

THE MABELLE B. AVERY INFORMER

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Clay Krevolin, Principal

A Message from the Principal:

Clay Krevolin

*I have had the pleasure of working with middle school children for over 30 years. It is amazing to me that the needs of preadolescents really haven't changed over the past three decades, or from when I was in Junior High School, some fifty years ago. We are at the time of the year where it would be most beneficial to spend a few moments reflecting on the need to **set goals**. The booklet "How to Get the Most out of Middle School Junior High" by Woodburn Press does a nice job outlining this task. I thought this would be a great opportunity to share some excellent ideas taken from the passage on setting goals.*

It is important for people of all ages to have goals. Goals give you direction and focus. They help you decide where you want to go in life. If you are not in the habit of setting goals for yourself, now is the time to start.

Set Short-Term and Long-Term Goals

Examples of short-term goals:

Get a B on my next history test

Get all of my chores done by Friday

Practice my soccer drills three times this week

Examples of long-term goals:

Get all As and Bs on my report card this quarter

Make the basketball team next year

Go to college and become a lawyer

Set Goals that are Specific, Measurable, and Realistic

Not specific-I will do better in math

Specific-I will get a B in math this semester

Not measurable-I won't be so shy in class

***Measurable**-I will raise my hand at least three times today*

***Not realistic**-Even though I usually get all Cs on my report card, this semester I will get straight As*

***Realistic**-I usually get all Cs on my report card, but this semester I'm going to Get Bs in at least two classes*

Set Both School and Personal Goals

At the beginning of each grading period, look over the courses you're taking and figure out what grade you think you can get in each class. Think of these grades as your academic goals for the term. At the end of the grading period, congratulate yourself if you were able to meet your goals. If you didn't achieve your goals, try to figure out why. Then set new goals for the next grading period. Also set personal goals for yourself. Perhaps you want to get in better shape, improve your athletic skills, or earn some money. Come up with two or three things that you want to accomplish that don't involve grades, and make those your personal goals.

Write It Down

Once you have set a goal for yourself, write it down. Then write down the specific things that you need to achieve your goal. In the example below, Jennifer sets a goal for herself, and she make a list of thing she needs to do to achieve her goal.

My goal is to have enough money to buy an iPod before the end of next month. To help me reach my goal, I will:

- 1. Find out where I can get the best price, and then figure out how much money I need to save.*
- 2. Ask Mom if she has any jobs that I can do to earn some money.*
- 3. Save all of my birthday money.*
- 4. Baby-sit for my aunt, and save the money I earn*

Successful people set goals and then work hard to achieve them. Having goals will help you become the person you want to be.

Assistant Principal Message - Mr. Rob Kapner

New dismissal process being piloted starting in March - We will soon be piloting a new dismissal process, eliminating PM homeroom. Students will be dismissed directly from their 8th period classes, thereby eliminating a transition. Details will be explained in our next advisory.

As we approach the end of the second trimester, I want to share some discipline data and things we can do together to reduce the number of incidents and stressors that interfere with the learning process.

Documented behavior incidents to date for the school year:

| Grade | Number of Referrals | Percent of Referrals |
|-------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 6 | 24 | 8 |
| 7 | 100 | 36 |
| 8 | 156 | 56 |

Congratulations, 6th grade. Keep up the good work

The top 5 reasons for referrals are as follows:

1. Misuse of technology
2. Disrespect
3. Disruption
4. Inappropriate Language
5. Physical Contact

Although these numbers look high, our Safe School Climate Committee just reviewed student and parent survey results, and they are very encouraging. Overall, our students and parents report a safe and welcoming environment, albeit not devoid of behaviors that undermine the overall positive school climate.

Knowing where middle school students are developmentally, and the social challenges our students face, it is incumbent upon school and home to be teaching about safe and respectful interactions. In school, we continue to run advisory sessions on topics such as avoiding and confronting mean behavior. We have a school-wide system of rewarding good behavior which has recently been revamped to encourage more participation and increase its impact.

Everyday teachers and staff intervene and coach students through teachable moments, most of which do not rise to the level of needing to be documented and relayed on to parents.

Here are a few strategies among the multitude of approaches to supporting healthy social development among adolescents.

Misuse of technology

- Students should leave their cellphones in their lockers during the school day.
- Parents should not communicate directly with students during the school day. Messages should go through the office. Students are always welcome to call home if there is a concern.
- Students may use their cellphones after the end of the last class (2:20). Parents should text at that time. Again, if phones are in lockers, parents could text at any time and the messages could be retrieved at the end of the day.
- Parents should teach responsible use of technology at home and monitor use of the school-issued chromebook and cell phones.

