



# Smithton Tale

Smithton Middle School  
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Columbia, MO 65203

Phone: 214-3260  
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Volume 16 Number 2  
September 3, 2010

Jean Selby, Principal  
Darlene Grant, Assistant Principal  
Deborah Greene, Assistant Principal

## A Letter from the Principal, Ms. Jean Selby

Welcome to the 2010-2011 school year. This year has gotten off to a great start, as we have welcomed back close to 900 excited sixth and seventh graders.

It is an exciting time as students become accustomed to their schedules and begin to get into the routines of each school day. In addition to the students, our teachers have worked hard to plan an educational experience to focus our learners each and every day, with both a challenging and engaging curriculum.

As this year progresses and students become challenged in their academic work, we will work hard to support your student. Not only can we provide that support framework, I would like to invite and encourage you to become an active part of this as well. As we begin this year, here are some tips to help you support your child, and these can be as easy as:

- \*asking your child to see their agenda book and assignments each day,*
- \*providing a consistent time and place to support your child's homework needs,*
- \*asking your child to explain the important points of their learning,*
- \*recognizing and encouraging their positive work efforts,*
- \*asking about their concerns or questions,*
- \*contacting your child's teacher to seek more information or to set up a meeting if you have concerns (our teachers want to work with you!),*
- \*encouraging your child to become active in an extra-curricular activity,*
- \*consistently communicating your high expectations for their learning!*

It is never too late to help your child get into good habits at school and/or at home. A good relationship between you, the school and your child allows us to have a shared understanding of learning goals, the curriculum, and ways we

can work together to achieve the best for your child. Be watching for the first IPR (grade report) to come home on September 24.

We will be having our PTSA fundraiser kickoff assembly on September 7<sup>th</sup>. This will be a day to get information into your student's hands concerning how we can support our school initiatives. PTSA has been a huge support in providing activities and busing on field trips in order to allow our students an extension to their learning experiences here at Smithton. Turn in dates for student sales will be on September 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. Please be looking for this fundraising information, in order to continue supporting our school community.

For those parents/guardians who drop off or pick up your students, please follow the traffic flow around the perimeter of the parking lot. Please do not drop your student off in the middle of the parking lot. This is creating a safety issue when students have to cross over between cars to enter the building. We are working on creating two lanes, one for the outside drop off lane, and one to exit on the inside for those who have already dropped off. Thank you for your continued help to keep our students safe.

As a new administrator in this building, I must say, I have been impressed with the amazing group of learners coming into this building each and every day. Coupling this great group of learners with the hard working and talented staff, should result in great outcomes during this school year. We intend, as a learning community, to do everything in our power to give your child a great education, and continue to build upon the importance of the experience. We want to partner with you to help your student reach their academic and social goals. As was stated by a Chinese Proverb, *Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere*. Instilling this understanding will benefit your student's experience during this year and beyond. I look forward to a great year and seeing our efforts unfold!



## COUNSELOR'S

### *Counseling Services Available at SMS*

Did you know that a person will experience more change during adolescence than in any other time in their life? Coping with change can be a daunting task—especially if you are a teen in a new school of more than 900 students!

Smithton counselors are available to help your child with adjusting to school, or any other problems he or she may be experiencing. Examples of specific issues may include family conflict, depression, ADD/ADHD, anxiety, grief/loss, anger management, divorce, poor sense of self, alcohol/drug abuse, etc.

If you would like for your child to talk with a counselor, please contact Jessica Nicewarner (6th grade Guidance Counselor) or Dylan Irwin (7th grade Guidance Counselor), and they will help make a decision whether your child needs to see our Outreach Counselor, Trudi Beck.

If your child is seen for individual counseling, we will need your written permission. The specific issues discussed with your child in counseling are private, but you have a right to know how your child is doing in counseling. Confidentiality is protected unless a child is a danger to himself/herself or others, or if a child is in danger of being harmed by others (abuse or neglect).

### *Bullying/Harassment Curriculum*

It has been reported that issues of bullying and/or sexual harassment have contributed to student decisions to perform acts of violence in schools. This also includes the more recent trend of bullying through social networking sites (facebook, myspace) and texting. Smithton counselors and teachers conduct presentations to all students dealing with these issues. We continue to believe this to be a proactive way to approach this sensitive issue.

