

BUNGER MIDDLE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

March 2012

157 South Roosevelt Road --- Evansdale, Iowa 50707-1253 --- 319-433-2550

Principals' Points

Andy Mieke, Principal

Dear Parents:

Believe it or not it is already time to talk about Spring Conferences, Spring Break, and ITBS testing. The school year seems to have flown by once again. I know we are all looking forward to the spring thaw and warmer temperatures but spring will also bring an increased focus to Bunger.

Our teachers have been working hard to gather and analyze data on your students' learning and our collaborative teams have met twice a week to focus on math and reading objectives. These meetings in conjunction with our Instructional Decision Making model increase our hope that these extra efforts will result in increased student achievement.

A lot of this work can be better explained by your students' teachers at conferences on March 1st and 2nd. Please contact us if you need transportation to conferences.

I would also like to give everyone in the Bunger family a heads up that we will be taking our **ITBS tests the weeks of March 26th and April 2nd**. We are excited about our students taking this "new look" assessment and showing off all of the hard work they have put in this year. We are planning to continue our incentive program and as a staff we have been working to make sure your students have the best opportunity to be successful.

This plan includes a modified daily schedule, goal setting exercises, practice tests, and increased focus on objectives. Please discuss the ITBS and its importance with your student as the testing dates draw near.

SPECIAL INFORMATION :

Conferences March 1st and 2nd

Site Council meeting Monday March 5th

ITBS testing March 26th through April 6th

Site Council/Community Safety meeting
Monday, April 2 @ Poyner Elementary

No School April 6th

Sincerely,
Andy Mieke, Principal

Dear Parents,

I am happy that it is March and spring is almost here. I am looking forward to shedding some of my winter clothing, and I cannot wait to begin experiencing warmer weather. I know that our students and teachers are anticipating spring break and a change of pace before focusing on the remaining weeks of school. It is important that you continue to check with your child about their homework as they begin to take advantage of the warmer weather and begin spending more time outside. We have the Iowa Test of Basic Skills in a few days and we want all of our students to do well. Now would be a good time to begin discussions with your child about the importance of taking the tests seriously and putting forth their best effort.

The boys' basketball season had its final game during the last week of February. The boys have worked hard, improved their basketball skills, learned how to be good sports and had fun. Now we can begin turning our attention to the upcoming track season. The first day of practice is March 19 for 7th and 8th grade girls and boys. It is important to make sure that all of the athletes participating have their proper paperwork turned in to the office. They will need a physical, insurance waiver, health history and concussion form in order to practice and compete. I hope that the weather will cooperate and we will have great weather to practice and compete in.

Thanks, for all that you do to make Bunger a great place to learn and work.

Sincerely,

Dede Fantroy
Assistant Principal/Athletic Director

Spring Conferences

Spring conferences are Thursday, March 1st and Friday, March 2nd.

Staff will be located in their classrooms. Please limit your conference time so all parents are able to speak to their child's teacher. We use the following schedule:

Thursday, March 1st

1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

5:00 – 5:30 PM - Dinner break for teachers

5:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Friday, March 2nd

7:30 AM – NOON

Thank you for attending your child's conference.

School Dance

Bunger Dance – March 2, 7:00-9:00 pm.

Attend conferences and Save A Buck. \$1.00 off coupons handed out by math teachers at Parent Teacher Conferences. The District dress code will be adhered to.

Book Fair Luau Reminder

Aloha! Our Luau themed Scholastic Book Fair has brought a wonderful selection of fun, engaging, and affordable books that our students want to read. Join us before the book fair ends:

Book Fair Dates: February 28th, 29th, & March 1st

Shopping Hours:

February 28th, 29th – 7:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

March 1st – 1:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

If you're all booked up (or just want to keep shopping), be sure to visit the Book Fair online at www.scholastic.com/schoolbookfairs or <http://bungermmedia.weebly.com>. The online Book Fair is available until to March 5th. All orders ship to school for FREE and each purchase benefits our school. Please contact Mrs. Rogers to volunteer or with questions by email (rogersc@waterloo.k12.ia.us) or phone (433.2566).

