

PARSONS MIDDLE SCHOOL

September, 2006

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Dear Parents:

It's always astonishing to see the changes that occur in middle school students over the summer. Some that leave us in May return three to four inches taller in August. Not only do these students go through dramatic physical changes, they also experience tremendous cognitive growth from one year to the next. Even though they are often resistant to accepting more responsibility with this coming of age; it is our responsibility as parents and educators to be aware of what capabilities each stage of development brings, as well as how hard to push each individual to accept such responsibilities.

At Parsons Middle School, we have not only had training to help us understand the development of adolescents, but we also had many, many years of experience to serve as a measuring device for appropriate guidance for our youth. It is important that one understand that all children do not mature at the same rate. There are however, physical traits, as well as social and emotional characteristics that occur within an age range that we see during the middle school years. For example; we expect most of our sixth grade students to start their middle school years as rather small in stature, and dependent on the adults in their lives to direct most everything they do. Conversely, we know that many of our eighth grade students will begin to display many physical attributes of an adult, and must be responsible for their own action, as that is what will be expected of them as high school students.

Our staff designates time at faculty meetings at the beginning of each year to discuss what is developmentally appropriate for each of our students. On the next couple of pages you will find policies and procedures established by teachers from each grade level. You will notice that each year we require more maturity from our students. We ask that you please review these items. Feel free to contact us should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Terry Smith
Principal



Lancer News

Making the Most of Parent-Teacher Conferences

The Middle School will be holding conferences part way through the nine weeks. The dates and times will be **Monday, October 2, 4:00-7:30 p.m. and Thursday, October 5, 4:00-7:30 p.m.** Students will attend all day both days; students will not attend school on Friday, October 20. This will enable parents to talk to the teachers before the grade cards have gone out.

Conferences are often the best way for you to get a clear picture of your child's academic and social progress. They also help teachers better understand how to reach and teach your child.

You will be receiving information regarding Parent/Teacher Conferences later in the month. Please fill out and return as soon as possible. Conferences are scheduled on a first-come, first-serve basis. There will be volleyball and football games on Oct. 5, so please plan accordingly when scheduling your conferences

Before you go to the conference:

*Ask your middle schooler if they want to go along. If not, is there anything they want you to ask their teachers?

*Avoid surprises. Look over recent test grades, homework, and projects.

When you get there:

*Get the whole picture. Try to see all your child's teachers and meet the school counselor, if possible.

*After you talk about grades and homework, ask how your child gets along with others.

*Pass along information about your child's special needs or family situations.

*If there are problems, work with the teachers to focus on solutions, not blame.

*Ask what you can do at home to help.

When you get home:

*Tell your child what you talked about.

*Together, work out answers to problems. Low test scores? Think about restricting TV, computer, and phone time. Is work often late? Try making a list of assignments to go over together nightly.

*Follow up with teachers to make sure there is progress. Keep your parent-teacher team active all year long!

These are general suggestions on how to have a successful parent-teacher conference. We look forward to seeing you for conferences.

M.S. Athletics

Our interscholastic seasons of football, volleyball, and girls' tennis are all off to an excellent start. The kids are working hard preparing for our first opponents. Our school is blessed with excellent participation in our extra curricular programs.

KANSAS SCHOOL SAFETY HOTLINE

The 1999 Kansas Legislature has appropriated funds to assist the State Department of Education, in cooperation with the Kansas Highway Patrol, in establishing a school safety hotline. This hotline is a toll free number available 24 hours per day, 365 days per year to give students, parents, and community members the opportunity to report any impending school violence. As you are aware, students usually have knowledge of potential school violence before it occurs. **This hotline would give students the opportunity to anonymously report any potential violence.**

The Kansas School Safety Hotline Number is: 1-877-626-8203

Personnel at the Salina Central Dispatch of the Kansas Highway Patrol will answer the hotline number. The dispatchers will get as much information about each situation reported as the caller wishes to relay. Upon a receipt of a call, the dispatchers will notify appropriate law enforcement agencies and/or the office of the superintendent of schools depending upon the severity of the situation.



ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM USD 503 FOOD SERVICE

Meal Substitutions for Dietary Needs - Child Nutrition Program regulations require School Food authorities to make substitutions in foods listed in our meal patterns for children with disabilities who are unable to consume specified food items or have food allergies or intolerances. However, a signed physician statement is required yearly. Please check with your child's school for the appropriate paperwork for the doctor to complete and sign.

Charging of Meals - Middle School students are permitted to charge up to 3 days per semester. If your student is on full-price status the maximum that could be charged per semester is \$6.30.

Meal Cards - The students pick up their meal card in the cafeteria from the card rack. After they fill their meal tray, they present the card to the cashier. Cards will be retained by the cashier and placed back on the card rack after their meal period. All meal cards, should remain in the cafeteria. Students should not take them home. Students should not handle other students' cards, only their own. If a student cannot find his or her card, they are to notify one of the cashiers.