The main goals are to help students understand why bullying of other students will not be tolerated at Smithton Middle School, and to help them know what to do when they either observe or experience bullying or sexual harassment. If you have questions or comments regarding this curriculum, please call Mrs. Nicewarner, sixth grade counselor, or Mr. Irwin, seventh grade counselor in the Smithton Guidance Office.

### *Helping Your Teen Become More Responsible This School Year*

He forgot his homework, so he wants you to drive it to school. She hasn't completed her Language Arts paper, so will you let her stay home from school until she finishes? Does this sound familiar? Teens aren't always responsible, but some haven't ever had to be. Whenever those kids face a problem, their parents try to fix it.

That may solve some problems today, but it will create even bigger problems in the future. Starting this year, you can help your teen develop the responsibility he'll need for the rest of his/her life. Here are some tips:

**Give** your teen as much **responsibility** as you can. Teens need lots of growing room. Whenever you can give your teen a chance to make a decision for himself, do so.

Help your teen **think about consequences**. Teens tend to jump in without thinking. Encourage your teen to think about the results of an action before taking it.

**Make a plan**. At the beginning of the year, help your teen figure out a schedule. When is the best time to study? Can he play a sport or be involved in other extra-curricular activities?

Let your teen **learn from experience**. Experience is a good teacher. But teens can't learn the lessons they need if their parents are always there to bail them out. If your teen doesn't get her paper written on time, let her deal with the teacher and suffer the consequences.

Continued.....

Continued...

**Duke University Talent Search**

Each year the Duke University Talent Identification Program sponsors a talent search for selected seventh grade students. Smithton students have typically done quite well. Last year 22 students qualified for recognition at the state or national level. In order to participate, students must have scored at the 95th percentile or above on a grade level standardized achievement, aptitude, or mental ability test battery. Scores from either of the two most recent administrations are acceptable. Students must qualify in an acceptable composite or subtest area.

Participation in this program is completely voluntary. The aim is to assist young people who have excellent mathematical, verbal or general intellectual ability by providing them with information about their ability and about educational options that may be beneficial to them.

Students who participate will complete the SAT or ACT, tests originally designed for high school juniors and seniors. Application deadlines are October 1, by mail, or October 19, online, for the December test and November 1, by mail, or December 1, online, for the January and February tests. For more information about this opportunity, please contact Dylan Irwin, seventh grade counselor, at 214-3263 or [dirwin@columbia.k12.mo.us](mailto:dirwin@columbia.k12.mo.us).

**MAP SCORES**

On Friday September 3, 2010 your student brought home his/her MAP scores. A letter explaining the MAP tests and results accompanied these scores. If you have any questions please call the Guidance Office at 214-3263 or speak with your student's teachers.

**Bike Club!**

Bike Club helps students develop an enjoyment of bike riding by teaching students to legally, safely and predictably use bicycles for transportation and recreation. Each meeting will consist of lecture/discussion time and an active period for practicing bicycle handling skills. Bike Club will meet after school on the second and fourth Tuesdays from 3-4PM.

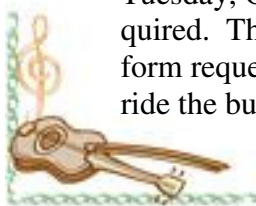


## Smithton Orchestra Notes

Sixth and Seventh Grade orchestra students are enjoying our new location on the hallway with Choir/Encore Music and Band. Stop by and check us out.

Honors Orchestra auditions will be held at the Hickman Music Building on Thursday, September 9<sup>th</sup> beginning at 3:30. The director for this year is Ms. Nellie Shrantz. Ms. Shrantz taught with the summer music program and is teaching our beginning viola section at Smithton. We are happy to have her contributing her expertise.

The beginning sixth grade string players will begin after school orchestra rehearsals on Tuesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, from 3:00 to 4:00 in the orchestra room. These rehearsals are required. The activity bus will be available if rides are needed. Parents will need to fill out a form requesting this service and students will need to let us know each day they need to ride the bus.



