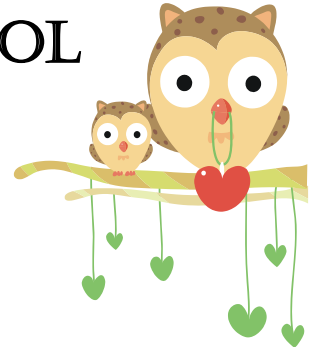




KEOKUK MIDDLE SCHOOL

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER



Gary Benda, Principal
Corey St. John, Asst. Principal

From the Principals Desk:

The end of the 2nd Trimester is March 9th. If your student is experiencing difficulty in any class, please contact the teacher immediately if you have not already done so. The teacher can help you understand where the difficulty lies and how to best overcome the difficulty. Chances are our teachers have already contacted you, please let me know if we have not contacted you in a timely manner. The end of the trimester is also a time where we begin to look at retaining students who have not demonstrated academic proficiency the first two trimesters.

IMPORTANT DATES

February 3rd	Midterm Grades Sent Home
February 9th	11:15 Early Out
February 9th	1:30-6:30 P/T Conferences
February 9th	Spring Pictures
February 10th	No School
February 10th	7:30-12:30 P/T Conferences
February 20th	No School-President's Day
February 21st	4:30pm Science Fair
February 24th	KMS Dance @ 6pm



SPRING PICTURES

Keokuk Middle School students will have Spring pictures taken on Thursday, February 9th. Spring pictures provide parents the opportunity to have a picture taken with a different setting than the Fall picture. **These pictures are optional!** A picture packet will be sent home with your student on Monday, Feb. 6th. Students will need to have their packets and money in hand the day of pictures. Any student who does not have a packet will not be allowed to have their picture taken. These are basic pictures taken with a background. Students are not allowed to bring props with them for the pictures as this creates issues at school and consumes too much time to get the pictures taken. This is also an 11:15 early dismissal day and the first day of Parent/Teacher Conferences.

Parent / Teacher Conferences

We will have Parent Teacher Conferences on February 9th & 10th. Each teacher has been assigned 17-20 students. Conferences are scheduled in 15 minutes increments and will be lead by the student. During conferences your child will begin by explaining how he/she has done in each class and what they believe their expectations for themselves should be. In addition to their scheduled conference times, there will be 60 "5-minute" time segments. You may also request a copy of your child's grades at the KMS office when you come in for conferences. Should your child have any grades below C-, those teachers will have a report provided for you. We believe this format will allow you to receive the information you need about your child and at the same time eliminate having to spend considerable time at school waiting to talk to your child's teachers. It is important that you and your child attend the conferences. Should you not be able to attend, we encourage you to send a grandparent or older brother/sister with your child to the conference. If you have not heard from your students teacher please call the KMS Office so we can set up a time.

Student Attendance/Tardies

Since Thanksgiving we have been having a significant issues with student tardies at the beginning of the day. We have began implementing a full day of ISS when the student reaches their sixth tardy of the trimester. All students receive a warning from Mr. St. John when they have accumulated their 3rd tardy, and parents will receive a phone call when the student accumulates their 4th tardy. I want to remind parents that it is their responsibility to get their child to school before 8:15am. We open our doors at 7:30am to allow a safe warm place for students to wait prior to going to class. Students are then dismissed at 8:05am to go to their classrooms.

Wrestling Stereo Donation

We would like to thank the Keokuk Kids Wrestling Club and parent volunteers for the new stereo receiver that was donated to the KMS wrestling program. The stereo is mounted in a wooden cabinet on the wall in the wrestling room and is capable of connecting to Ipod's, MP3 players, and cell phones. Thank you kids club!

Middle School Dance

February 24th we will have our 2nd middle school dance. We would like to remind Parents and Students of our dance guidelines.

1. Only KMS student may attend the dance.
2. You must be in school the day of the dance.
3. You must have your 2011-2012 KMS I.D. to get in the dance. The Wednesday before the dance is the last day to order an I.D. There are no exceptions to this requirement.
4. All students are placed on behavior probation 2 weeks prior to the dance. Any student who cannot behave those weeks, or who gets an I.S.S. or O.S.S., is not allowed to attend the dance. Students also must have all detentions completed by the end of the day Friday.
5. If you leave the dance you are not allowed to return.
6. Any student misbehaving at the dance will be removed from the building and not be allowed to attend at least the next dance.
7. Students are not to wear hats, head coverings, or other questionable clothing objects to the dance. You need to follow the basic clothing guidelines for school.

Our dances run from 6:00-8:00 and cost \$3.00. We hire two police officers to work our dances. We also need parent volunteers. Our volunteers simply are assigned an area in the building that they supervise.

If you would like to help with the dance please contact the middle school office. WE STRESS THAT IF YOUR CHILD CANNOT MEET ALL THESE GUIDELINES THAN THEY SHOULD NOT EVEN COME TO THE DANCE. DO NOT COME WITH YOUR CHILD TO ASK US TO MAKE EXPECTATIONS. STUDENTS KNOW THAT GUIDELINES SO TO BE FAIR AND CONSISTENT WE DO NOT MAKE EXCPETIONS.