2012 Gold Star Award

Brochures to nominate an outstanding teacher can be picked up in the office. Deadline for nominations ends Thursday, March 1, 2012

Attendance

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential for success in school. Parents/Guardians are requested to call the school office at (319) 433-2550 between 7:30-9:00 am to report a student's absence. Calls should be made for each day a student is absent. **If your child visits a physician/dentist please obtain a medical excuse and submit it to the office.**

Chat and Go:

Quick Book Talks With Your Child

Chat and Go is an effective strategy for engaging your child in an informal conversation about what he/she is reading. This strategy has the potential to motivate your child to read more for pleasure. Chat and Go will also give your child insight into your child's interest as a reader.

Conversation Starters:

What is the title of the book or article?

What genre are you reading? (mystery, science, fiction, teen issues, etc)

Why did you pick this book?

Tell me something interesting from your reading. Rate your book/article on a scale from 1-10.

Tips:

Share a book you are reading too.

Find a special place to chat (Barnes & Nobles, coffee shop, etc)

Milk Moola and Donuts to Dough

Bunger participates in this program sponsored by Kwik Star stores to help raise funds for our Family Consumer Science room. Milk Moola is a program where we receive 5 cents for every cap and bag top we collect from Kwik Star products such as milk, orange juice, bottled water and Kwik Star's line of fruit drinks. Donuts to Dough is a program where we receive 10 cents for every price oval we collect from Kwik Star's Dozen and Half-Dozen boxes of Glazers Donuts.

The biggest thing you can do to help is to purchase those products and save the caps, bag tops, and Glazers price ovals.

Chorus Concert

Seventh and Eighth Grade Chorus Concert
May, 22, 2012 - 7:00 pm
East High School Auditorium

Bunger Yearbook



Parents of 8th Grade Students are invited to put a KUDOS message in the yearbook wishing their student good luck in high school, congratulating them on Middle School accomplishments, or acknowledging them in any other way. Limit is 25 words or less, school photo will be used in the message. Ad forms have been distributed in homerooms, or can be picked up at the school in the front office. Yearbooks are \$15.00 and will be distributed in late May.

HyVee Cash 4 Students



Bunger participates with HyVee "Cash 4 Students". This program earns cash for our school. The deadline for this year's receipts is April 27, 2012. Please save your register receipts (groceries, meals, beverages, gas and prescriptions) and send them to Bunger before the end of April 2012.

8th Grade Dance

It is that time of year again. "Paradise" is the theme for the 2012 dance. We are all very excited and are already coming up with many decorating ideas. The dance will be held on Friday, May 18, 2012. The District dress code will be adhered to.

Bunger Instrumental Solo Contest

On Wednesday, February 29 the Bunger Band Department will be hosting the annual Solo and Ensemble Festival. The festival will be held during the school day in the Bunger Band and Choir Room and we will have two separate judges who will write comments on ballots and award each student a rating.

Parents are encouraged to attend and listen to the student performances if available to do so. Even though we are hosting this festival during a school day, we are asking students to dress up to reflect the importance of this special event. It doesn't have to be the concert black and white, just nice clothes.

Your student will be bringing home a schedule of rehearsal times with their accompanist as well as their performance times on the day of the contest. If you have any questions please call the band office at 319-433-2550. Thank you and we hope to see you on February 29th!

Operation Family Pack



Bunger has partnered with the Northeast Iowa Food Bank to offer a program called "Operation Family Pack". The program distributes healthy snack foods to students on a weekly basis. The foods will be placed in a backpack (provided by NIFB) and students will bring them home on the last day of the school week. Students will return the backpacks to Bunger on the following Monday to be used again.

Kid friendly snacks may include; Easy Mac & Cheese, crackers, cereal, shelf stable milk, pudding, soup, fruit, trail mix, and other items.

This program is available for students who receive free or reduced lunch and/or have an immediate need. There is a quick, easy enrollment form to fill out.

Have your child contact Ms. Yancey or parents/guardians may call Bunger at 433-2550. This program has officially started, but you may enroll at any time.



Bunger collects pink Box Tops. Box Tops can be found on hundreds of products throughout grocery and discount stores. For a complete list of products got to: btf.com/products. Remember - just clip it from the package and send to our school.

