

# THE MABELLE B. AVERY INFORMER

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*Clay Krevolin, Principal*

Principal's Message--Clay Krevolin

Sometimes I think my job as Principal of a middle school is difficult. After reading this, my thinking has changed. Happy New Year to Everyone--Enjoy!

## **POSITION: Parent**

### JOB DESCRIPTION:

Long-term team players needed for challenging permanent work in an often chaotic environment. Candidates must possess excellent communication and organizational skills and be willing to work variable hours, which will include evenings and weekends and frequent 24-hour shifts on call. Some overnight travel required, including trips to primitive camping sites on rainy weekends and endless sport tournaments in faraway cities. Travel expenses not reimbursed. Extensive courier duties also required.

### RESPONSIBILITIES:

Must provide on-site training in basic life skills, such as nose blowing. Must have strong skills in negotiating, conflict resolution and crisis management. Must be able to think out of the box but not lose track of the box, because you most likely will need it for a school project. Must reconcile petty cash disbursements and be proficient in managing budgets and resources fairly, unless you want to hear, "he got more than me" for the rest of our life

## RESPONSIBILITIES Cont'd.

Must be able to drive motor vehicles safely under loud and adverse conditions while simultaneously practicing above-mentioned skills in conflict resolution. Must be able to choose your battles and stick to your guns. Must be able to withstand criticism, such as “You don’t know anything.” Must be willing to be hated at least temporarily, until someone needs \$5 to go skating. Must be willing to bite tongue repeatedly. Must be able to go from zero to 60 mph in three seconds flat in case, this time, the screams from the backyard are not someone just crying wolf. Must be willing to face stimulating technical challenges, such as small gadget repair, mysteriously sluggish toilets and stuck zippers.

Must screen phone calls, maintain calendars and coordinate production of multiple homework projects. Must have the ability to plan and organize school gatherings for clients of all ages and mental outlooks. Must be willing to be indispensable one minute, an embarrassment the next.

Other responsibilities include floor maintenance and janitorial work throughout the facility.

## POSSIBILITY FOR ADVANCEMENT AND PROMOTION:

Virtually none. Your job is to remain in the same position for years, without complaining, constantly retraining and updating your skills, so that those in your charge can ultimately surpass you.

## BENEFITS:

While no health or dental insurance, no pension, no tuition reimbursement, no paid holidays and no stock options are offered, the job supplies limitless opportunities for personal growth and free hugs for life, if you play your cards right.

*-New England League of Middle Schools—Found on the Internet, author unknown.*

## **Message from Mr. Kapner, Assistant Principal**

### Talking About Homework

This fall, the MBA faculty and administration reexamined the role and nature of homework we are assigning our students. This is an area that is being studied in educational circles, so our review is very timely. With the advent of one-to-one devices, online books, and other recent changes, it is incumbent upon us to look at how we are meeting the learning needs of our students and accomplishing our curriculum goals. This remains a work in progress and we would appreciate feedback from parents as we consider how homework is playing out in the various households within our school community.

Mr. Kapner's Message Cont'd.

In this document, we have tried to capture all aspects of homework, including the purpose, types of assignments, amount of homework, student, teacher, and parent responsibilities, and grading. Anecdotally, it has seemed that we have had fewer concerns expressed by parents this year after our faculty reflected on their own practice as part of this process.

Our annual **school climate survey** contains a couple of questions about homework. I invite you to use the open-ended response to comment on any or all aspects of homework at MBA as you are experiencing it through your child. The survey is accessible online as follows:

MBA 2018-19 SSCC Parent Survey  
<http://www.quia.com/sv/890278.html>

Thank you in advance for your feedback.

Rob Kapner

## MBA Homework Guidelines

### **Purpose of homework**

Homework should support the learning in the classroom by:

- providing practice opportunities to reinforce skills learned in class
- allowing students to complete tasks that cannot be completed in class
- helping students to prepare for assessments
- allowing students to explore independently to kindle their interest in the subject matter
- providing students with instructional resources to review (flipped classroom)

In general, homework is intended to help students to be ready for the next lesson.

### **Types of homework assignments**

Homework assignments can be comprised of different types of activities including but not limited to:

- practice exercises
- completing exercises started in class
- readings/extension activities
- reviewing notes and other resources
- independent reading

All homework should be able to be completed independently by the student. If a student was not in class, he or she may need some assistance.

### **Amount of homework**

In assigning homework, teachers will recognize that time spent for completion of assignments can vary tremendously among learners. Accordingly, some differentiation may be necessary. Assignment scope should be task driven rather than defined by a specific amount of time. Generally speaking, to be developmentally appropriate, the total amount of homework for all classes should not take more than 60 min. for 6th grade, 70 min. for 7th grade, and 80 min. for 8th grade. This is the National PTA recommendation (Ref. Education Association Research Spotlight on Homework <http://www.nea.org/tools/16938.htm>).