Disrespect, Disruption, Language, Physicality

- Having high expectations and consistent rules help students self-regulate. It is well documented that adolescents need boundaries.
- Physical activity and traditional play. It is important for students to interact with each other in person and to get physical exercise, whether it be through organized sports, or just physical play. At school, as we look to next year, we are discussing ways to increase opportunities for physical activity during the school day.
- Diet - We see students get very revved up during and after lunch. Looking at what many students are eating, it is hard to believe that sugars, caffeine, and other food factors are not contributing to this.
- Providing solid and dependable emotional support through adult relationships. With anxiety and depression rates soaring, we know that our students need to have open communication so they can seek advice and support from trusted adults and loved ones.

Also, please feel free to reach out to our support specialists for resources and advice:

Jaime Bohan, School Counselor
Sean Shimansky, Behavior Specialist
Dr. Michael Wald, School Psychologist
Sharon Walsh, Social Worker

Suggestions for further reading (Provided by Sharon Walsh)

1. [Does Social Media Cause Depression?](https://childmind.org/article/is-social-media-use-causing-depression/) How heavy Instagram and Facebook use may be affecting kids negatively. Caroline Miller, Child Mind Institute
<https://childmind.org/article/is-social-media-use-causing-depression/>
2. [How Using Social Media Affects Teenagers?](https://childmind.org/article/how-using-social-media-affects-teenagers/) **Experts says kids are growing up with more anxiety and less self-esteem.** Rachel Ehmke, Child Mind Institute
<https://childmind.org/article/how-using-social-media-affects-teenagers/>

ShopRite Act of Kindness Award Recipient

Ethan Hartman serves as a tremendous role model for students in the sixth grade. MBA teachers describe Ethan as a thoughtful, caring, and empathic young man. Ethan is a quiet leader, who models excellent academic focus and exemplary classroom decorum. Ethan is always willing to help others in class, including assisting the teacher with classroom tasks (often taking down an entire classroom of chairs in minutes) without being asked. Ethan is also willing to take risks; attempting new challenges for exploring options on his own before asking for assistance.

Nurse's Message - Mrs. Fry

As we welcome March and anticipate spring, it is once again time to think about keeping your child's medical files up to date. Please be aware that current physical exams are required for entrance into the 7th grade, as well as the required immunizations. The physicals must have been performed ***after the last day of 5th grade*** to be considered current.

Postural screenings for 7th grade girls will begin in the spring. Keep an eye out for notification that will be sent home in the coming weeks.

I am pleased to report that the district's health services page has been updated with helpful information, take the time to have a look!

As always, please contact the health office with any questions.

Career Day is Coming!

On March 28, 2019, the students of MBA will participating in a Career Day. This ½ day event will expose the students to over 25 volunteers in different career fields. Students will select 3 career presenters of interest and learn about the job requirements, education requirements, skills needed and the job outlook. MBA teachers and staff look forward to learning about the different careers, along with the students.

We are open to accepting a few more presenters, such as a mechanic, plumber or electrician. These 3 careers were high on the priority list for students. If you would like to share your profession with the MBA students, please contact Ms. Scholes or Mrs. Bohan immediately-the deadline is fast approaching! Ms. Scholes can be reached at erin.scholes@somers.k12.ct.us and Mrs. Bohan at jaime.bohan@somers.k12.ct.us

Grade 6 World Language - Ms. Gowdy

The Sixth grade French students are learning about French culture, how to introduce themselves, and their numbers. We like to speak as much as possible in the target language. Encourage your child to try their new words at home. During March, we will celebrate Mardi Gras with an artistic project. The students are enjoying the beautiful French language, and I want them to continue to thrive in class.

7th Grade World Language - Ms. Kunzelman

The end of Quarter 2 brought with it a new experience for all Spanish A and French A students: Midterm Exams. These exams were designed to assess the long-term retention of the material learned during the first half of the school year. All students have received individualized feedback regarding their midterm performance and should be making a plan to improve areas of weakness following the provided suggestions. Please ask your child to show you his/her individual report. It is important for students to remember to study through a variety of methods, on all topics, on a consistent basis. The consistent review and practice helps to improve the length of retention, which will of course help support the learning and understanding of the material to follow. The score on the midterm exam does not alter the individual quarter averages, however it does impact the final average for the school year. It is worth 10% of the final average. In order for students to advance to French B or Spanish B in 8th grade, they must maintain a final average of 70% or better. Students can expect a final exam in June, which is designed to cover the material from the entire school year.



Grade 8 World Language - Ms. Sawtelle

During the second half of French, we have been learning how to order food in a restaurant as well as some of the cultural differences between American and French meals. Students were given the opportunity to recreate a visit to a restaurant, create a menu, and perform a skit with classmates. Many enjoyed this activity and improved their oral and written language skills as they worked together in a collaborative experience.