Nominate 93.5 The Mix's Teacher of the Week

Does your child have an outstanding teacher? If so, consider nominating them for 93.5 The Mix's "Teacher of the Week." Fill out the on-line application with your name, your teacher's name and why they should be recognized for what they do.

93.5 The Mix will choose a new "Teacher of the Week" every Monday morning. The winning teacher will receive a prize package valued at over \$100. They will also be invited to a special banquet to recognize them for their hard work.

For more information or to complete the online application visit: <http://935themix.com/teacherweek.php>



Get Ready for Track

Practice for track will start on March 20th. Any student interested in participating should have all the forms and physical turned in before the first practice. You may pick up the form in the main office.

Track Schedule

	Boys	Girls
Tues. Apr 10		Hoover & Bunger @ Denver
Thurs. Apr 12	Hoover & Bunger @ Denver	
Thurs. Apr 19	Bunger, Holmes, Central @ Hoover	
Tues. Apr 24		Bunger, Central, Hoover, Peet & Carver @ Hudson
Thurs. Apr 26		Bunger & Waverly @ Carver
Tues. May 1	Bunger & Waverly @ Carver	
Thurs. May 3	Bunger, Carver & Peet @ Central	
Sat. May 12	Metro Hosted by Hoover and Carver	Metro



Congratulations February S.M.A.R.T Students

6 th Grade	Cameron Quick
	Staci Strader
7 th Grade	Layne Walker
	Starr White
8 th Grade	Allie Gladson
	Justin Hinz
	Brady McDowell
	Jocelyn Shaffer



Student Information Updates Through the Parent Portal

Parents and guardians can now update student contact information through the parent portal! It is very important to update your child's contact information every year and now it is much easier. To do so, log onto the portal and select one of the following tabs:

- Select Household Information to update your home's phone number,
- Select Family Members to update individual family member phone numbers, such as work numbers.
- Select a student, then click on demographics. Here, you can update other contact information or add a new contact.

Please note that the update requests must be processed/approved by your child's school, so submitted changes will not immediately appear on the portal. You will be notified by a message on the portal when your change request has been processed. If you don't have a parent portal account, please contact your child's school to be issued an activation key, allowing you to sign-up for access on our website. Keeping your contact information updated is very important, so we hope you will take advantage of the portal to keep your records updated. You can also contact your child's school to request a change.

Middle School Students at Athletic Events

We encourage students to attend home contests and support our team. They must have served all detentions before they are allowed to attend our home games. There is little supervision at away games therefore middle school students cannot attend away games without being accompanied by a parent or adult who will be responsible for them before, during and after the event. The only home track meet Bunger hosts is the girls' track meet on May 1, 2012. Students must have an adult with them to attend the other track meets at Central or Carver. If they are dropped off they will not be allowed to stay and will have to call for a ride home.



Instrumental Music, A Win Win

You may have heard that changes are coming in the way we provide instrumental music—band and orchestra—in grades 5-8. We are working with our music teachers to develop a model that protects instructional time in other subjects while supporting a first class band and orchestra program.

Under our new model, by the time students arrive in high school, they will have had 45% more instructional time in band/orchestra than they would under our old model. Band/orchestra will be offered every day of the week in middle school, generally with two instructors per classroom. One will be working with the large group, while the other with smaller groups of students.

Because of shifts in how instrumental music is provided, students who would have been pulled out of other classes under the old model will also realize 90 more hours of instructional time in those other courses, over the four years of grades 5-8.

Ultimately, we want to make some “tweaks” at high school so that students are not pulled out of academic subjects for sectionals, but we haven’t worked out a plan for that yet. We believe most of the pull-outs now are from study hall or lunch, plus there are small group lessons before and after school. Until we get a detailed model worked out for high school, there won’t be significant change in that approach.

Our focus to date has been on grades 5-8, and that’s where we’ll begin full scale implementation first. We will be able to focus on high school planning as soon as next year. See below for more information.

Math Curriculum

Our students need to prepare for a complex future. Our new K-12 mathematical model and framework ensures they are prepared for success for college, career, and citizenship. It prepares them to think critically, to solve problems, to reason, and to persevere. Please see the Waterloo Community School District website: waterloo.k12.ia.us for more information related to the Math Curriculum. This information will grow and expand as the curriculum is implemented in each grade level.

