

Anchor Bay North

Principal's Corner

James Thiede



IMPORTANT 2026-27 DATES

October 2nd- North Stride Walk a thon donations due

October 13th-Sail the ship Walk a thon

October 22nd- Picture re-take

November 3rd- Election day- No School

November 9th-13th-North Pole Santa Shop

November 19th and 20th- Final exams—1/2 days

November 21st-29th- Thanksgiving break-No School

December 7th -5th grade Vision Screening

December 8th-Band concert @ ABHS 7pm

December 11th- Choir Concert @ABHS 7pm

December 19th-January 3rd- Christmas Break-no school

January 29th- Dodgeball

October 2026

Start of School Year Update

A Great Start to the 2026-27 School Year! As principal, I continue to be impressed with how quickly our students have familiarized themselves with NORTH and our daily routines and expectations. We are truly blessed to have such great students! Thank you to our parents for your continued support and partnership in helping make the start of the 2026-27 school year such a success. We have already had some great opportunities to build connections and school spirit. We welcomed our new students with our New Student Luncheon and recently held our 5th Grade and 6th Grade dances. Both dances were wildly successful, with more than 500 students combined attending the two events! It was awesome to see so many students having fun and enjoying time with their classmates. I am equally impressed with our teachers and staff and the way they have welcomed and supported our students. Our community is fortunate to have such dedicated educators and role models working with our children. It has been a fantastic start, and we are excited about what lies ahead!

SAIL THE SHIP Walk-A-Thon!

Our annual **SAIL THE SHIP Walk-A-Thon** is coming up on Tuesday, October 13th, during the school day! This is an awesome event filled with energy, teamwork, and NORTH school spirit—and it is also our only fundraiser of the year!

Traditionally, our Walk-A-Thon has been incredibly successful thanks to the tremendous support of our students, families, and community. Funds raised go directly back to our students, supporting opportunities such as new classroom technology, enhanced learning materials, field trip experiences, and student enrichment programs. For planning purposes, we are asking that money be turned in by Friday, October 2nd. However, we will continue accepting donations through Thursday, October 8th. A huge thank you to our students for participating, our parents for encouraging and supporting them, and our community members for their generous contributions. We are excited to see what we can accomplish together again this year! **SAIL THE SHIP! Go Tars!**

M-STEP & NWEA Results

Students will be bringing home their **NWEA and M-STEP test results** on **Friday, October 9th**. Please check with your child that evening to review their reports together.

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.



SEE PAGE 2



October is Anti-Bullying Month

At Anchor Bay NORTH, we are committed to creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment where every student feels valued and supported. Stopping bullying is a shared responsibility, and we need your help to ensure our students can thrive both academically and emotionally.

Understanding the Difference: Bullying vs. Being Mean

It's important to recognize that **bullying is not the same as someone being mean once.**

- **Being Mean Once:** A single incident where a student says or does something hurtful. While still taken seriously, it may not be an ongoing pattern.
- **Bullying:** Repeated, intentional behavior meant to harm, intimidate, or control another student, often involving an imbalance of power.

Understanding this distinction helps us address concerns appropriately while ensuring true bullying is taken very seriously.

Why Stopping Bullying Matters

Bullying can have serious consequences on a child's mental and emotional health, as well as their academic performance. Victims may experience anxiety, depression, and loss of confidence, which impacts their ability to learn. Students who engage in bullying also face long-term consequences, such as difficulties forming healthy relationships.

How Parents Can Help

- **Talk to Your Child:** Discuss what bullying is, how to recognize it, and why it's important to speak up. Encourage empathy and kindness.
- **Encourage Open Communication:** Let your child know they can come to you with concerns if they are experiencing, witnessing, or even participating in unkind behavior.
- **Monitor Social Media:** Many bullying incidents occur online. Keep an eye on your child's online activity and talk about the impact of words and actions in digital spaces.
- **Support School Policies:** Review our anti-bullying policy and reinforce with your child the importance of respecting others.
- **Report Concerns Promptly:** If your child reports bullying behavior, notify the school immediately. Early intervention makes a difference.

Our Commitment

We are dedicated to providing resources, support, and training for students and staff to effectively address and prevent bullying. Our school has a comprehensive policy in place, including consequences for those who bully and support for those affected. We also implement programs that promote social-emotional learning, empathy, and respect.