### **Grading of homework**

Recognizing that counting homework for a grade can be a motivator for students to get their work done, the relative weight of homework grading is at the teacher's discretion. However, the homework grade should not comprise any more than 20% of the overall term grade. Homework is often scored as "done" or "not done", but it may also be graded for quality of work, completeness, etcetera.

### **Teacher responsibilities**

- Teachers will post assignments daily on the team blog or teacher website. They should review and discuss homework at team to be conscious of the total amount of homework being assigned from the various teachers.
- Teachers will post more involved assignments well in advance and assist students in "chunking" them out so they are not left to the last minute.
- Teachers will ensure that students can complete assignments independently.

### **Parent responsibilities**

- Parents will ensure that student has quiet time and place to do homework, helping students to pace their work so multi-step assignments don't overwhelm students the day before it is due. In general, homework is intended to help students be ready for the next lesson.
- Parents will monitor students for signs of frustration. They should intervene if student is spending an inordinate amount of time and communicate to the teacher that they had to do so.
- Parents will reinforce the idea that doing homework is a task that students must do, just as parents also have tasks to do at home. Doing work or reading alongside students while they are doing homework can be an effective strategy.

### **Student responsibilities**

- Students should plan ahead and "chunk out" work so as not to leave projects to the last minute.
- Students should ask teachers for help if they are not understanding the material so they do not get "stuck" when they are working independently.
- Students should put forth their best effort, thereby taking pride in their work.

- Students should submit their homework in a timely fashion. if it is late, it is the student's responsibility to inform the teacher that it has been submitted.

### ShopRite Act of Kindness Award Recipient

The 6th grade team nominated Sydney Drinan as the December recipient of the award. The owners of ShopRite made the presentation to her on December 19th. I look forward to seeing her picture and nomination prominently displayed at ShopRite in Enfield.

### Grade 8 Team



The grade eight team is pleased to announce the *Star Students* for the month of December: Philip Alaimo, Emma Cardinale, Eva Bruel, Jackie Bordeaux, Madison Juzba, Kiana Kalman, and Meghan White. Students were chosen for various reasons, including positive peer relationships, academic excellence, and perseverance in the face of adversity. Many of our students have shown exceptional responsibility by quickly making up missed work after absences and taking the initiative to go the extra mile on difficult tasks. Take a moment to stop by the eighth-grade team room window to check out the smiling faces of our recipients.



**Caring,  
Empathetic,  
Compassionate,  
Unique,  
Thoughtful,  
Kind,  
Artistic,  
Expressive,  
Musical,  
Imaginative,  
Sympathetic,  
Unselfish,  
Helpful,  
A Non-Conformist,  
Selfless,  
Vivacious,**

Bold,  
Spirited,  
Brave,  
Or, even Quiet?

**First Meeting**

**Monday, January 14, 2019**

**Room 307, from 2:30 to 4:00**

**Activity: Creative Pin Making**

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***Cursive Club***

*First Meeting*

*Wednesday, January 23rd, 2019*

*2:30 to 3:30*

*Room 307*

*Looking for students who will enjoy learning and mastering the art of cursive handwriting. Guaranteed to be a fun hour, filled with background music, while we learn more about the art of cursive handwriting.*

*Besides practicing, our club will be writing to pen-pals from all across the country: IN CURSIVE! No prior experience required.*

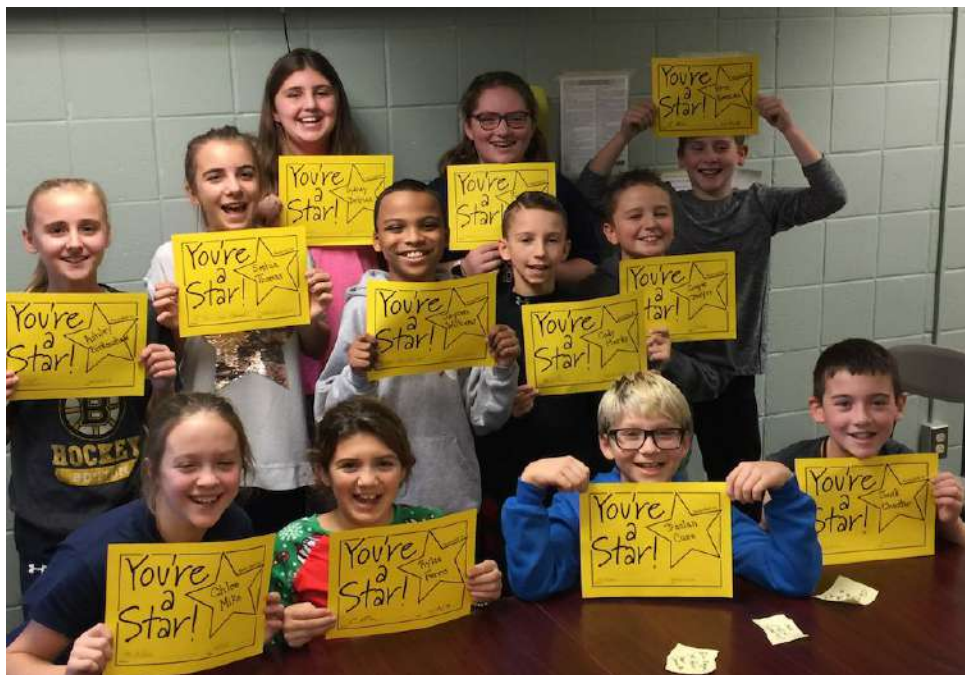
*See Mr. Maciolek for details & permission forms.*