Math Fun Night

Thursday, March 22nd - 7:00-8:15pm – Media Center

CMP2 Math

Included in this newsletter is the CMP2 Parent Guides that highlight the topics that will be taught in each of the grades 6-8 during third/fourth quarter. This letter provides for parents the unit goals, suggestions for helping with homework, ways to help your child by having conversations about the mathematics in the unit, and important concepts and examples.

For more information, please visit the Waterloo website: www.waterloo.k12.ia.us/families

Or the CMP Parent Web site:

<http://connectedmath.msu.edu/parents/welcome.shtml>

Or the Prentice Hall CMP2 Web Site:

<http://www.phschool.com/cmp2/parents>

Community Safety Meeting – SAVE THE DATE April 2nd from 5:30-6:30 at Poyner Elementary

As a result of a District Safety Meeting that was held with building safety officers and community stakeholders, each school will be hosting a parent and community meeting covering the subjects of bullying, cyber-bullying, and gangs.

Counselor’s Corner

February was a short but very busy month. 8th grade scheduling is in full swing and we hope to be finished by the first week in March. If you or your student have any questions about the high school they will be attending, the classes they are taking, or the classes they would like to take, please contact the guidance office and we will do our best to answer all your questions.

Student Council has been busy planning fundraisers, helping with the planning of the 8th grade dance, and brainstorming service learning opportunities for the school. If you have any ideas or would like to be a part of organizing a service project please let us know. We always appreciate suggestions from parents and the community.

Student voices participants also completed an exchange with the students from Central Middle School. The Central students came to Bunker to observe how we drive motivation and achievement. They were able to observe classes, as well as hear a great presentation from our Bunker Student voices members. In March, we will visit Central to hear all about the great things they do there to drive achievement.

Dear Family,

The next unit in your child's mathematics class this year is ***How Likely Is It?: Understanding Probability***. This unit helps students understand and reason about experimental and theoretical probability and the relationship between them. Students make important connections between probability and rational numbers, geometry, statistics, science, and business.

UNIT GOALS

Students will learn to find probabilities in two ways: by conducting trials and collecting experimental data, and also by analyzing situations to determine theoretical probabilities. Students use fractions, decimals, and percents to describe how likely events are.

Students experiment with coins, number cubes, spinners, and paper cups. They will examine simple games of chance to determine whether the games are fair. Students will examine how probability is useful in predicting the likelihood of genetic traits, such as eye color and tongue-curling ability.

HELPING WITH HOMEWORK

You can help with homework and encourage sound mathematical habits as your child studies this unit by asking questions such as:

- What are the possible outcomes that can occur for the events in this situation?
- How could you determine the experimental probability of each of the outcomes?
- Is it possible to determine the theoretical probability of each of the outcomes?
- If so, what are these probabilities?
- How can you use the probabilities to make decisions about this situation?

In your child's notebook, you can find worked-out examples from problems done in class, notes on the mathematics of the unit, and descriptions of the vocabulary words.

**HAVING CONVERSATIONS
ABOUT THE MATHEMATICS IN *HOW LIKELY IS IT?***

You can help your child with his or her work for this unit in several ways:

- Discuss examples of statements or situations in everyday experiences that relate to the likelihood of certain events.
- Look at sports statistics with your child and ask questions such as how a batting average or a free-throw average can be used to predict the likelihood that the player will get a hit the next time at bat or make a basket the next time at the free-throw line.
- Look over your child's homework and make sure all questions are answered and that explanations are clear.

A few important mathematical ideas that your child will learn in *How Likely Is It?* are given on the back. As always, if you have any questions or concerns about this unit or your child's progress in class, please feel free to call.