Together, we can foster a positive school culture where every student feels safe, accepted, and supported. Thank you for your continued partnership in making Anchor Bay NORTH a safe and welcoming place for all.



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

- **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 of Social Media and how they work. The presentation also includes ways to access additional information. Please click on the following link to access helpful tools:

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





Educational Interventions

- **Staff Trained in Recognizing Bullying** – All Anchor Bay NORTH staff have 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, Student of the Month, and Sailor Salute are some examples of PBIS at NORTH.
- **National STOP BULLYING DAY** – On Monday, October 5th we are asking our staff and students to wear Blue to bring awareness and stop bullying.
- **School Resource Officer, Brian Chadwick Presentations**-will conduct classroom visits through the month of October speaking about bullying and other topics.



STOMP OUT BULLYING

New Student Luncheon

We are very lucky to welcome new students to Anchor Bay North this school year! On Tuesday, September 22nd, 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 is a nice event for our new students to get to know each other and make new friends. Welcome new Tars!

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. Lunchroom
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 connected to each other. In an effort to educate our students on social isolation and how to recognize it and what to do, our counselors visited all classrooms with Start with Hello message.

ANCHOR BAY NORTH

PARENT GUIDE

TO

MONITORING YOUR KIDS' SOCIAL MEDIA

BE A CAPTAIN IN THEIR DIGITAL WORLD!

Social media is part of your child's world.
As parents, we can help them navigate it safely.
Parental tools and open conversations
make all the difference.



USE PARENTAL CONTROLS

- ⚓ Set time limits
- ⚓ Filter content
- ⚓ Limit who can contact your child
- ⚓ Monitor activity



TALK. LISTEN. CONNECT.

- ⚓ Have open conversations about online activity
- ⚓ Ask about the apps they use
- ⚓ Build trust and stay involved



KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

- ⚓ Withdrawing from family or friends
- ⚓ Sudden mood changes
- ⚓ Secrets about devices
- ⚓ Excessive screen time
- ⚓ Receiving upsetting messages



WHAT TO DO IF THERE'S A PROBLEM

- ⚓ Stay calm and listen
- ⚓ Do not blame or shame
- ⚓ Save evidence
- ⚓ Report the issue
- ⚓ Get help if needed



PARENT RESOURCES – CLICK THE LINKS BELOW

FTC – PROTECTING KIDS ONLINE



FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

Tips on parental controls, privacy settings, and keeping kids safe online.

CLICK HERE:
[FTC Protecting Kids Online](#)

NCMEC – NETSMARTZ RESOURCES



NetSmartz
A PROGRAM OF THE
NATIONAL CENTER FOR
MISSING & EXPLOITED
CHILDREN

Free resources on social media safety, cyberbullying, sextortion, and more.

CLICK HERE:
[NetSmartz Resources](#)

META FAMILY CENTER (FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM)



Tools and settings to help you supervise and support your teen on Instagram.

CLICK HERE:
[Meta Family Center](#)

TIKTOK – FAMILY PAIRING



Link your account with your teen's to set controls and stay informed.

CLICK HERE:
[TikTok Family Pairing Help](#)

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- ✓ Know the apps your child uses.
- ✓ Check privacy settings together.
- ✓ Remind them: Think Before You Post!
- ✓ Encourage positive online choices.
- ✓ You don't need to be perfect – just present.



If your child is experiencing or is a victim of online exploitation, cyberbullying, or unsafe content, help is available.

NCMEC CYBERTIPLINE

- 📞 Call: 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678)
- 💬 Text: "HELP" to 233733
- 🌐 Online Report: www.cybertipline.com

SAFE ONLINE. — ★ — STRONG TOGETHER. — ★ — SAIL FORWARD!

SEE PAGE 6



What is AI?

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a type of technology that allows computers and machines to perform tasks that usually require human intelligence. Some common examples include voice assistants like Siri or Alexa, self-driving cars, and recommendation systems on Netflix or YouTube.