### Attendance/Tardy Policy:

Attendance at school every day is an important factor in the success of students. The Columbia Board has placed an emphasis on identifying students who are excessively absent. School administrators have been requested to take every possible action to ensure the attendance of all students. The following policy is written in the student handbook pertaining to absenteeism. "All absences, including those approved in advance by parents and/or school officials, will be counted as days absent, unless the absence is for a school sponsored activity. Absences can be excused or unexcused. A parent can excuse his/her child for **seven** absences per year for any reason, after which time the student will need to secure a note from a physician excusing him/her for further absences." Late students must sign in at the office when arriving after 8:00 a.m. before going to class. Parents/Guardians should phone or send a note explaining why the student was late or absent. Please refer to the colored pages in the student handbook for additional information concerning attendance. **Students will be subject to disciplinary action on the third unexcused tardy.**



### **Partners in Education**

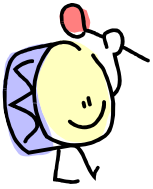
Our business partners will continue to be Quaker Oats, MU Volleyball, and P.A.C.E. We have many activities planned throughout the school year, so stayed tuned to your newsletters for events and dates. If you would like to become involved with PIE, please drop a note to Maria Cox ([mcox@columbia.k12.mo.us](mailto:mcox@columbia.k12.mo.us)) or call the school and leave a message.

**We've got SPIRIT!**

**Yes we do!**

**We've got SPIRIT!**

**How 'bout YOU?**



The Missouri HIGHSTEPPERS is a contemporary, precision dance and drill troupe – performing dance steps, military drill maneuvers, marching steps and carefully choreographed street dance. They perform solely to percussion instruments, which accompany and set the pace for each performance. All drill members are required to memorize The Creed – a code of behavior that is governed by a positive attitude, perseverance and compassion. The HIGHSTEPPERS are under the direction of Rolando Barry.

Further information about the Missouri Highsteppers organization can be found at their website [www.mohighsteppers.org](http://www.mohighsteppers.org) . More details on Smithton’s after school satellite program is available in the main office.

# Get Active!

## Welcome to Physical Education

Throughout the year, we will be focusing on fitness and motor development, using a variety of group and individual activities. It is our goal to provide your child with the skills, knowledge and opportunities to develop habits which will enhance and maintain good health. We will create a classroom atmosphere which encourages the student to be active, not just in school, but also outside of school and throughout their lifetime.

Please note that **clothes worn to school are not considered P. E. clothes.**

Clothes needed for P. E. class are:

- Elastic waistband shorts
- T-shirt **with sleeves** (no inappropriate logos)
- Good fitting pair of athletic shoes with laces that are tied on top (no slip-ons).
- Clean socks, deodorant, wet wipes and small container (no glass containers) for jewelry.
- Sweatshirt and sweat pants for cool weather (we will go outdoors whenever possible).

The Smithton Middle School physical education department is looking forward to having a wonderful year with all of our students. If you have any questions or concerns, please call Steve Kissane or Cara Ross at 214-3260.

## QSP Fundraiser Coming Soon!

Smithton PTSA’s fundraiser is the QSP program. The students will be asked to sell magazine subscriptions and gift items. Sales begin September 7th. Orders and money can be turned in on Wednesdays, September 15th and 22nd. Merchandise should be ready for pick up at Smithton during parent/teacher conferences on November 12th. Students are then responsible for delivering the products to their customers.



QSP items make great gifts. Magazine subscriptions can be renewed. All proceeds go towards providing activities and educational equipment for Smithton students. Participation is optional, if you would rather your child not sell items; cash donations are also accepted. Your support is greatly appreciated.

## COLUMBIA ASSOCIATION FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED PTA

You are probably aware that most schools in the Columbia Public School District have their own PTA, but did you know that families of students in the Primary High Potential Program, elementary Extended Educational Experiences(EEE), and secondary EEE programs have their own PTA as well? The goal of the CAGT PTA is to advocate for gifted children and to help ensure that our program is not only here to stay, but flourishes as a top educational experience. During the 2010-11 school year, we have several interesting and informative meetings lined up ranging from expert presentations related to raising gifted children of all ages, to updates on legislation and how it will impact our families. Although each meeting might span a breadth of topics from book reviews to fundraising, our focus remains on giving our children the best educational opportunities available.