Sincerely,

Important Concepts	Examples
<p>Probability A number between 0 and 1 that describes the likelihood that an event will occur.</p>	<p>If a bag contains a red marble, a white marble, and a blue marble, then the probability of drawing a red marble is 1 out of 3 or $\frac{1}{3}$. We would write: $P(\text{red}) = \frac{1}{3}$.</p>
<p>Once we have a probability—theoretical or experimental—we can use it to make predictions and decisions.</p>	<p>If a number cube is rolled 1000 times, we would predict that a 3 will occur about $\frac{1}{6}$ of the time or about $\frac{1}{6} \times 1000$, or 167 times.</p>
<p>Theoretical Probability A probability obtained by analyzing a situation. If all the outcomes (possible results) are equally likely, you can find a theoretical probability of an event by first listing all the possible outcomes, then finding the ratio of the number of outcomes you are interested in to the total number of outcomes.</p>	<p>If a number cube has six sides with the possible outcomes of rolling: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6, then the probability of rolling a “3” is 1 out of 6.</p> $P(\text{Rolling a 3}) = \frac{\text{number of favorable outcomes}}{\text{number of possible outcomes}}$ $= \frac{1 \text{ (there is 1 number 3 on the cube)}}{6 \text{ (there are 6 possible outcomes)}}$
<p>Experimental Probability A probability found as a result of an experiment. This probability is the relative frequency of the event (a set of outcomes) that is the ratio of the number of times the event occurred compared to the total number of trials (one round of an experiment).</p>	<p>If you tossed a coin 50 times and heads occurred 23 times, the relative frequency of heads would be $\frac{23}{50}$.</p> $P(\text{heads}) = \frac{\text{number of times the event occurred}}{\text{number of trials}}$ $= \frac{\text{number of heads}}{\text{total number of tosses}} = \frac{23}{50}$
<p>Random Events In mathematics, random means that any particular outcome is unpredictable, but the long-term behavior exhibits a pattern.</p>	<p>Flipping a coin is a random event because we never know whether the next flip will be heads or tails, but we do know that in the long run we will have close to 50% heads.</p>

Strategies for Finding Outcomes	Organized List	Tree Diagram															
<p>When situations involve more than one action, we need to generate the outcomes in a systematic way. Organized lists or tree diagrams are particularly useful.</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>First Coin</th> <th>Second Coin</th> <th>Outcome</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>heads</td> <td>heads</td> <td>heads-heads</td> </tr> <tr> <td>heads</td> <td>tails</td> <td>heads-tails</td> </tr> <tr> <td>tails</td> <td>heads</td> <td>tails-heads</td> </tr> <tr> <td>tails</td> <td>tails</td> <td>tails-tails</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	First Coin	Second Coin	Outcome	heads	heads	heads-heads	heads	tails	heads-tails	tails	heads	tails-heads	tails	tails	tails-tails	
First Coin	Second Coin	Outcome															
heads	heads	heads-heads															
heads	tails	heads-tails															
tails	heads	tails-heads															
tails	tails	tails-tails															

Law of Large Numbers
Experimental data gathered over many trials should produce probabilities that are close to the theoretical probabilities. This idea is sometimes called the Law of Large Numbers.

It is important for students to realize that a small amount of data may produce wide variation. It takes many trials to make good estimates for what will happen in the long run.

The Law of Large Numbers does not say that when flipping a coin, we should expect exactly 50% heads in any given large number of trials. Instead, it says that as the number of trials gets larger, we expect the percentage of heads to be in a smaller range of around 50%.

On the CMP Parent Web Site, you can learn more about the mathematical goals of each unit, see an illustrated vocabulary list, and examine solutions of selected ACE problems. <http://PHSchool.com/cmp2parents>

Dear Family,

The next unit in your child's mathematics class this year is ***Data Distributions: Describing Variability and Comparing Groups***. Students will learn to choose among a variety of representations to display distributions and will analyze, describe, and compare sets of data.

UNIT GOALS

Exploring statistics as a process of data investigation involves a set of four interrelated components (Graham, 1987).

- Posing the question: formulating the key question(s) to explore and deciding what data to collect to address the question(s);
- Collecting the data: deciding how to collect the data as well as actually collecting it;
- Analyzing the data: organizing, representing, summarizing, and describing the data and looking for patterns in the data; and
- Interpreting the results: predicting, comparing, and identifying relationships and using the results from the analyses to make decisions about the original question(s).

This dynamic process often involves moving back and forth among the four components.

HELPING WITH HOMEWORK

You can help with homework and encourage sound mathematical habits as your child studies this unit by asking questions such as:

- Is there anything that surprises you about the data and their distribution?
- Where do the data cluster in the distribution?
- How can I use the mean or median and range to help me understand and describe a data distribution?
- What strategies can I use to compare two different data sets?

