

Magic in the Middle



January 2010

Volume 8, Issue 5

Principally Speaking...Mid-Year

January Calendar Marks

- 4—School Resumes
- 8—Late Start / Fun Night
- 15—Spelling Bee, 1:30, theater
- 19, 21 —STAAR Nights
- 22—Early Release 1 P.M.
End of 2nd Quarter
- 28-29— Mini Courses

With the midway point of the school year fast approaching, now might be the time to get out a reminder to check in on your student via Family Access. Here are some things to do: make sure your student's lunch account balance is on the positive side; check into absences to make sure they're accurate (remember: the office needs a call or note from you in order to excuse an absence).

And last, but certainly not least, check your student's grades and any late or missing home-

work. Discussing with your student his or her grades is an excellent way to show you're involved, interested, and care. Assisting with or guiding your student's homework is another great way to keep abreast of what's happening in school. *Doing* your student's homework is not and does not help your student grow to become an independent young adult.

If you have any questions regarding your students academic (or social) well-being, please do not hesitate to call

his or her teacher, a counselor, or the office. For assistance with how to navigate through Family Access, please call me or either of the secretaries. (If you don't have computer access, please call the office for assistance or with any questions.)

Happy New Year and have a great month—Mini-Courses are right around the corner!

Mr. Roou, Principal

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Middle school is often the age of the closed door. Your once-affectionate child wants to be alone much of the time.

This behavior reflects that your child is growing up and becoming a separate person. You should respect it, but at the same time never let your child lose sight of the fact that he is part of a family. Privacy is fine, but total separation from the family is not. Consider these

Spending Time Together

guidelines:

Insist your child spend most of his time at home. Two evenings a week is plenty of time with friends.

Keep TVs and computers in family areas. Having one in his bedroom gives your child more reason to separate himself.

Grant your child leeway when it

comes to family activities. Allow him to sometimes opt out, but make it clear there are other times when he will have to come along.

Consider letting your child bring a friend to spend time with your family. Discuss this in advance so he knows that this is an occasional treat.

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7th grade Math Highlights:

As second quarter comes to a close, we are finishing up our unit out of the Comparing and Scaling book. Students should be able to make useful comparisons of information using ratios, fractions, decimals, rates, unit rates, and percents. Students also learned how to use scale factor to make similar larger or smaller models.

Our next unit will be on positive and negative numbers. Students will work on developing systematic ways to add, subtract, multiply, and divide positive and negative numbers. We will also look at the order of operations. This is a unit where calculators are not permitted. You can help your child with his or her work for this unit by asking them about their homework packet, and by looking over their work to be sure they've shown their work completely. You can also ask them to tell you about real world

scenarios in which positive and negative numbers are used. If your child hasn't given you a parent letter with examples of how to do problems from this book, please ask them about it—they were given this letter at the start of the book. Thanks!

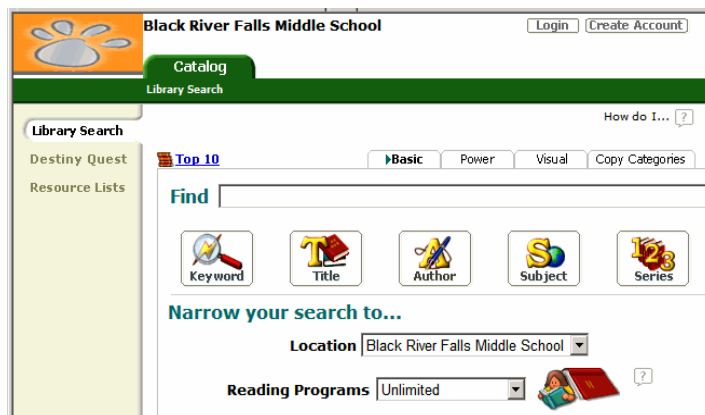
Students in 7th grade high math have been working hard at learning about linear relationships. They have had a lot of practice writing and solving equations and finding slopes and y-intercepts. Students will now be looking at real life applications where using linear relationships helps solve the problem. High math will then be switching gears into a little geometry. Students will be exploring the Pythagorean Theorem and again using it to problem solve.