If you have a child in the gifted program we want you to join our PTA! The CAGT PTA membership form can be downloaded at <http://service.columbia.k12.mo.us/gifted/cagt-pta/> or contact John Holmes at 573-289-4607 or [holmej@mchsi.com](mailto:holmej@mchsi.com).

The first meeting of the 2010-11 year will be September 9th at 7:00pm at the Gifted Education Center at 918 Bernadette Drive.



## NOTES FROM THE NURSE



The following is a reminder of the Columbia Public School District medication policy:

Prescription medication **from a physician** or other health professional licensed by a state regulatory body as an authorized prescriber, will be administered.

Over the counter medications must have a written request **from a physician** or authorized prescriber for administration in the school office.

Prescription medication must have a pharmaceutical label that includes the student's name, current date, name of medication, the dosage, route and frequency of the medications and the name of the physician.

Medication must be delivered to the school by a parent or guardian or other designated adult.

Middle school students **are not** allowed to carry medications considered to be Schedule II category controlled substances. Examples are: Ritalin, Adderall or Dextrostat.

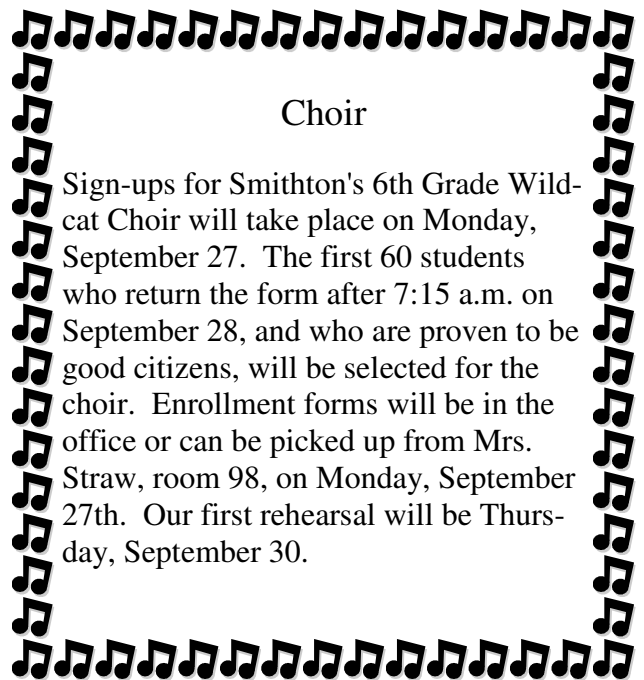
Middle school students **are** allowed to carry on their person all other prescribed and over the counter medication **needed for the school day**. Prescription medication should be logged in the nurse's office. All self-administered medication must be in a properly labeled pharmaceutical bottle or container labeled by the manufacturer and contains only the amount needed for the day.

**If your child has received any immunizations in the past 2 years, please provide a copy to the Nurse in order to update the immunization record.**



### Join us for some Intramural FUN!

We are very excited to offer intramural activities to our students. Both 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades are eligible to attend most sessions. Fall session dates begin the week of Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> and the last day will be Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>. It is important you get all the details to make an informed decision as to whether or not this after school activity will fit into your family schedule. Please carefully read the Intramural forms attached to this newsletter. These forms list our mission statement, citizenship and eligibility requirements, activity options, dates and times of each session, and it also includes the FALL registration form for you should you choose to join. (MUST adhere to registration deadline!) No physicals are required to participate and no prior experience in the activities listed is required. Join us to learn, improve, play games and have FUN!



### Choir

Sign-ups for Smithton's 6th Grade Wildcat Choir will take place on Monday, September 27. The first 60 students who return the form after 7:15 a.m. on September 28, and who are proven to be good citizens, will be selected for the choir. Enrollment forms will be in the office or can be picked up from Mrs. Straw, room 98, on Monday, September 27th. Our first rehearsal will be Thursday, September 30.

# Wildcats Rule!!



## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Wildcat Band

Hello and welcome to Smithton Middle School! This year we have a huge beginning band with 189 students enrolled. At this point, all of the students should be able to assemble their instruments, hold them correctly, and play a couple of notes. The students should have also brought home at least two weekly reports for you to read and sign, confirming their practice time. If you have not seen a weekly report yet, please ask your child about them. I will also be happy to email you one as an example. The weekly reports go home every Friday and are due back every Monday. Weekly reports can also be found on the 6<sup>th</sup> grade band website: <http://service.columbia.k12.mo.us/brandolp>.