In your child's notebook, you can find worked-out examples from problems done in class, notes on the mathematics of the unit, and descriptions of the vocabulary words.

HAVING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE MATHEMATICS IN DATA DISTRIBUTIONS

You can help your child with his or her work for this unit in several ways:

- Look with your child for uses of data in magazines, newspapers, and on TV.
- Point out examples of graphical displays and ask your child questions about the information shown.
- Ask your child about the data studied in class. What were the typical (mode, median, or mean) values for these data?
- Look over your child's homework and make sure all questions are answered and that explanations are clear.

A few important mathematical ideas that your child will learn in *Data Distributions* are given on the back. As always, if you have any questions or concerns about this unit or your child's progress in class, please feel free to call.

Sincerely,

Important Concepts and Examples

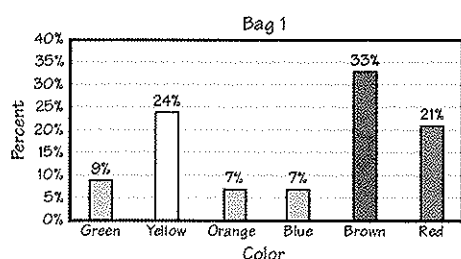
Representing Data Distributions

Statisticians use representations or summary statistics during the analysis part of the process of statistical investigation to describe the data distribution.

READING STANDARD DATA REPRESENTATIONS

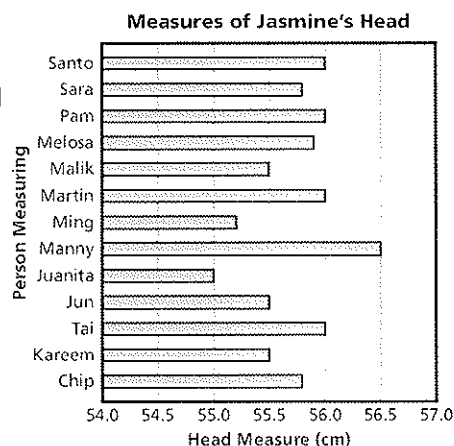
- Reading the data involves “lifting” information from a graph to answer explicit questions.
- Reading between the data includes the interpretation and integration of information presented in a graph.
- Reading beyond the data involves extending, predicting, or inferring from data to answer implicit questions.

FREQUENCY BAR GRAPH A bar’s height is the number (frequency) of cases that all have that value.



VALUE BAR GRAPH

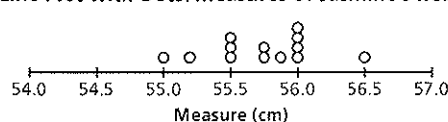
Each case is represented by a separate bar whose relative length corresponds to the magnitude or value of that case.



DOT PLOT (OR LINE PLOT)

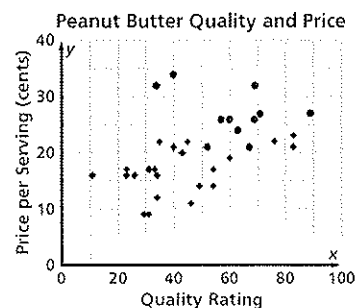
Each case is represented as a dot (or an “x”) positioned over a labeled number line.

Line Plot with Dots: Measures of Jasmine's Head



SCATTERPLOT

The relationship between two different attributes is explored by plotting values of two numeric attributes on a Cartesian coordinate system.



Measures of Central Tendency or Location (Mode, Median, Mean)

MODE The data value or category that occurs with greatest frequency. It is not usually used for summarizing numerical data.

Number of siblings: 0, 0, 0, 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 5, 6.

The mode is 2.

MEDIAN The numerical value that marks the middle of an ordered distribution. It is not influenced by extreme data values. Graphically, the median marks the location that divides a distribution into two equal parts.

The median for the data set 3, 4, 4, 7, 8, 9 is $5\frac{1}{2}$, the number halfway between 4 and 7.

For 4, 5, 5, and 7, the median is 5.

MEAN The numerical value that marks the balance point of a distribution; it is influenced by all values of the distribution including extremes and outliers. It is a good measure to use when working with distributions that are roughly symmetric.

Number of people in household: 2, 3, 3, 4, 6, 6.