## Sixth Grade Language Arts

Ms. Bittner and Mr. Maciolek have recently finished their first novel, Wringer, by author Jerry Spinelli. Overcoming adversity and learning how to face personal obstacles head on, were two themes of Spinelli's novel. We focused on becoming familiar with a list of literary terms and how to discuss novels with others. Both classes have moved on to separate novels, Tuck Everlasting and Like a River; literary elements such as conflict, character traits, point of view, and many more remain the focus. We are focusing on the four methods of characterization and how a narrator's point of view can influence how we read and interpret a novel. IXL has been introduced into Sixth Grade Language Arts and students have worked extremely hard during class on grammar skills that are skilled-based. If a student does not finish during class, completion at home (in a quiet setting) is required. Trying to get our students to slow down and read the "explanations" when they get a question incorrect, continues to be an ongoing challenge.



## Sixth Grade Star Students Recognized for December





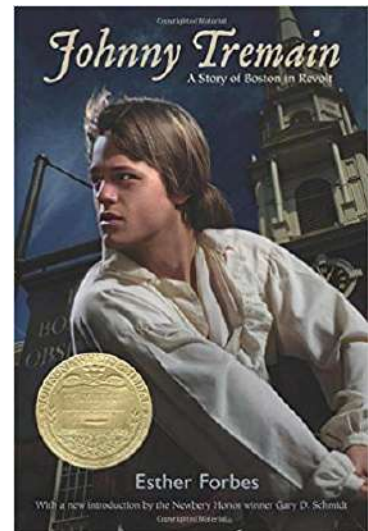
***Our Sixth Grade team congratulates Ashley B., Sophia T., Sydney D., Jaycen W., Kinsey L, Cody M., Cooper D., Eric R., Chloe M., Rylee F., Declan C., and Jack C. We continue to celebrate our student leaders as they set an example for others by showcasing: kindness, empathy, and quality work!***

### **Grade 8 Language Arts**

Ms. Cichon and Mrs. Wilson

Language Arts classes in grade eight will continue with *Johnny Tremain*. The figurative language, allusion to historical figures/documents, and the patriotism exhibited by characters in Esther Forbes' novel have captivated eighth graders for generations. Students have enjoyed acting out several scenes from the story and discussing universal themes incorporated in the plot.

As a reading-writing connection, students will have a choice of three prompts in the month of January: A) Reflect on the characterization of Johnny at the beginning of the novel versus at the end of the novel. Does Johnny change/evolve in the course of the plot? Be sure to justify your opinion with quotes from the novel which include both direct and indirect characterization used by the author. B) For your essay, explain aspects of colonial life and the Revolutionary War. Determine if Esther Forbes portrayed the time period accurately. Use both secondary sources (the journaling links) and quotes from the novel to support your claim. C) The novel *Johnny Tremain* has stood the test of time. It has been read in countless schools since its publication in 1943. However, some people wonder if we should continue to read the novel. Write an argument supporting the inclusion of the novel or the removal of the novel from the eighth grade curriculum.



Students will continue to complete weekly worksheets focused on spelling and editing/revising skills of eighth graders.

### **DATES TO REMEMBER**

Mon., 1/21  
Fri., 1/25  
Wed., 2/13

ML King, Jr. Day - No School  
End of Quarter 2  
MAD Concert, MBA Gym 7 PM

## **MBA Cross Country Team: State Championships**

Both the Girls and Boys Squads on the MBA Cross Country Team competed in the 2018 Connecticut Middle School State Championships on Saturday November 3rd at Wickham Park in Manchester.

The MBA Cross Country Team closed out its season Saturday at the Connecticut Middle school Championships at Wickham Park in Manchester. 8th Graders Gabe D'Amour (24th), and Robin Gaskill (50th), took medal for MBA, finishing in the top 50 of their races.

In the A Race, the Boys Team took home a team trophy finishing 5th in the Class S and placed 23rd overall. Gabe D'Amour finished 24th, Jack DuPerre took 68th, and Manny Davis 121nd.



In The Girls A Race, the team took 42nd place overall. Eva Bruel came in 139th, Ella Campion 120th and Gracie Flynn 121st.

In the Girls "B" East of the River" Race MBA finished 6th overall. Robin Gaskill placed 50th, Josie Smith 51st, Jocelyn Randall 66th and Erin Donohue 67th.

Finishing 15th overall in the "B" East of the River Race, MBA's Zachary Avery finished 52nd and Drew DiCesare 88th, and Tyler Scott 118th.

Congratulations to all our team members on an outstanding season!