After school band rehearsals will begin the week of October 4. Rehearsals are held from 3:05-4:05pm in the band room. Students will be assigned a day for their rehearsal. There will be a place to request specific days on a future weekly report. The after school rehearsals are extremely important as this is the only time that the students meet all together in a band. We will be practicing music that they will receive in the future at these rehearsals. They will then perform in an afternoon concert on December 6. The concert will begin at 4:30pm. We will be practicing in the gym from 3:00-4:15 that afternoon prior to the concert. Audience seating will begin at 4:15. For concerts, students are expected to wear "performance attire." This means dress up clothes; shirts and ties, slacks, dresses, blouses, and skirts. Please no denim, flip-flops, crocs, athletic clothes, or athletic shoes. If there are any students who have a financial hardship, and do not have performance attire, please contact me before the concert, so that we can make sure everyone is "covered." If you ever have any questions or concerns about the band program, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached by email at [brandolp@columbia.k12.mo.us](mailto:brandolp@columbia.k12.mo.us)

Mrs. Collins and I are looking forward to a fabulous year. Band is an extremely rewarding experience that the students will love. They will enjoy challenging themselves and "Reaching for the Stars!"

Bridgett Randolph, Director of Bands,



## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Wildcat Band!

Hello, and welcome to another exciting school year filled with music and new experiences! The 7<sup>th</sup> grade band is off to a tremendous start. We have lots of challenging new music to practice, as well as Award Band auditions to prepare for. At this point if your child is planning to audition for the Award Band, they should have turned in their audition request sheet. These were due Friday Sept. 10. Auditions will be held Tuesday, September 21 at West JH. We will let the students know their audition times as soon as we receive them. This will hopefully be sometime the week before auditions.

7<sup>th</sup> grade band is very different from 6<sup>th</sup> grade band. We no longer meet everyday in classes that have 7-15 students in them. Instead the students have band in larger classes and it alternates with PE. Each 7<sup>th</sup> grader must be very responsible in getting their homework turned in every month. We have a standing practice assignment of 60 minutes per week. The students are given a calendar to keep track of their practice time and are expected to turn in the completed form at the beginning of each new month. If your student has misplaced their practice calendar, you can access a new one from the 7<sup>th</sup> grade band website: <http://service.columbia.k12.mo.us/bbatye> The students' grades are based 40% on practice assignments, 30% on performances/concerts, 20% on playing tests, and 10% on participation..

Our first performance will be a Fine Arts assembly on Oct. 15. This performance takes place during school, in front of the entire student body. We will have a concert for parents beginning at 4:00 in the gym on this date. For concerts, students are expected to wear "performance attire." This means long, black dress pants for everyone, white blouses and closed-toe black shoes for girls, and white button-up shirts, a tie, black shoes, and black socks for boys. Please no shorts, Capri pants, sandals, or sweats. If obtaining the performance attire will be a financial hardship for your family, please contact Mrs. Randolph as soon as possible so that we can aid you and make sure that every student can participate.

If you ever have any questions or concerns about the band program here at SMS, please do not hesitate to contact me. My email address is [brandolp@columbia.k12.mo.us](mailto:brandolp@columbia.k12.mo.us) Mrs. Collins and I are looking forward to a fantastic year, and we know that you are too!

Bridgett Randolph, Director of Bands



## ***Smithton's Fall Show***



Smithton's Fall Show, "Goldilocks on Trial", will have auditions Wednesday, Sept. 8 and Thursday, Sept. 9 after school in room 145. Set in a courtroom, characters include: a judge, bailiff, 2 lawyers, Papa, Mama and Baby bear along with Goldilocks, a pig, wolf, police officer and scientist. The show is a very funny look at what really happened when Goldilocks entered the bears' house that day. Did she break the chair? Or is she being falsely accused? Performances are Oct. 21, 22 and 23rd. Packets with audition forms and more information will be available outside room 145.