Our next unit brings us to Senegal where we will explore the rich culture of this French-speaking country. We will be designing our own paper versions of Le Boubou, an article of traditional clothing, worn by the Senegalese men and women. In addition, students will learn to use the past tense as well as clothing vocabulary when working on this unit.

In Spanish, students recently learned how to make commands in the target language and vocabulary dealing with chores in the house. Culturally, we studied about Ecuador and learned about the Galapagos Islands. Students learned about the indigenous species that inhabit this beautiful group of islands off the coast of Ecuador.

Our next unit brings us to the Dominican Republic where we will learn about the culture of this island in the Caribbean. Students will learn sports terms and how to express themselves in the past tense with the use of regular and some irregular verbs.

I hope to complete unit 8 in French and unit 7 in Spanish. This will give students a very good base as they continue their language study at Somers High. As always, I will inform our high school language teachers about what material students have covered and the strengths and weaknesses my students have shown. This will provide a smoother transition for students. I believe we have all grown from our language learning experience in regards to both intellect and culture.

Physical Education - Mr. McCarthy

Physical education students recently completed units in bowling and volleyball. Spring activities include floor hockey, team handball, wiffle ball, and fitness stations.

A friendly reminder that students are expected to have a change of clothes and sneakers for every class.

Art - Ms. Koullis

Grade 8 has completed their trimester for art class. During their trimester, the 8th grade students worked with clay to create "piggy bank" sculptures. The students learned about the Impressionistic art movement and the artist, Claude Monet. They picked a landscape of their choice to paint using the techniques taught in class. The students also learned about Expressionism and Surrealism and artists such as Edvard Munch and Salvador Dali. All students should have brought home their portfolio with their art projects. It is my hope that several of the 8th grade students will continue to take art classes next year at Somers High School. There are a variety of art classes to choose from at SHS that focus on drawing, painting, printmaking, and sculpture.

Grade 7 students finish their trimester for art the first week of March. During their trimester, the 7th grade students created awesome clay sculptures using hand-building techniques such as pinch pot, slab and coil construction. The projects were fired in the kiln and then painted with detail. The students worked on a reduction printmaking project, where they were able to use more than one color of ink while printing. The

students also learned about the artist, Claude Monet. They studied his painting called *The Magpie*. Paintings with white birch trees that showed perspective (depth) were created. In conclusion, the students also learned about the American artist, Georgia O'Keeffe. The students chose to focus on an object found in nature. We learned how to use oil pastels to add color to the drawings by blending and creating visual texture where needed.

Grade 6 will start their trimester for art in the beginning of March. I am looking forward to getting to know the 6th grade class and teaching the students new art concepts. As we look forward to warmer days, please keep the following date in mind, April 25, 2019.

This is will be the opening night for the District Art Show. Student work from grades K-12 will be on display. The art show will run until May 11, 2019.



Jr. Beta Club - Mr. Szafir

Students who made the honor role every marking period in grade 7 and 8 qualified for Jr. Beta Club. Through working with teachers and support staff, administration reviewed citizenship and discipline history before students could join the organization.

The Junior Beta Club is a non-profit, leadership-service organization similar in nature to the high school National Honor Society. In 1934, the founder, Dr. John Harris, fulfilled his greatest dream- the establishment of a national organization to honor and recognize students for their achievement, character, and leadership qualities. The National Beta Club began a new era of recognizing academic achievement and leadership potential.

Junior Beta Dates:

- 3/7 Meeting 2:40-3:15
- 3/15 Meeting 2:40-3:00
- 3/21 Practice Ceremony 10:50-11:35
- 3/21 Junior Beta Induction Ceremony

Intramural Basketball 2019 - Mr. McCarthy

Congratulations to captain Trent Beggs and his Alabama team for winning the MBA Intramural Basketball Tournament Championship.

Many thanks to everyone who participated this year. There were several competitive games including the double-overtime game that was decided by foul shots.



Board Games Club - Mr. Szafir

MBA Board Games Club had a successful year. Students met weekly after school to play a wide variety of classic and contemporary board games. Members used strategy, critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork to navigate each game. Games Club provided opportunities to develop sportsmanship as well as socialize.



Tues. & Wed. 3/5 & 6
 Thurs & Fri. 3/7 & 8
 Fri., 3/15
 Thurs., 3/21
 Wed., 3/27

 Thurs., 3/28
 Thurs., 3/28
 Fri., 3/29
 Fri., 4/5

MAP Testing (LA)
 MAP Testing (Math)
 SHS Drama - "The Drowsy Chaperone"
 Jr. Beta Induction
 All District Concert - SHS Auditorium
 7-9:30 PM
 All District Concert - Snow Date
 Career Day
 Professional Development - No School
 Africa Day

4/8-12

April Vacation