

Lansing Middle School

Parent Newsletter



September 2022

Start of the Year

We are almost a month into the start of the 2022-2023 school year. So far, Lansing Middle School has had a very good start. It has been extremely busy, but students and staff have settled in quite well. A goal for this school year at Lansing Middle School is to look for increased measures for positive recognition for both our students and our staff. Some positives from last school year that we'd like to note –

- Parental Involvement, Conferences
 - 1,213 conferences were conducted in the Fall of 2021
 - Student-Led Conferences – 93% attendance rate
- State Assessments
 - 195 LMS students achieved at Level 3 or Level 4 on the math assessment
 - 275 LMS students achieved at Level 3 or Level 4 on the reading assessment
 - 67 LMS students achieved at Level 3 or Level 4 on the science assessment, which is only given at the 8th grade
- Honor Roll
 - 1st Semester – 134 students with All A's (22% of LMS Students)
 - 2nd Semester – 131 students with All A's (21% of LMS Students)
 - 2nd Semester – 378 total students on an honor roll (61% of LMS students)
- Behavior
 - 135 students in 6th grade had no discipline referrals during the '21-'22 school year
 - 154 students in 7th grade had no discipline referrals during the '21-'22 school year
 - 137 students in 8th grade had no discipline referrals during the '21-'22 school year
 - Grand Total – 426 students with no discipline referrals (69% of LMS students)

Student Behavior/Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST)

One of the areas that was concerning last school year was student behavior. This was discussed between administration and staff several times last year. As a result, we have refocused our efforts around student behavior in various ways for this school year. Behavior is foundational, therefore our steps to address student behavior started on the first day of school.

Lansing Middle School has used BIST (Behavior Intervention Support Team) as a school since the 2013-2014 school year. We attempted to create more consistency with BIST by having all teachers give instruction over behavior expectations and BIST procedures on the first and second days of school during Advisory classes. During the first week, Advisory was held Tuesday through Friday so the lessons could be completed. The topics during the lessons included – a) underlying expectations, “It is never OK to be hurtful”, and “It is never OK to be disruptive”, b) responding to redirection in the classroom, c) gateway behaviors – understanding what they are, d) the purpose of a safe seat and expectations for moving to a safe seat, e) the purpose of a buddy room and expectations for moving to a buddy room, f) processing – understanding what it is and how it should look. After presenting the information to students, teachers gave scenarios where students could model and role-play what had been presented to them. Additionally, teachers also conducted modeling and role-playing in each of their classes, so students understood that the expectations were the same throughout the entire building.

An underlying premise of BIST is the idea of three necessary life skills – 1) “I can be OK when others are not OK, 2) “I can do something even if I don’t want to”, 3) “I can make good choices even if I am mad”. Additionally, we are putting emphasis on helping students to work on/practice missing behavioral skills, much the same way that a student would practice a missing academic skill.

Academic Support – Fastbridge Testing – Math and Reading Enrichment

We use Fastbridge as a screener for math and reading. Students take the Fastbridge assessment in reading and math three times each academic year – in the fall, winter, and spring. Our literature and math teachers have conducted the testing for the last two weeks and will finish by Friday, September 16th. After testing is completed, we will be able to decide placement into Reading and Math Intervention for students needing Tier 2 and Tier 3 support. Once placement has been determined, we will communicate with parents of students that will be placed. Miss Rachel Sheeley is our reading interventionist and Mrs. Emerald Peters is our math interventionist.

SAEBRS/mySAEBRS

Fastbridge also has a BSEL (behavior/social-emotional) component. Teachers complete the SAEBRS screener and students complete mySAEBRS. Our school will be administering the mySAEBRS universal screener through FastBridge on Thursday, September 29th. mySAEBRS is taken by students in grades 2-12 and takes approximately 5 minutes to complete. mySAEBRS (my Social, Academic, and Emotional Behavior Risk Screener) is a brief, norm-referenced tool for screening students to identify those who are at risk for social-emotional behavior (SEB) problems. mySAEBRS is one of the only SEB universal screening tools built to align with a dual-factor model of student social-emotional functioning, which asserts that mental health should be defined by both the absence of problem behaviors and symptomatology (e.g., internalizing and externalizing behaviors) and the presence of well-being and competencies (e.g., social-emotional skills).

We believe this survey is a valuable tool because mySAEBRS can be used to identify students who are at risk for social, academic, and emotional behaviors up to five times a year. By evaluating in which of the three specific domains a student is at risk, we may determine what type of supports

are most appropriate and which problem behaviors should be prioritized through intervention. For instance, if a student is only at risk for emotional problems, then we may decide to target emotional behaviors via the application of social-emotional learning (SEL) programs.