# **FALL REGISTRATION FORM IS DUE TO THE OFFICE BY Sept 17<sup>th</sup>.**

## **Columbia Public Schools Middle School Intramural Program 2010-11**

***Mission Statement: Columbia Public Schools Middle School Intramural Program enhances each middle school's diverse learning community by helping students develop in areas of personal growth, wellness and sportsmanship.***

***\*NO Physical is required to be turned in***

***\*NO prior experience is required. Come to learn, play games and have fun!***

### **Activities for 2010-11 School Year**

Fall: Kickball/Volleyball for both 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades

Winter: Basketball for 7<sup>th</sup> grade and if space 6<sup>th</sup> grade also

Spring: Flag Football/Soccer for both 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades

***Each 6 week session is 2 days per week, Tuesday and Thursday from 3-5 p.m. IF we end up with a large amount of registrations; participants will come only one day per week. This can not be determined until after registration, so get your form in early and circle your preferred day.***

- Fall session begins the week of September 27, ends week of Nov 1
- Winter session begins the week of Jan 10, ends week of Feb 14
- Spring session begins the week of April 11, ends week of May 16
- Rules and guidelines will be given to participants at the beginning of each session. A parent and student signature is required to be returned. You may review the participation guidelines below.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **CPS Middle School Intramural Program Citizenship and Eligibility Expectations**

1. **Must have passing grades in all subjects, no F's, as of first Interim Progress Report**
  - **An F on a progress report is an automatic 5-day suspension and will result in more suspension time if the grade is not passing after 5 days.**
2. **Must have satisfactory conduct average (less than 3.25 with no 5's) on IPR.**
3. **An office referral will result in suspension from participating on two intramural days.**
4. **Participants must report directly to the gym after school, must be in a supervised area at all times. (Reporting area is determined by administrators/commissioner).**
5. **All participants must be picked up at the end of each session at 5 p.m.**

STUDENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

TEAM # \_\_\_\_\_

**SMS FALL Intramural Activities Registration Form 2010-2011**

**Submit this form to the office by Sept. 17<sup>th</sup> ; no forms accepted after the deadline.**

The student above has my permission to participate in Intramural Activities from 3:00 – 5:00 PM at Smithton Middle School.

**Place a check next to the activity you would like to participate in.**

**FALL SESSION=**      \_\_\_\_\_ Kickball      or      \_\_\_\_\_ Volleyball

**\* Circle your day of preference**      \_\_\_\_\_ Tuesday      or      \_\_\_\_\_ Thursday

**\*Students may attend both days if less than 150 students register...stay tuned!**

My son/daughter and I understand that participation is contingent on the following:

- 1. No referrals or detentions in any classes
- 2. No non-dresses for Physical Education class
- 3. Cooperates with staff when participating

Students must go immediately to the gym at 3:00 PM & and be picked up promptly at 5:00 PM.

**Supervision of students ends at 5:05 PM.**

Students must follow school and good sportsmanship expectations as described in the Intramural Program Description attached. Students may not leave early without a parent/guardian.

My student's transportation at 5:00 PM will be:

Check all that apply \_\_\_\_\_ I will pick up my student at 5:00 PM  
\_\_\_\_\_ My student will be picked up at 5:00 by: (list drivers name and #)

(Name) \_\_\_\_\_ (Phone #) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ My student has permission to walk/ride a bike

\_\_\_\_\_ My student has permission to ride the city bus

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number(s) where parent can be reached from 3:00-5:00 PM in case of emergency:

**Print** Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Print Parent E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Other emergency contact: Adult Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone# \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures: (parent&student) \_\_\_\_\_