Memory Books

Memory books will go on sale Tuesday, January 3rd through Friday, March 2nd. Memory books are \$10.00 which can be paid by mailing a check to KMS or having your student bring the money into the front office. We also think it's best to pay by check to KMS for the amount, but we will also accept cash. After March 2nd the order will be placed and there will not be another opportunity to purchase a memory book so don't put this off, order right away if you are interested in a memory book



Homework Tips

This is the tough, dreary time of the school year where homework can become a grind. Here are some tips you may want to try to keep homework positive are: 1) Make it social. Allow your child to invite one or two friends over to study and complete assignments. Of course you will want to influence their choice of study buddies with students who demonstrate they can do well in school. 2) Make it scenic. Don't be afraid to occasionally alter the spot they elect to do their homework. 3) Provide an incentive for completing all of their homework correctly.

KMS Math Notes

The KMS Math club which started in October will have a regional competition for the National MATHCOUNTS in February for all eighth graders. The sixth, seventh and eighth grades will also gear up for another AEA Competition in March.

Open Enrollment

Open enrollment is an option by which parents/guardians residing in IOWA district may enroll their children into another Iowa school district under the terms and conditions of Iowa Code sections 282.18. The parent/guardian must complete an application that is available in the central office and the Iowa Department of Education website. The deadline for an open enrollment application for the 2012-2013 (next year) is March 1, 2012. The deadline for kindergarten students for the 2012-2013 school year is September 1, 2012

The Importance of Reading

I am sure all parents have heard how important it is for our students to be reading. Parents have done a great job of helping to ensure students are completing their AR goals, keep up with their reading in their various classes, etc. It is time to take reading for understanding further. Students not only need to understand the importance of reading, but they also need to be able to read for understanding the topics they might not ordinarily choose to read about. Think about the types of reading you must do in everyday life. Most of it is not fictional, fun reading. It is reading policies, directions, factual knowledge over all manner of topics we would choose to read about. Consider establishing a family time to read for 30 minutes once each week. You all might read the newspaper, magazines or other informational texts. Then take a few minutes to exchange information and learn a little bit about what each other has read and why it is important to know. If you do this activity you will demonstrate that you think reading is important, help students to learn to read for understanding from non-fictional texts, and create a family activity that can become fun for all of you. If you want to build a second great learning activity onto this activity; before sharing the information, have your student write down a summary of what they read and why it is important. Writing is the most challenging method of demonstrating that you have understood what you have read and it is also the best way to improve your literacy.

Bullying/Harassment

I am sure many of you know or have heard stories about students being teased, harassed or bullied this school year or in a previous school years. At the middle school, we have continued the Olweus work the school district invested in two years ago. We conduct monthly or bi-monthly Olweus small group meetings to continue to educate our students on how to handle these situations. I would like to say we are being successful, but I think we are just holding our own and in some cases falling back. We need your help!!! Harassment and bullying are not simply something to be endured to toughen up students or acceptable. When you hear about these situations, ask your child what they did to stop the teasing? This is tough for students to do. Students want to fit in and not stand out. Bullies take advantage of that and count on no one wanting stand out by telling the bully to stop. Students also fear the bully turning on them. These are things that are easily stopped if one or more bystanders simply step up and let the bully know their behavior is unacceptable. They should move the bullied student to another location, let a staff member know what has occurred and finally always choose friends who will support them in their decision to stand out from the crowd in this circumstance. Think about how tough that is on a middle school kid. Now, imagine the power of the bullied and those that befriend them versus the power of the bully in this situation. Bullies don't look to harass large groups of students. They will quickly stop the behavior. Next middle school staff can begin to work with the bully to correct the behavior as well as helped the bullied get over what had occurred. Now imagine what happens to bullying and harassment in our building if 80% of our students took this stand.

I am sure that we will always have bullying and harassment situations and that how it occurs will change over time and that we will constantly have to improve our strategies for handling it. But, I do believe it will get better. Parents we need you to encourage your students to step forward and put a stop to bullying in the middle school. They should try to remove the bullied student from the situation and to a safe place, tell a staff member what happened and choose friends who will support them in their efforts to end bullying.

Improve your Child's Self-Esteem

Have you noticed that your child wants to blend in with their peers and not stand out from the others? That is very common among middle school students and carries over well into high school. Students who feel good about who they are have an advantage growing up; they are less dependent on impressing others and they tend to face challenges with confidence. You can build your student's self-esteem by emphasizing their strengths. Most students view their strengths based upon where they fit in with their peers. Instead of allowing them to do that, point out their strengths as they truly are. They may be outgoing, great at social interaction, a problem solver, someone who is a good listener, etc. Help them identify their strengths and then positively encourage them to develop their strengths. Help your child choose their friends by choosing people who build them up and who don't talk about others behind their backs. Their friends should also be people that your child will help build up when they make a mistake. Finally encourage your child and their friends to help others and give back to their community.