- Mrs. Krista and Mrs. Kunding

LMC News

The Black River Falls Schools have recently upgraded their card catalog to the online version of Destiny. This application is now available outside of the district also. To find Destiny—the online card catalog, log into the computer; go to the Internet, and go the Black River Falls School District homepage. From the homepage, under schools, there is a listing for Des-

tiny, which is now our Online Card Catalog. Students or staff can look up books from anywhere! Also, be sure to take a look at Destiny Quest, this 21st Century version of the card catalog, shows the top 10 books checked out by middle school students so far this year. Everyone can also see the new books that we have recently received.



Computers & Internet

Responsible Middle Schoolers

Of course you want your preteen to become a responsible person. But does he know what that means? To help him understand what "being responsible" looks like, talk about the traits responsible people share. Also, suggest ways he can model those same traits.

For instance, responsible people usually demonstrate:

- A sense of duty. They do what they're supposed to do—even if they don't feel like it. For your preteen, that might mean getting to school on time, finishing his homework every night and doing his chores.
- Self-reliance. They value self-sufficiency, so they do as much as they can for themselves. True, your

middle schooler is too young to be completely self-reliant. But he can take a big step toward becoming more responsible. Empower him to handle many of his own tasks, such as doing his own laundry.

- Persistence. They don't give up, and they don't abandon goals just because they seem out of reach. Your preteen can demonstrate persistence by hanging in there when the going gets tough. If he doesn't earn a spot on the basketball team this year, for example, he can sharpen his skills in the off-season and try again next time.

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Your preteen may be a whiz when it comes to surfing the Internet, but that doesn't mean he's an expert at keeping himself safe online. In fact, his "super surfing skills" might lead him to think he's safer than he really is. And that's where you come in.

Take time to talk with your middle schooler about staying safe online, and don't feel intimidated because he knows more about how the computer works. You're the adult, and you know more about how the world works.

To help your middle schooler stay safe when he's online:

- Enforce some rules. Are chat rooms off-limits? If so, make sure your preteen knows. Is he forbidden from visiting fee-based sites? Make that clear. Establish serious consequences if your child breaks the rules.
- Talk about the dangers.

Don't assume your preteen knows the pitfalls of sharing too much information online. Speak with him about keeping all of his personal information private. Also, remind him that "stranger danger" applies online, too.

- Trust, but verify. Tell your preteen that inappropriate sites are forbidden, but also block them with parental-control software.

- Be aware of his online life. Does your preteen have a MySpace or Facebook account? That may be fine—as long as he's not keeping it secret.

Don't allow the computer in your preteen's bedroom. He's less likely to get into trouble if he's surfing the Internet in the living room or kitchen.

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Christmas Tree Pick-up on **Tuesday 1/5**. We will start after school in the ag room. Wear warm clothes! We will pick up until 5:30 p.m., with hot refreshments afterwards. **We still need adult drivers and hay-racks – contact Mr. Markhardt.**

The middle school **FFA Quiz Bowl Team** is practicing **Wednesdays (1/6, 1/13, 1/20, 1/27) during in-house** in the Middle School commons. Students in this contest should be studying information between practices!

The **FFA meeting** is **Tuesday, January 12** from 3:15-4:15 p.m. in the HS ag room. We will be discussing Speaking Contests, FFA Week and lots more...

We will need parent volunteers to help with Black River Falls hosting the District Speaking Contests on Monday, February 15. Set-up beginning at 2:15 and

cleanup ending around 9:00. Please contact Brad Markhardt if you are able to help out.

FFA is a leadership organization for 7th and 8th grade students. It's mission is to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education.

Please contact the FFA Advisor, Mr. Brad Markhardt, if you have any questions: 284-4324 ext. 2210



Setting Expectations

Don't make your middle schooler guess what you expect from him. Spell it out! When it comes to setting expectations for your middle schooler:

- **Be precise.** "Clean the basement" might mean totally different things to you and your middle schooler, so make your instructions clear. "Please put your video games away, bring your dirty plate upstairs and vacuum the rug."
- **Give a time frame.** Attach a very specific time frame to chores. "I need you to empty the dishwasher within the next 15 minutes." It may help avoid foot-dragging on your middle schooler's part.
- **Get his input.** Your pre-teen isn't a little kid anymore, so don't treat him like one. When-

ever possible, let him put in his two cents when it comes to the house rules. For instance, has he been insisting that he's old enough for a later bedtime? He may be right.

- **Trust him.** Respect your middle schooler by assuming he'll do what he's told. (In other words, don't hover as he works.) If he falls short again and again, you may need to supervise more closely. But if he does well? Honor him with some breathing room.
- **Offer praise.** Is your middle schooler doing a great job following the rules and pitching in? Let him know!