**Submit this form to the office by Sept. 17<sup>st</sup> ; no forms accepted after the deadline.**

# September 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<p><i>1</i></p> <p><i>3:15</i> <i>PLT Meeting</i></p> <p><i>6:30-8:30 P.M.</i> <i>7th. Grade Back</i> <i>-to-School Night</i></p>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>5</i>	<p><i>6</i></p> <p><i>Labor</i> <i>Day</i> <i>No School</i></p>	<p><i>7</i></p> <p><i>PM QSP Kick</i> <i>Off Assembly</i></p>	<p><i>8</i></p> <p><i>12:00</i> <i>PTSA board meet-</i> <i>ing conference</i> <i>room</i></p> <p><i>3:15</i> <i>Leadership Mtg.</i> <i>team mtgs.</i></p>	<p><i>9</i></p> <p><i>9:15 am fire</i> <i>drill</i></p>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>12</i>	<p><i>13</i></p> <p><i>Picture Day</i></p>	<i>14</i>	<p><i>15</i></p> <p><i>QSP collection-</i> <i>conference room</i> <i>All day</i></p> <p><i>3:15</i></p>	<i>16</i>	<p><i>17</i></p> <p><i>2:00-6:00</i> <i>Blood Drive</i></p>	<i>18</i>
<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i>	<p><i>22</i></p> <p><i>QSP collection</i> <i>all day confer-</i> <i>ence room</i></p> <p><i>3:15</i> <i>PLT Mtgs.</i></p>	<i>23</i>	<p><i>24</i></p> <p><i>No</i> <i>School</i></p> <p><i>Collaboration</i> <i>Day</i></p>	<i>25</i>
<i>26</i>	<i>27</i>	<p><i>28</i></p> <p><i>2:06</i> <i>Tornado drill</i></p>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>		

# October 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6  <i>3:15 Leadership Mtg.</i>	7  <i>??? Fire Drill</i>	8	9
10	11	12	13 <i>12:00 pm PTSA board meeting conference room 3:15</i>	14	15 <i>2:00 Fine Arts Assembly 4:00 Fine Arts Concert</i>	16
17	18 <i>8:30 Earthquake w/ fire evacuation</i>	19	20 <i>12:30 Early dismissal  TBD</i>	21 <i>1:30-3:30 Drama assem- bly-cafe</i>	22 <i>6-10 pm. School Drama</i>	23 <i>1:30-3 &amp; 6-10 Drama perform- ance</i>
24	25	26	27 <i>???? Pm fire drill.  3:15 PLT Meetings</i>	28	29 <i>IPR #2 OUT</i>	30
31						

# Middle Years

Working together for school success

## Short Stops



### ► Everyday reading

Keep your child interested in reading with a daily “show and tell.” During dinner or before bed, each person can talk about something he read that day (chapter of a book, magazine article, report for work). Knowing that others read regularly can encourage your middle schooler to do the same.

### ► Handbook review

Go over your youngster’s student handbook together. That way, you’ll both be aware of important school information, like attendance policies, dress code, technology use, and bus and cafeteria rules. Since the handbook may change slightly from year to year, it’s a good idea to review it each fall.

### ► Keeping promises

Middle graders want to be trusted. Let your child know that the best way to build trust is for her to keep her word. For example, she should come home at the agreed-upon time. Or if she borrows a friend’s sweater, she should return it when she promised she would—and in the same condition.

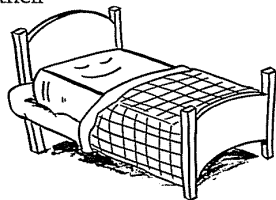
### ► Worth quoting

“The beginning is always today.”  
*Mary Wollstonecraft*

### ► Just for fun

**Q:** Where do books sleep?

**A:** Under their covers.



## Steps to a smooth year

Whether your child is just beginning middle school or returning for another year, you can help her get off to a successful start. Try these steps:

1. Attend back-to-school events. Teachers often go over grading policies and discuss how much homework to expect. Take notes and share them with your youngster when you get home. Also, teachers may ask you to fill out a card with your contact information and something you want them to know about your middle grader. You might mention a strength, weakness, or favorite hobby—anything that will help the teacher connect with your child.
2. Provide support. Middle schoolers can be nervous about a new year. Will the work be too hard? Will they have friends in their classes or their lunch period? Together, brainstorm ways your child can feel more comfortable. For example, she might find out about



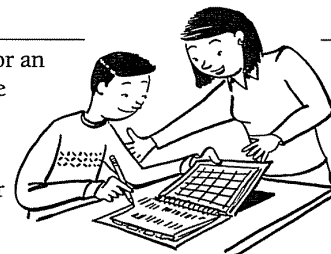
extra-help sessions before and after school. Or she could call a friend and make plans to sit together in the cafeteria.