The mean (average) number of people in these households is 4. There are 24 people “shared” among 6 households.

Using Measures of Variability

Measures of variability are used to describe how widely spread or closely clustered the individual data values are.

Range depends on two values, the greatest and the smallest. Range is the difference between the greatest value and the least value in the data.



March

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

1

2

3

Parent Teacher
Conferences
1:00-5:00 pm
5:30-8:00 pm

Parent Teacher
Conferences
7:30am-Noon

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Site Council 5:30 8th Gr Honor Band

End 3rd Term

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

Spring
Spring Break
No School

Spring Break
No School

Spring Break
No School

Spring Break
No School

Spring Break
No School



18

19

20

21

22

23

24

1st day 4th Term

Track Practice
Starts

Math Fun Night
7:00-8:15 pm
Media Ctr

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

2012



Sun *Mon* *Tue* *Wed* *Thu* *Fri* *Sat*

1 **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7**

Site Council &
Community Safety
Meeting @ Poyner
5:30-6:30 pm

No School

8 **9** **10** **11** **12** **13** **14**



GTrack
Bunger@Denver

BTrack
Bunger@Denver

15 **16** **17** **18** **19** **20** **21**

BTrack
Bunger@Hoover

Mid Term

22 **23** **24** **25** **26** **27** **28**

GTrack
Bunger@Carver

GTrack
Bunger@Carver

29 **30**

2012

Middle Years

Working together for school success



Short Stops

Conserve resources

Your child can do her part to take care of the earth. Encourage her to think of a new way each week to conserve a resource or material (water, paper). For example, she might resolve to turn off the faucet while brushing her teeth or to use both sides of printer paper.

Excited about tweens

It's normal to feel a bit sad as your middle grader grows up. But it helps to remember that you have a lot to look forward to. You may discover mutual interests and enjoy discussing various topics as his opinions develop. Plus, you get to witness the excitement of his first school dance, band concert, or other events.

Historical cards

When your child needs to send a birthday card, suggest that she personalize it with a fact about the person's date of birth. She can use an almanac or a website (try sfactmonster.com/dayinhistory) and include a note such as "On this day in 1775, Patrick Henry gave his famous speech."

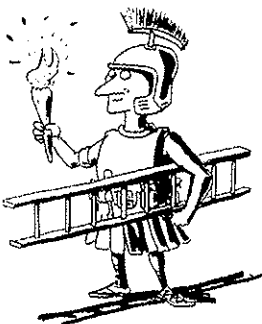
Worth quoting

"The best luck of all is the luck you make for yourself."
Douglas MacArthur

Just for fun

Teacher:
When was Rome built?

Student: At night! My dad says Rome wasn't built in a day!



Math for a lifetime

"When am I going to use this?" Your child might ask that question as he does his math homework. The answer? "Your whole life!" Show him how important math is and help him build skills by pointing out:

How people use math at work

Ask your middle grader what he wants to be when he grows up. Then, help him find ways math is used in that field. If he's interested in city planning, for example, he could pay attention to roads and intersections. He might notice that some highway on-ramps are shorter than others or that certain traffic lights stay red longer in the mornings than in the evenings. Can he figure out how speed limits and traffic volume affect planners' decisions?

How you use math

Get your child involved in math-related projects at home. You might have him calculate the square feet of the walls in a room you plan to paint (width \times length). Then, at the paint store, suggest that he look at a can of paint to see how



many square feet it covers and calculate how many cans you will need. Or you could take him with you to a car dealership and have him help you decide whether it makes more sense financially to lease or buy a car.

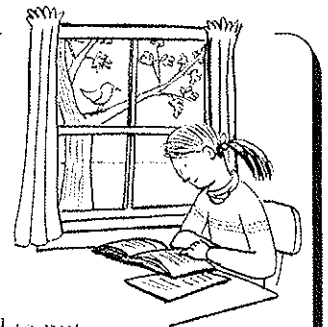
How he can use math

Mention how math helps your youngster with everyday tasks. For instance, he can use estimation and subtraction to be on time. Say he's going to a party at 7 p.m. Have him think about what he needs to do first (feed the dog, get dressed, ride to the party) and estimate how long each task will take. Subtracting those estimates from 7 p.m. will tell him when he needs to start getting ready. 👍

