your child's online activity and having open conversations about responsible technology use are critical. Here are **some key steps you can take:**

Monitor Your Child's Social Media & Online Activity:

- Regularly check your child's **phone, apps, and search history.**
- Set parental controls on devices and enable privacy settings on social media accounts.
- Use monitoring apps such as **Bark, Qustodio, or Net Nanny** to track online behavior.



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Talk to Your Child About Online Safety:

- Explain the **legal consequences** of cyberbullying, harassment, and sharing inappropriate content.
- Emphasize that anything posted online is **permanent** and can impact future opportunities.
- Discuss how **AI tools** should be used responsibly and not for deception or harm.

Set Limits & Expectations:

- Establish clear rules about **screen time, app usage, and social media behavior.**
- Require your child to keep their phone **out of the bedroom at night** to prevent late-night use.

Encourage in-person social interactions instead of excessive online engagement.

Helpful Resources for Parents

To support you in guiding your child, here are **some excellent online resources:**

Common Sense Media: www.commonsensemedia.org – Advice on social media, gaming, and online safety.

StopBullying.gov: www.stopbullying.gov – Information on cyberbullying and ways to prevent it.

ConnectSafely: www.connectsafely.org – Guides for parents on various apps, social media platforms, and AI safety.

Family Online Safety Institute: www.fosi.org – Resources for setting up parental controls and digital safety discussions.

We recognize that keeping up with the ever-changing digital world is challenging, but with **consistent supervision and open conversations**, we can work together to ensure our students use technology safely and responsibly.

Thank you for your support in reinforcing these important lessons at home.

Social Media Safety





Middle School Parents

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Anchor Bay Middle School North

still make the difference!



Talk about academic integrity with your middle schooler

Middle school students sometimes turn to cheating when they face academic stress, have a fear of failure or feel pressured by classmates. That's why it's crucial for you and your child to have open conversations about academic integrity.

Studies show that:

- **Above-average students** are just as likely to cheat as their lower-achieving peers.
- **Cheating doesn't** carry much of a stigma anymore. Students don't feel the shame in it that they once did.
- **The more pressure** students feel to earn higher grades, the more likely they are to cheat.
- **Cheaters often think** they'll be at a disadvantage if they don't cheat because "everyone else" does.

- **Cheating is easy**, due to technology. Students can download papers or projects and pass AI-generated work off as their own. They can text pictures of test questions to friends.

Emphasize to your child that cheating is never OK. Say you expect honesty at all times. Be clear that cheating includes:

- **Copying homework** from another student.
- **Receiving or giving help** during a test.
- **Copying work** without giving the source.
- **Handing in a project** or paper that was completed by artificial intelligence or someone else.

Source: *Plagiarism: Facts & Stats: Academic Integrity in High School*, Plagiarism.org.

Show your child how to enjoy time alone



While peer relationships are important during middle school, it's equally essential for students to develop a sense of self-reliance and independence. Encourage your child to engage in activities that foster self-discovery and enjoyment, such as:

- **Reading.** Your child is always less likely to feel lonely when immersed in a good book, or any other enjoyable reading material.
- **Arts and crafts.** Adolescents are often wonderfully creative and can produce beautiful work when given the time.
- **Writing.** Your child could keep a journal or write a short story.
- **Exercise.** Suggest your child go for a walk each day. Your middle schooler can listen to music or an audiobook, or just think about the week ahead.
- **Cooking.** Growing kids are usually drawn to the kitchen. Cooking is a rewarding experience that involves all five senses. And as a bonus, your child can eat the creations!
- **Daydreaming.** Let your child know it's OK to spend some time imagining what life could be like.



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Middle schoolers like to have a sense of control over homework



You might have a difficult time finding a middle school student who loves doing homework. But you can help your child develop a positive attitude about it. The key is to give your child a feeling of control.

Research shows that middle school students have definite preferences about completing assignments at home. They would rather:

- **Do the assignment** somewhere other than at home.
- **Do the assignment** when their peers are around.
- **Have their family members** be less involved with schoolwork.

So what can you do to support success with homework? You can:

- **Check on school achievement.** If your child is doing fairly well, consider allowing your middle

schooler to choose where to complete homework, within reason.

- **Let your child try studying** with a friend, in person or online. Keep an eye on the study session.
- **Provide encouragement.** Say things like, "I see you working hard on your assignment. That's why you make progress!"

Source: H.Z. Kackar and others, "Age and gender differences in adolescents' homework experiences," *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, Elsevier.

"As children grow older, parents must give them greater freedom, including greater freedom to make mistakes."