Ticket Replacement Policy - Middle School students are responsible for their meal cards during the lunch period. The student will pick up the card and is expected to have the meal card ready to present to the cashier when they take their meal.

If a student loses, damages, or has a meal card stolen, it should be reported immediately to the food service cashier. The student will be allowed to eat three meals before a replacement card is issued. The student must eat these three meals in the main cafeteria line and report to the cashier that they are eating without a card.

A maximum of three replacement cards will be issued at no charge per school year. After the third card replacement, written notice will be given to the student and parent advising that the student will be required to pay \$5.00 for the fourth and subsequent replacements.

Offer VS Serve - Parsons District Schools participates in the Offer Vs Serve option to the National School Lunch Program. The feature of this program is designed to reduce food waste and give the student the opportunity to select the foods which they want to eat. Each day students will be offered the complete meal however, they may select the full meal or decline certain items. The price per meal remains the same. A school breakfast provides approximately one-fourth of your daily nutritional needs. A school lunch provides approximately one-third of your needs. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to serve you.

USD 503 Web Page

Many of you have checked out in the past the district's web pages. It is updated frequently for the benefit of our patrons. You will also be able to access your child's teachers by e-mailing them. Please check out the web page at www.vikingnet.net.

TARP DANCES

Several years ago, Middle School students wishing to have dances began working with the Recreation Center. As a result the TARP program was born. This program depends on students, the Recreation Center, and parents to keep it alive. A minimum of 10 volunteers will be provided by PTO or we cannot have a dance.

If you would be willing to help, please clip out this form and return it to the Parsons Middle School. You will be contacted to see if you can help. This in no way obligates you to work.

NAME _____

PHONE _____

TARP Dance Dates:

September 9 (6th Gr. Only) September 22

October 28 November 11

December 16 January 27

February 9 March 9

April 6 May 4

May 18 (8th Gr. Only)

7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Traffic

The curb cuts in front of the building allow parents bringing their children to school in vehicles to pull up along the sidewalk along the front of the middle school. The crosswalk divides the two areas where parents can drop their children off in front of the building.

We have handicapped parking along the southeast side of the building for our public to use. Parking is also available in the west parking lot across the street from the middle school. We ask that patrons do not park along the north side of the building. Please continue to be cautious of our students. Our neighboring businesses have requested that you do not use their parking lot unless you are conducting business with them. Please respect their request.

Crosswalk Help Wanted

As parents you know that your child has the opportunity to attend a fine middle school that is thoroughly updated and filled with caring teachers. However, we need your help in promoting throughout the community caution for our students who use the crosswalk before and after school. Although, staff is there daily, it is becoming apparent that inattentive driving is making the crosswalk area dangerous at times for our students. We have had several cars drive through the intersection even when we were standing in the crosswalk escorting students from one side to the other. We would like everyone to pass the word to assist us in providing safety to your children as they cross Main Street. Please advise drivers to slow down early and to be cautious of anyone in the crosswalk.

TRAFFIC SAFETY

Caution your student to stay on the sidewalks and cross the street at the designated crosswalk. Again, please **do not** block or park in these areas. Bicycle riders should follow proper bicycle safety rules and walk bikes on campus and across streets at crosswalks.

PTO

All parents are encouraged to participate in our Parent Teacher Organization. P.T.O. will meet on Tuesday, September 5th, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will take place in our community room located in the northwest corner of the building. Parking is available west of the Rees Hughes building. We would like as many parents as possible to be in attendance. We rely on our PTO to help operate our concession stands at our sporting events. If you are interested in volunteering to help with PTO Concessions please call the middle school office.



"Zero F" Policy

We have a "Zero F" Policy for students wishing to participate in extra-curricular programs. Student Athletes are students first. We believe that students can achieve the academic expectations we set for them. Those expectations must be met before a child can participate in extra-curricular activities. There are many programs in place to help students who need additional assistance. However, it is the child and family's responsibility to ensure that they acquire the additional assistance when their child is not making the grade.

Safe School Protection

Parsons Middle School has many cameras that monitor the interior and exterior of our building providing us with extra sets of eyes. We will continue to leave the main south doors open during school hours. You will find other exterior doors secured. This allows us to monitor visitors to our building. We ask that all visitors stop in the office when you arrive at the building. Our district has a "Crisis Plan" in place that we practice each semester in the event that it becomes necessary to lock down the building. Your children are in a safe place while at the middle school.

KIWANIS B.U.G.

The Parsons Kiwanis club is again sponsoring our Sixth Grade *B.U.G.* program, an acronym for Bring Up Grades.

The program was initiated in the 1989-90 school year and won national recognition in the Kiwanis Challenge in Education Program.