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6th Grade News

The 6th Grade is having a busy time decorating our doors and getting ready for Mini Course registration. In science we're studying genetics to find out how we came to have the traits we do. Some students might be coming home and asking their family members odd sounding questions about traits like; Can you roll your tongue, which of your fingers is longer, or which is your dominant eye?

Several classes are reading books with snow in the titles, which fits our present weather

perfectly. Math is investigating how decimals work and how they change into the percents that give us our grades. This would be a great time to have the students work with money especially in figuring out percentage, like in tips at a restaurant.

In social studies the students are learning about the major religions in India before they leave for Ancient China. It's amazing how many inventions came from that part of the world.

Attention 8th grade parent/guardian:

Dear 8th grade parent/guardian:

Next fall, your son/daughter will be beginning their high school experience. We would like to jointly work with you to ensure a successful transition from the middle school to the high school. We are scheduling orientation meetings for all 8th grade parent/guardians to provide information about 9th grade course selection, graduation requirements, and block scheduling.

On Monday, January 11, 2010, we will be meeting with your son/daughter during the school day to begin the registration process. We will be providing the students with course description booklets, course selection worksheets, and scheduling procedure information. Please ask your son/daughter for this resource packet after-school on Monday.

On that same evening, January 11, 2010 at 6 pm, we request your attendance at a parent high school informational meeting in the HS Cafeteria. At that time, the counselors will explain registration procedures, and the high school teachers will discuss courses offered, course prerequisites and course

content. Your son/daughter is encouraged to attend with you.

Your student will then need to complete his/her pre-registration/course selection form and return it to the **middle school by FRIDAY, JANUARY 15th, 2010 as we will be pre-registering on-line that day.** The high school guidance will then create a master schedule of classes and in March/April, your son/daughter will receive their computer-generated class schedule. We will not be scheduling by arena this year. If you have specific questions about course selection, please feel free to call us at the guidance office at (715) 284-4324, ext. 2020.

We look forward to working with your son/daughter over the next four years. Freshman year is the best opportunity to get started on the right track and allow for a wonderful high school educational experience.

Susan Leadholm
Eric Erickson
Guidance (ext. 2021)
Guidance (ext. 2022)

MIDDLE SCHOOL EXTENSIONS:

~ Dial 284-4357, then the extension of the person with whom you wish to speak.

Mr. Roou	3001	Mr. Markee	3212
Mr. Amborn	3114	Mr. Markhardt	2210
Ms. Anderson	3201	Ms. Massart	3214
Mrs. Boerger	3113	Mrs. Nelson	3006
Mrs. Bragee	3215	Mrs. Nortman	3101

Mrs. Carlsen	3205	Mrs. Reichenbach	3114
Mr. Cowley	3216	Mrs. Rodney	3110
Mrs. DeBerg	3208	Mr. Rufsholm	3150
Mr. Dokkestul	3102	Mrs. Rumsey	3117
Mr. Downie	3106	Mr. Schmitt	3214
Mr. Dutton	3202	Ms. Schwarz	3210
Ms. Erlandson	3003	Mr. Shepard	3206
Mrs. Ferstenou	3002	Ms. Skogstad	3212
Ms. Ghelf	3109	Mr. Stanley	3022
Ms. Henrickson	3207	Mr. Stemper	3116
Mr. Jensen	3108	Mrs. Swenson	3152
Mrs. Jensen	3112	Mr. Tande	3111
Mr. Johnson	3211	Ms. Weberg	3203
Mrs. Krista	3105	Mr. Wester	3107
Mrs. Kundingger	3103	Mrs. Zillmer	3204

School Attendance during Mini-Courses

Just a reminder that school attendance during our annual end-of-January Mini-Courses is mandatory.

Staff offer this opportunity as a means by which students may step out of

their “comfort zone” and try something new. It’s also an excellent opportunity for your student to make positive connections with a staff member outside the realm of the regular classroom.

We all feel Min-Courses to be an essential, viable part of your student’s Middle School experience. We encourage you to stop by the school to check out or visit any of the courses.

If you’re interested in volunteering, assisting, or chaperoning, please contact the office, and we’ll put you to work! :-)

Black River Falls Middle School
1202 Pierce Street
Black River Falls, Wisconsin 54615

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Wisconsin 54615

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