Benefits of AI for Students

1. **Helps with Homework and Research-** AI-powered tools can assist you in finding information faster and more accurately. Search engines, online encyclopedias, and even AI writing assistants can help organize your thoughts, check your grammar, and offer ideas.
2. **Personalized Learning-** AI can create a learning environment that's tailored to your specific needs. For example, apps like Khan Academy or Duolingo adjust their lessons based on your performance, helping you learn at your own pace.
3. **Saves Time-** AI tools can summarize long articles, create study guides, and even automate repetitive tasks. This gives you more time to focus on understanding difficult topics or engaging in extracurricular activities.
4. **Creative Inspiration-** Tools like AI-powered art generators or writing assistants can help you come up with new ideas for projects, essays, or even creative stories.
5. **Accessibility-** AI makes technology more accessible for students with disabilities. For instance, speech-to-text programs can help students who have difficulty typing, and text-to-speech tools can assist students with reading challenges.

Areas of Concern with AI

While AI can be very useful, there are also some important things to be cautious about:

1. MISINFORMATION

AI can generate text, images, or even videos that look real but are actually false or misleading. This is especially true with **AI-generated photos and movies**. These "deepfakes" can be used to spread false information, make fake news, or even create false evidence. Always double-check information from trusted sources.

2. OVER-RELIANCE ON AI

Using AI for everything can prevent you from developing your own critical thinking and problem-solving skills. For example, using an AI tool to write an essay might save time, but it also means you aren't practicing writing yourself.

3. PRIVACY AND DATA SHARING

Some AI tools collect personal data, which can lead to privacy concerns. Be careful about what information you share online, especially when using AI-powered platforms.

4. PLAGIARISM AND ORIGINALITY

AI-generated content might be useful for inspiration, but copying it directly and passing it off as your own work is plagiarism. Schools are increasingly aware of this, and using AI irresponsibly could lead to academic consequences.

5. EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT

AI can affect how you see yourself and others. Social media platforms use AI algorithms to show you specific content, which can sometimes lead to comparing yourself with others or believing that what you see online is always true or real.

Responsible Use of AI

1. **Verify Information-** Before believing or sharing something you found online—especially AI-generated content—always verify it with trustworthy sources. Look for official websites, academic resources, or consult your teacher.
2. **Use AI as a Tool, Not a Shortcut-** AI can help you with research, organization, and even creativity, but it should never replace your own efforts. Balance AI use with your own learning.
3. **Stay Safe Online-** Be mindful of the information you share with AI-powered platforms. Avoid sharing personal information like your full name, address, or school without a trusted adult's guidance.
4. **Practice Digital Citizenship-** If you see AI-generated content that is misleading or harmful, report it. It's important to be responsible and help maintain a safe online environment.

AI-Generated Photos and Movies: Special Concerns

AI can create realistic photos and videos that are completely fake. These can be used in creative ways, like video games or movies, but can also be misused.

1. **Deepfakes-** AI can swap faces in videos, making it look like someone did or said something they didn't. This can be harmful and confusing, so it's important to be aware that not everything you see online is real.
2. **Fake News-** AI can create fake photos or videos that spread misinformation. For example, a picture of a fake event might be created and shared to deceive people. Always check with trusted news sources before believing or sharing such content.

Conclusion

AI is an exciting tool that offers many benefits for learning and creativity, but it also comes with responsibilities. By using AI thoughtfully, verifying information, and being cautious about privacy and plagiarism, you can harness the power of AI safely and responsibly.



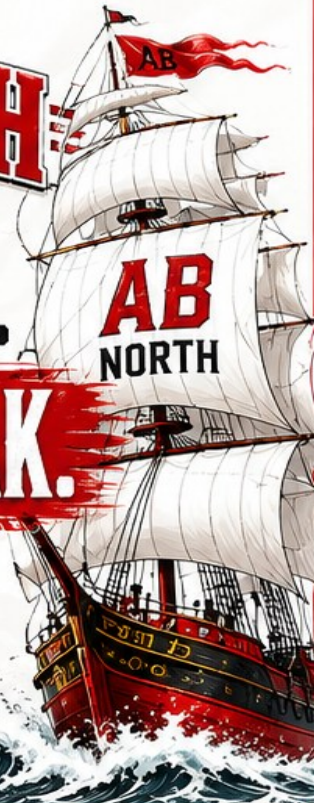
ANCHOR BAY NORTH

WORDS MATTER.

THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK.

Jokes, "just kidding," or saying something online or in person can have real-world consequences.

**THREATS OR INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE
ARE NEVER OKAY.**



EXAMPLES OF INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE THAT CAN BE CONSIDERED THREATS

- ▶ "I'm gonna kill you."
- ▶ "I'm going to shoot up the school."
- ▶ "I want to hurt you."
- ▶ "I'm bringing a weapon."
- ▶ Threats to other students or to the school.
- ▶ Posts, memes, or messages that suggest violence.

**EVEN IF IT'S
A JOKE—IT
CAN TRIGGER
A FULL
INVESTIGATION.**

THE REALITY OF THESE "JOKES"

- ✓ Require full administrative and law enforcement investigations
- ✓ Take time and resources away from learning
- ✓ Cause stress and discomfort for students and staff
- ✓ Can lead to serious school and legal consequences



**RECENT INCIDENTS ACROSS OUR COUNTY REMIND US THAT
WHAT MAY SEEM HARMLESS CAN ESCALATE QUICKLY.**

LOCAL STUDENTS HAVE FACED SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR WORDS THAT WERE MEANT AS "JOKES" OR ONLINE POSTS THAT WERE TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

TALK TO YOUR CHILD

- ✓ Remind them that their words have power.
- ✓ Encourage them to think before they speak or post.
- ✓ Teach them to walk away from conversations that get negative or threatening.
- ✓ Report concerns to a trusted adult immediately.
- ✓ Remind them: real strength is making smart choices every day.



**MAKE GOOD CHOICES.
PROTECT OUR SHIP.**

Help us keep Anchor Bay North a safe, respectful, and positive place for every student to learn and grow.



**BE RESPECTFUL.
BE RESPONSIBLE.**

**BE A CAPTAIN.
SAIL THE RIGHT WAY.**



STARBASE 2026

We are excited to announce that our 5th-grade students have again begun to attend the STARBASE program at Selfridge Air National Guard Base. Each student will participate in **four engaging sessions** designed to inspire interest in science, technology, engineering, art/design, and mathematics (STEAM). **STARBASE** is a hands-on, minds-on educational program sponsored by the Department of Defense. It provides students with 25 hours of interactive instruction, where they engage in activities such as building rockets, programming robots, and exploring engineering concepts. Throughout the program, students interact with military personnel who serve as role models, demonstrating how STEAM principles are applied in real-world settings. This unique opportunity allows students to explore STEAM fields in a dynamic environment, fostering curiosity and encouraging them to consider future careers in these areas. Please ensure that your child arrives at school on time and is prepared for these exciting sessions. We look forward to seeing how this experience sparks their interest and imagination!



General Notice-REMEMBER, IT ALL DRAINS TO OUR LAKES AND RIVERS

Storm drains and roadside ditches lead to our lakes and rivers. So, any oil, pet waste, leaves or dirty water from washing your car enters a storm drain gets into our lakes and rivers without being treated. With almost five million people living in Southeast Michigan, we all need to be aware of what goes into our storm drains. How can you help? Simple.

Sweep it. Do you have extra fertilizer, grass clipping or dirt on your driveway or sidewalk? Sweep it back onto your lawn. Hosing your driveway sends these pollutants into storm drains that lead directly to our lakes and rivers.

Keep it clean. Whether in the street or in your yard, remember to keep leaves, grass clippings, trash and fertilizers away from storm drains.

Only rain in the drain. Never dump motor oil, chemicals, pet waste, dirty or soapy water, or anything else down the storm drain. All of these materials pollute our lakes and rivers.

Label it. Volunteer to label the storm drains in your neighborhood to inform residents that storm drains lead directly to our lakes and rivers. Call your local community for more information on storm drain stenciling programs.

Middle School Parents[®]

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still make the difference!

Anchor Bay Middle School North



Use four strategies to spark your child's interest in STEM

It is common for students to think science and math are too hard. Many kids believe they are simply "not good" at these subjects. However, when middle schoolers try fun, hands-on activities, they often realize these subjects are actually exciting!