—John Rosemond

Playing board games builds skills and promotes learning



Did you know that playing board games reinforces skills that aid learning and thinking? Board games give children an opportunity to:

- **Follow directions.** Students in middle school still need to practice this skill—just ask any middle school teacher!
- **Use logic, reasoning and strategy.** For success with many games, your child will need to decide which move to make or card to play. This kind of decision-making will be helpful in math and science classes.
- **Read, write, spell** and boost their vocabulary. Some board games are all about creating words and

word puzzles. For others, your child must read and understand questions and clues.

- **Create and spot patterns.** Learning how to recognize, remember and apply patterns is directly related to success in math.
- **Focus and pay attention.** Taking turns, planning strategies and monitoring opponents all require focus and attention. Your child will sharpen these skills while playing.
- **Negotiate and communicate.** Some board games, such as Monopoly, require players to make deals and alliances in order to move forward. Playing these games teaches kids how to collaborate with others.

Are you instilling kindness in your middle schooler?



Students are expected to be responsible and caring members of the school community. Are you encouraging your child to be kind? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below to find out:

___ **1. Do you model** kindness by treating your child and others with kindness and respect?

___ **2. Do you teach** your child to be kind on social media? Make it clear that it's never OK to post mean or hurtful comments online.

___ **3. Do you promote** empathy by saying things like "Remember how you felt when you didn't get invited to Parker's party?"

___ **4. Do you notice** when your child is being kind to others and say you are proud?

___ **5. Do you encourage** your middle schooler to befriend a wide variety of students—even if others don't welcome them as easily?

How well are you doing?

More *yes* answers mean you are teaching your middle schooler to be kind. For each *no* answer, try that idea.

Middle School
Parents
still make the difference!

Practical Ideas for Parents
to Help Their Children.

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A five-step process can help your child make better decisions



Want your middle schooler to make more responsible decisions? Encourage your child to rely on this five-step

process when faced with a dilemma:

1. **Define the problem.** Your child should have a clear understanding of the issue at hand before making a decision.
2. **Explore options.** What are some ways your child could handle the problem? Have your child make a mental list, then narrow it down to the three most sensible choices. This list-making step is crucial because it illustrates that there are usually more than two options for solving a problem.

3. **Consider the disadvantages.** Have your child think about the cons of each of the top three ideas. If a certain option has a particularly serious consequence, this is a good time to rule out that option.
4. **Consider the advantages.** Now ask your child to figure out the pros of the top choices. Does one option have major advantages over others? That may be the winner.
5. **Decide on a solution.** After weighing the pros and cons of each possible option, your middle schooler can now make a decision with confidence.

Source: R. Burke, Ph.D. and others, *Common Sense Parenting: Using Your Head as Well as Your Heart to Raise School-Aged Children*, Boys Town Press.

Volunteering boosts middle schoolers' self-confidence



The middle school years can be tough. Schoolwork is harder. Friendships often change. And it seems as though

physical changes may never end. That can lead even the most confident kids to struggle with self-confidence.

Studies show that volunteering is an effective way to increase self-esteem in adolescents. Helping others lets middle schoolers develop skills and understand that *they* can make a difference.

Any volunteer work is valuable. But research reveals that reaching out to strangers may have the biggest impact on kids. Performing acts of kindness for people your child doesn't know can produce positive feelings that last as long as one year.

To help your child reap the benefits of volunteering:

- **Keep it simple.** Volunteer work doesn't have to be on a grand scale. Your child could sign up to work one shift preparing sandwiches for a group that feeds the hungry. Or, your middle schooler could get a group of friends together to join a walk to raise money for a cause.
- **Consider volunteering as a family.** Whether it's collecting food for a food bank or delivering meals to those in need through an organization like Meals on Wheels, your family can grow closer as you help others together.

No matter what volunteer activity your middle schooler decides to engage in, be sure to stress how your child will be making a difference. It's that sense of accomplishment that helps kids feel capable.

Source: J. Fraga, "Helping Strangers May Help Teens' Self-Esteem," National Public Radio.

Q: I didn't do well in math when I was in school. Now my middle schooler is taking a math class that I don't really understand. When my child struggles, I don't know how to help. How can I offer support?

Questions & Answers

A: You can help your child with math assignments—even if you don't know how to do the math. Here's how:

- **Have a positive attitude.** Several studies show that families' attitudes about math have a direct effect on their children's achievement in math. Instead of saying things like, "I was never very good in math," say, "Wow, that looks challenging. But I know you will be able to figure it out!"
- **Ask your child to explain the math problem to you.** Say, "Tell me step by step how you think you should solve it." This is one of the best ways for students to figure out new math concepts.
- **Suggest writing down the steps your child takes to solve each problem.** While there may be only one right answer to a problem, there may be many ways to get to it. Showing work lets the teacher see what your child did—and if the answer is wrong, the teacher will know where things went off track.
- **Point out times during the day when *you* use math.** Whether you use math on the job or to double a recipe, your child will see that the subject is important in everyday life.
- **Encourage your child to persist.** The feeling of finally "getting it," will motivate your child to keep going when facing new challenges.