3. Set up supplies. Suggest that your middle grader use separate folders and notebooks for each class. She might color-code them (English = purple, science = green) so she can spot them quickly. At home, help her stock a workstation with pens, pencils, pencil sharpener, paper, ruler, calculator, and reference books (dictionary, atlas). Having her supplies handy will let her stay focused on her work. 👍

## What’s on the agenda?

Most middle graders use a student planner or an agenda book. Here’s how both of you can make the most of this valuable tool.

- Your child should write down homework assignments, upcoming tests, and due dates for projects. In addition, he should pencil in his activities (meetings, sports practice). Then, he can consult his planner to schedule homework time and study sessions.
- Look over your middle schooler’s planner nightly, and sign it if required. Read assignments and ask about missing subjects in case he forgot to write something down. Also, you can respond to any comments from his teachers and perhaps leave an encouraging note for your youngster (“Good luck on your history test!”). 👍



## Learning from mistakes

Devon feels like he's ready for an oral report, so he decides he doesn't need to practice. But when he gets up in front of the class, he forgets a whole section.

When your child makes a mistake like this, you can help him learn from it. Try these suggestions.

**Pinpoint the error.** Encourage your youngster to figure out what he did wrong. Say he missed an easy math problem on a quiz. It's possible that he misread the question. Or he may have made a simple arithmetic error.



**Find solutions.** Together, talk about ways he can avoid making the same mistake in the future. For instance, he might read the test questions twice and double-check his work when he's finished.

**Lead by example.** Show your child how you deal with mistakes. You could make a light-hearted comment ("I guess we're lost after all") and then explain what you could do differently next time ("I'll print directions from MapQuest before we leave the house").

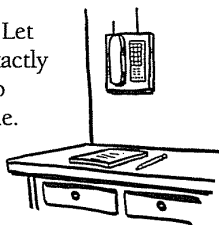
*Tip:* Remind your middle schooler that everyone makes mistakes. Learning to handle them now is a skill he can use throughout his life. 👍



## Alone after school?

School ends at 3:00, and you don't get home from work until 5:30. Can your middle grader stay home alone? If she isn't afraid and she usually follows rules, she may be okay unsupervised for a short time. Here are some ways to help her stay safe.

● **Provide structure.** Let your child know exactly what she should do when she gets home. Examples: call you to check in, make a snack, practice flute, do homework.



● **Set rules.** Your middle schooler should not answer the door, and she should never tell callers she's home alone. Instead, she might say, "My mom's busy. Can she call you back?" Spell out whether your child can use the computer, TV, or appliances (microwave, toaster).

● **Plan for emergencies.** Explain how to use a first-aid kit and what to do if there's a fire. Show your youngster where you keep flashlights, batteries, and a radio in case of a power outage. Also, post a list of emergency contacts by the phone (911, your work and cell numbers, neighbors). 👍

## Parent to Parent

### Curious questions

My child sometimes asks questions that I can't answer. For example, the other day she asked me why other countries use the metric system and we don't. And last week she wanted to know why leaves change color in the fall.

Unfortunately, I'm usually too busy to stop what I'm doing and help her look up answers—but I didn't want to discourage her curiosity. So I decided to post a "Questions we can't answer" board in our kitchen. Now anyone in our family can jot down what they want to know. When we have time, we look up information together in books or online at the library.

My daughter seems happy that I take her questions seriously—and she's excited that we're solving her "puzzles." I'm also pleasantly surprised by how many of my own questions teach us all something new! 👍



## Q & A An earth-friendly family

**Q** My son said his friends talk about "going green." What are some easy, inexpensive ways our family can help the environment?

**A** Learning to take care of the earth will teach your child responsibility and show him that he can make a difference.

Start by asking him for ideas, and have him find out what his friends' families are doing. Then, agree on one or two changes to make. If you start small, you'll be more likely to stick with your new routines.

For example, your family might switch to reusable water bottles so that you use less plastic. Also, consider buying local fruits and vegetables. This choice supports farms in your area and saves fuel because the food isn't shipped long distances. Other easy habits include using both sides of printer paper, taking shorter showers, and participating in community cleanup days.

*Tip:* For more ideas, have your son visit [www.epa.gov/newsroom/gogreen](http://www.epa.gov/newsroom/gogreen) or [www.scholastic.com/actgreen](http://www.scholastic.com/actgreen). 👍



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.  
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[www.rfeonline.com](http://www.rfeonline.com)  
ISSN 1540-5540

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