If your child thinks science or math is boring or difficult, here are four easy ways to spark interest:

1. **Find science videos or games online.** Websites like [YouTube](#) or [Common Sense Media](#) have educational shows, experiments and interactive games for kids of all ages.
2. **Head to the kitchen.** As you prepare a meal together, ask questions to get your child thinking:
 - » *Why do you think water boils when it gets hot?*

- » *What happened when we forgot to add baking powder to the cookies?*
- » *How much flour will we need if we double this recipe?*

3. **Visit a natural history museum or science center** in person or online. These places help children see how nature, science and technology have changed over time and explain how everyday things work.
4. **Focus on growth.** Learning something new is often tough at first. Talk about the new skills your child is gaining and how those skills might be useful in the future. Say you are proud of how hard your child is working.

Source: M. Pinola, "How to Get Your Kids Interested in STEM (Without Forcing It on Them)," LifeHacker.

Boost academic achievement with exercise



Stress can lower students' performance in the classroom. It often comes with exhaustion and

distraction—neither of which is helpful for learning. One simple and effective way to help your middle schooler reduce stress is to encourage daily movement.

Physical activity:

- **Can help your child feel happier.** The endorphins exercise releases also increase energy levels.
- **Is calming.** While focused on the activity, your child is likely to stop focusing on worries.
- **Improves memory.** Exercise increases blood flow to the brain, which can help your child stay alert and remember more.
- **Increases self-confidence.** Exercise helps students feel in control of their bodies—which can inspire them to take control of their studies.

When planning your child's schedule, try to fit in at least 30 minutes of exercise daily.

Source: "Exercise and stress: Get moving to manage stress," Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research.

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Build background knowledge to support reading comprehension



Research shows that students understand what they read much better when they already know something about

the topic. This is called *background knowledge*.

Being familiar with a topic allows your child to focus more on meaning rather than decoding when reading—making comprehension and learning easier.

To help your child build a strong base of knowledge:

- **Read about the world.** Encourage your child to read news articles. Many will cover topics your child will likely encounter in schoolwork.
- **Explore new things.** Visit museums, watch educational shows or go

to historic sites. These real-life experiences may connect to something your child reads in the future.

- **Share your experiences.** Talk to your child about places you have been, hobbies you enjoy or different 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



Helping middle schoolers with their writing can be tricky. They’re often sensitive to criticism and resistant to suggestions for

improvement.

Instead of offering feedback *after* your child writes something, try offering guidance *before* your child begins. Encourage your student to focus on these six key areas:

1. **Ideas and content.** The points should be relevant and well supported. The reader should easily understand exactly what your child is trying to say.
2. **Choice of words.** Strong writing “paints a picture.” When your child describes something, the reader should be able to visualize it. Every word should add meaning, not just fill up space.
3. **Organization.** Solid writing has a clear beginning, middle and ending. Points should flow logically and stay on topic.
4. **Sentence structure.** Writing should be clear and easy to follow. Sentences should flow naturally, like a real conversation. Help your child avoid repeating the same starting words. For example, if one sentence begins with “I feel,” the next one should start differently.
5. **Voice.** Your child’s writing should represent your child’s personality, feelings and tone.
6. **Mechanics.** This is the final step. Remind your child to proofread writing to check for correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Have you made academic honesty a high priority?



In a survey from the Center for Academic Integrity, a whopping 95 percent of high school students admitted to

having participated in some form of cheating. Are you addressing this with your child before high school? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below to find out:

1. **Do you set a positive example** for your child by being honest yourself?
2. **Have you spoken** with your child about the school’s honor code and the importance of following it?
3. **Have you discussed** different types of cheating, such as finding answers to test questions online, sharing answers and using apps or AI to do work your child is supposed to do?
4. **Have you explained** that copying passages without giving credit to the sources is also cheating?
5. **Have you said** that cheating is always wrong and talked about the consequences?

How well are you doing?

Mostly *yes* answers mean you are encouraging honest work. 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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Four ways to support academic success during middle school



Studies show that family support remains vital for middle schoolers. In fact, what you do at home is often more impactful than volunteering at school.

Try these four research-based strategies to help your child succeed in the classroom:

1. Connect learning to real life.

Talk about what your child is learning. Then, find ways to use those lessons in everyday life. For example, can your child apply math skills to figure out the most economical route to a destination? This demonstrates the importance and relevance of education.