Sprint to the finish line

Your middle grader is beginning the last quarter of the school year. Help her finish strong by sharing these ideas:

- Encourage her to go the extra mile. For example, she might include graphics on a science project poster to make it clearer or proofread a paper one more time to be sure she hasn't missed any errors. She could also ask teachers about ways to earn extra credit.
- If friends invite her to hang out, she might be tempted to put off assignments. Suggest that she make a deal with herself: after she completes one step (say, research for a history paper), she can join them. 👍



Siblings and friends

Whether they're giggling or squabbling, there's one thing siblings will always have: each other! Building a good relationship now can help them become lifelong friends. Here are three ways to strengthen their bond:

1. Look for ways your children can share good times. When one needs a partner for an activity (playing a game of Ping-Pong, rehearsing for a play), suggest that she ask the other to join her. Or pair them up for family events—they might paddle their own canoe or make party favors together for a reunion.



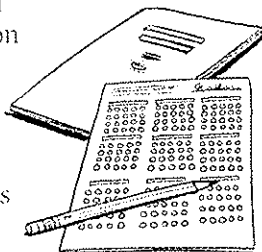
2. Suggest that siblings use their individual strengths to help each other. For example, one might teach the other to pitch a baseball. Or the child who loves to write can explain how she comes up with story ideas for English class.

3. Ask them to think of things they admire about each other, and encourage them to share their thoughts. They might jot compliments on each other's whiteboards ("You are a talented artist!") or post nice messages on the refrigerator ("Congrats on scoring the goal!"). If they do this regularly, getting along might become a habit. 👍

Tips for standardized tests

As spring arrives, so do standardized tests. Here are some tips to help your child do well:

- Be sure he attends every class, every day. Teachers will review information he'll need to know for the exam. They may also give practice questions that can help your child prepare for the actual test.



- He should get about nine hours of sleep and eat a healthy breakfast before each day of testing (and every day!). Protein (eggs, milk) and healthy carbohydrates (banana, whole-wheat toast) will help him stay alert and think clearly.

- Encourage your middle schooler by wishing him good luck on the morning of a test and telling him you know he'll do his best. Your positive attitude can be contagious. 👍



Q & A

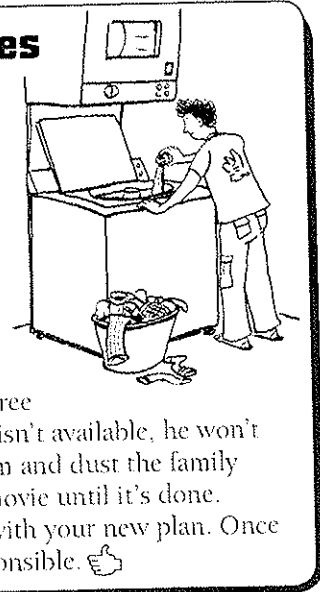
Handing over responsibilities

Q I feel like I do things around the house that my son should be doing. How can I help him be more responsible?

A Middle school is a good time for your child to take on more responsibility. Handling bigger tasks (laundry, lawn mowing) will give him skills that he'll need eventually when he lives on his own. Together, come up with ways for him to help—and consequences if he doesn't.

For example, show him how to wash clothes, and agree on a laundry schedule. If he puts it off and the washer isn't available, he won't have the clothes he needs. Or tell him he has to vacuum and dust the family room on a certain day. If he doesn't, he can't watch a movie until it's done.

You can help your child follow through by sticking with your new plan. Once he sees you mean business, he'll learn to be more responsible. 👍



Activity Corner

Are we there yet?

Arizona, Missouri, Louisiana. Does your child know where each state is located? Help her explore geography by playing this game.

Materials: paper, pencil, scissors, hat, U.S. map, game tokens, die

Ask your middle grader to list states' names on a sheet of paper and cut them apart to make 50 slips. Put the states in a hat, and let each family member draw one.

Place the map on the floor, and have each person put a token on the state you live in. Then, take turns rolling a die and moving that number of states in any direction. The object of the game is to be the first player to reach the state she drew. If you can't move

without landing on a state that has a token on it or jumping over another token, your turn is over. 👍



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.
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