Each month a student will be selected from each of our sixth Grade Classrooms. The selection of students will be based on the criteria of improvement in scholarship, attendance, responsibility, attitude, etc. The winners are then taken to a Kiwanis luncheon the first Wednesday of each month at the Parsonian Hotel to receive recognition from the Kiwanis club for their diligent efforts. Winning students will be listed each month and the class they represent in our newsletter.

LIONS ' "STUDENTS OF THE MONTH"

Similar to the B.U.G. Program, the Parsons Lions Club sponsors an eighth grade recognition program, "*Students of the Month*".

Each month, all eighth grade teachers nominate one male and one female to represent the Middle School. The winning students are recognized at a noon luncheon at the Sirloin Stockade the third Tuesday of each month.

ROTARY "EAGLES" AWARDS

The Parsons Rotary Club began a recognition program for our Seventh Grade Class five years ago. Each month, all seventh grade teachers nominate one male and one female student based on the same criteria as our Lions program. The two students receiving the most ballots are then invited to a noon luncheon the second Thursday of each month at the Parsonian Hotel.

As with all of our recognition programs, we always try to call the parents to let them share in their student's success. The winning students are also listed in the daily announcements and are included in our monthly newsletter.

We are indeed fortunate to have the exemplary support of the community civic clubs that recognizes students' efforts.

ACADEMIC RECOVERY

Students who are failing Math and/or Reading will be automatically assigned to attend after school classes. Classes meet until 4:00 p.m. daily and are assigned weekly. Students may also be assigned to AR for missing assignments, or scoring *Basic* or *Unsatisfactory* on the State Assessments in these subject matters. Students in AR will be forced to serve disciplinary consequences in from 4:00 pm until 5:00 pm in Room #206.

**OUR NEXT PTO MEETING WILL BE HELD ON
SEPTEMBER 5, 2006 IN THE
PARSONS MIDDLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ROOM
AT 6:30 P.M.
PLEASE TRY AND PLAN TO ATTEND**

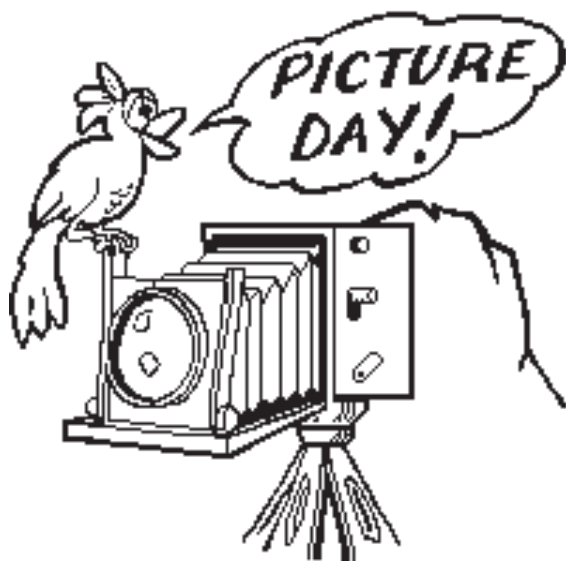
Address Changes

If you have any address changes, employment changes, emergency contact changes, etc., please let the office know. Send your student in to tell us or call us at 421-4190.

SCHOOL PORTRAIT DAY

School portrait day will be Wednesday, September 20. We are using a new company this year that we are very excited about. Interstate Studios will be our portrait company. They will offer several different options for school portraits. As in the past, all portrait orders must be PRE-PAID on or before picture day in an envelope that will be sent home with your student in a couple of weeks. **ALL** students will be photographed for school records, so please have your student dress accordingly.

This year you will be able to choose a theme that matches your student. Themes range from Nuts & Bolts to the good ole' Classic.



ELP NEWS

During the 2006/2007 school year, the Extended Learning Program will be interest-based. This will allow students to have a voice in deciding whether they will apply key principles being studied to math-oriented, literature-based, hobby-related, science-oriented, or history-associated areas. Some students need a longer period to reflect on ideas before beginning to apply them, while others prefer quick action. Many students need to talk with others as they learn, while others need a quiet work space. I have students who learn best as they tell stories about ideas being explored, while others create mind maps or construct three-dimensional representations. Some students may learn best through a practical application of ideas, others through a more analytical approach. The students will be working on independent contracts and group investigations. The final products will be negotiated jointly by student and teacher. I am looking forward to a great year!



Progress Reports Mailed
September 21

Early Dismissal - September 21 @
12:45 p.m. (Lunch served)

Parent/Teacher Conferences
October 2 - 4 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.
October 5 - 4 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

End 1st Quarter
October 12

Professional Development
October 13 - No School

**NO SCHOOL
LABOR DAY
SEPTEMBER 4, 2006
ALL
PARSONS DISTRICT
SCHOOLS
WILL NOT BE IN
SESSION**