2. Talk about the future.

Does your child want to be an architect, a mechanic or a fashion designer? Help your middle schooler

investigate the education and training necessary to prepare for careers of interest. Remind your child that even if interests change, a solid education is the ticket to achieving any goal.

3. Share your expectations.

When students know that their families believe in them and expect them to work hard, they feel more motivated to do their best.

4. Encourage reading for pleasure.

Making time for recreational reading remains one of the most effective ways to boost literacy, vocabulary and thinking skills. Keep a variety of books, magazines and articles available at home—and model reading habits yourself!

Source: D. Viadero, "Scholars: Parent-School Ties Should Shift in Teen Years," Education Week.

Questions & Answers

Q: My child is hanging out with some kids who aren't very kind. I'm afraid my child will give into peer pressure and start acting the same way. What should I do?

A: Definitely talk to your child but try not to focus on just one specific friend. Instead, have a general conversation about what makes a good friend. Ask questions like:

- *What fun things do you do together?*
- *What do you enjoy most about hanging out with them?*
- *What things do you believe in or care about?*
- *How do you feel when you are around them?*

It could be that these friends make your child feel more mature. Or it could be that your child is uncomfortable with how these kids act but doesn't know how to handle it.

Here are a few ways to steer your child through this situation:

- **Avoid critical comments.** Belittling friends or their families may make your child feel the need to defend them.
- **Ask guiding questions.** Instead of judging, try something like, "It sounds like your friend was rude to the teacher. How did that make you feel?" This kind of broad question may encourage your child to open up.
- **Be supportive.** Remind yourself that your child isn't weak when affected by peer pressure. Say that these situations are hard and that you are there to help your child figure things out.
- **Set clear rules.** If you are truly worried about these friends, it is OK to step in. Supervise the time your child spends with them or limit how often they hang out.

Foreign language study builds key skills for learning and more



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

When students study foreign languages, they enhance their:

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

language consistently score higher on standardized tests.

- **Problem-solving skills.** Studies show that students who speak two languages also do better in math and science.
- **Sense of achievement.** Learning another language is a challenge. As students master it, they see they can tackle difficult subjects.
- **Ability to get a job.** Many employers want to hire people who can speak more than one language.
- **Cultural awareness.** Exposure to new languages fosters a deeper appreciation for different perspectives and global traditions.

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

It Matters: Schoolwork

Share strategies for managing schoolwork



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.
- **Be flexible** about where your child works. Allow working where it's 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.

Don't let digital devices derail your middle schooler's studies

It seems like middle schoolers are glued to their phones and tablets. They text, watch videos and scroll through social media all day.

It is no surprise that students try to use these devices while doing schoolwork. However, research shows that using phones or social media while studying leads to lower grades.

Students might think using a device to watch a history video or check a math answer helps them study. The problem is that they rarely stay focused. Soon, they switch from that history video to a viral clip, and their schoolwork is forgotten.

To help your child stay focused:

- **Talk about multitasking.** Explain that research shows it doesn't



work. To learn, students need to focus on one thing at a time.

- **Prevent distraction.** Multitasking makes assignments take much longer. Have your child leave the phone or tablet in a different room while studying.

Four habits can make your child's study time effective



In middle school, schoolwork is about more than memorizing facts. Students need to think more deeply about what they learn. By helping your child adopt these study habits, you can foster the kind of thinking that makes study time more effective.

Encourage your child to make using these techniques a habit:

1. **Ask six key questions.** Your child should always ask: *who, what, when, where, why* and *how*. The answers will help your child understand reading assignments and create better outlines.
2. **Learn the vocabulary.** Students often struggle because they do

not know what words mean. Encourage your child to look up definitions for unfamiliar words.

3. **Weigh information.** Teach your child to find the main idea. If a sentence says, "Juan's blue shirt was wet with tears," ask if the color of the shirt or the fact that Juan was crying is more important.
4. **Compare and contrast.** Help your child practice finding how things are the same or different. This skill is especially useful for history and English. Ask your child to compare two things, such as how the life of a soldier in the Revolutionary War was the same as or different from the life of a modern-day soldier.