It Matters: Reading Skills

Audiobooks and e-books enhance reading time



In today's digital age, there are more ways than ever for middle schoolers to engage with reading. Beyond traditional books, audiobooks and e-books offer exciting alternatives that can spark a love of reading. These digital formats provide flexibility, convenience and a variety of features that can enhance your child's reading experience.

Introduce your child to:

- **Audiobooks.** These recordings are great resources—especially if your child struggles with fluency. Listening to books read aloud supports literacy skill development. Audiobooks offer many of the same benefits as print versions—exposure to story structure, compelling plots and new vocabulary words. For the maximum benefit, encourage your child to read along in the print version while listening to the audiobook.

As with traditional books, you can check out audiobooks from the library. You can also download free titles from websites like www.loyalbooks.com.

- **E-books.** Your child can read digital versions of books on a computer or a handheld device. While some e-books contain only text, others include graphics, videos and links. But be careful: Too many bells and whistles can distract readers. E-books are available at the public library and online at websites such as www.goodreads.com.

Join your middle schooler to encourage pleasure reading

Many things compete for middle school students' time—friends, activities, social media, etc. As a result, it can be challenging to prioritize reading for pleasure.

However, reading is a powerful tool that can enhance your middle schooler's academic success. By cultivating a love of reading, you're laying the foundation for a lifetime of learning.

To instill a passion for reading:

- **Read the same book.** Together, select a book and check out two copies. Set up a "mini book club" just for you and your child.
- **Read at the same time.** Your child is less likely to get distracted if you are both doing the same thing. Pick a time each day when you both can sit down for at least 20 minutes and read.



- **Look for movies** that are based on books. Interest in a movie can make your child more willing to read the book that prompted it. Plan to read the book and see the movie together.

Help your child gain a deeper understanding while reading



As students progress through middle school, reading assignments become more complex.

To build comprehension, encourage your middle schooler to engage in active reading. This means focusing on the text, asking questions, making connections and summarizing key points. Suggest your middle schooler focus on:

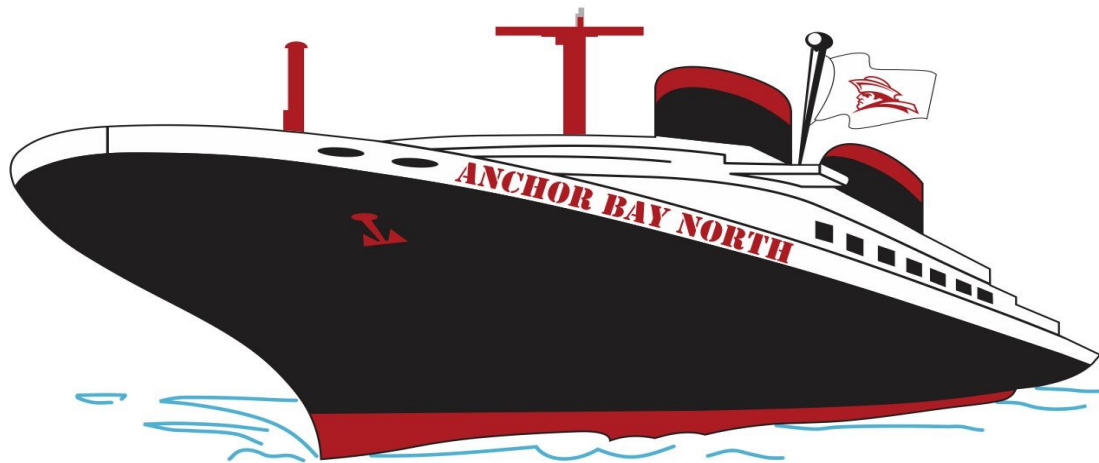
- **The author's purpose.** Why did the author write this? Was it to inform the reader? To entertain? To influence thinking?
 - **The main idea and details.** What is the author's basic message? What elements does the author include that support and strengthen this message?
- **Figurative language.** "The ocean sang to me," doesn't mean the ocean really *sang*. It means that the ocean was appealing.
 - **The sequence of events.** What happened first in the story? What happened next? What was the result?
 - **Relationships** between things that happened in the story and the outcome.
 - **The characters' feelings.** What decisions did they make as a result of those feelings?

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We are the “Anchor Bay NORTH Sailors” and our motto is **“SAIL THE SHIP!”**. We consider our school a ship that requires everyone’s best effort and ALL HANDS ON DECK to SAIL THE SHIP! **WE BELIEVE IN EACH OTHER** and know that we need each other to SAIL THE SHIP! GO SAILORS!



SAIL THE SHIP!