Other Important Items:

1. Participation is voluntary and your child may decline to participate.
2. mySAEBRS may be completed using a computer or tablet. Ratings correspond to the frequency of various behaviors in the previous month (Never, Sometimes, Often, Almost Always).
3. Participation is important. This data is extremely helpful in identifying needs and providing timely support and resources.
4. An e-mail was sent to parents with the consent form on Sunday, September 11th.

More information can be found at: <https://www.illuminateed.com/products/fastbridge/social-emotional-behavior-assessment/mysaebars/>

PRIDE Recognition

One of the ways that LMS staff positively acknowledge students is through our "PRIDE" Recognition system. When teachers see a student doing something positive anywhere in the school, they can note the accomplishment by having students scan a QR code on their badge that links into a Google Doc. These are the behaviors we are targeting –

P - Positive Attitude (Look for the good, not the bad)

R - Respectful (To students, staff, or the building)

I - Improvement (Behavior or Academic)

D - Doing Your Best (Behavior or Academic - It's all we can ask of you!)

E - Empathy (Understanding someone else's situation and/or speaking up for someone or a group of people)

We are hoping to expand on the ways that PRIDE Recognition is used. So far this year, 352 students have been recognized. Last school year, students were recognized 2,265 times.

Athletics

Fall athletic competitions have begun for all fall sports – cross-country, football, and volleyball. We have a high number of students participating in the different sports, which is something we love to see! Both the 7th and 8th grade football teams have started the season 2-0. Both 7th and 8th grade volleyball squads have gotten one win apiece. Cross-Country has only had one meet and had strong finishes from several athletes. Their next meet is this week. All sports conclude in early to mid-October. After that, girls basketball and wrestling seasons begin.

Fall Fundraiser

Our fall fundraiser kicked off last week on Wednesday, September 7th. This sale is a candy bar sale and specifics about this sale were sent out in an e-mail to all parents. The majority of money collected from the fundraisers is used to pay for grade level reward field trips. It covers the admission and transportation expenses associated with the field trips. Additionally, other funds are spent for classroom usage for things that may fall outside of the normal budget. The fundraiser will conclude on Thursday, September 22nd. We are very appreciative of the support we receive from our fundraisers.

Academic Spotlights

6th Grade Language Arts – Kathy Baughman, Pecos Miller, Tiffany Simmons, Rachel Szmed

Lansing Middle School 6th graders are jumping right into their first writing assignment – a personal narrative. They will be working through the steps of the writing process while focusing on ideas and organization (the first two traits of 6 Traits Writing). Sixth graders have also begun working with Greek and Latin roots as well as a daily dose of sentence editing. Curriculum standards addressed right now:

- W.6.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- W.6.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- W.6.10 Demonstrate command of and use knowledge of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing.

6th Grade Literature – Kathy Baughman, Cheryl Borgeson, Connie Evans, Alisha Holyfield, Pecos Miller, John Riggs, Tiffany Simmons, Rachel Szmed, Amanda Thomas, DeeDee Wiley

In 6th grade Literature, we have been looking at data from the 5th grade state assessments, this year's Fastbridge aReading screener, and classroom work to determine the needs of our students. Based on this data we have determined the biggest area of concern is with Central Idea and Details. This quarter we will focus on this skill, as well as addressing the 6th grade Literature standards. Our first Common Formative Assessment on Central Idea and Details will be administered in September. Additionally, we will be starting our textbook StudySync with the introduction unit called SyncStart. This unit introduces students to the website features and how to maneuver in StudySync.

6th Grade Math – John Riggs, DeeDee Wiley

Sixth grade has been super busy learning about negative numbers, absolute value and how to classify numbers! The student's math journey drastically changed this past month, as they have not worked with negative numbers in prior years. There is a huge focus on developing the concept of zero being a "homebase" for numbers and the "why" behind these concepts. The students are doing fantastic at embracing this change.

6th Grade Science – Alisha Holyfield, Amanda Thomas

6th grade science starts the year working in the Variables and Design unit. Students will begin comparing the work of scientists and engineers. Over the past week, we have been working as scientists where we designed a controlled experiment and discovered the relationships between variables. Students participated in a Paper Airplane Inquiry Lab, choosing from three test options (independent variable) that could affect how far the planes fly (dependent variable). Next, we are preparing to work as engineers as students gather information that will help them define a real-life engineering problem.

6th Grade Social Studies – Cheryl Borgeson, Connie Evans

In Social Studies we spent our first few days working on map features and reviewing the continents and oceans. We have moved on to the tools and specialized vocabulary of geography and how they are important to geographers. We have started our discussion of Chapter One, Understanding the Past. While we study this chapter, we are working on main ideas, reading strategies of a non-fiction text, compare and contrast, reading timeline, and many other skills. We are using our new material

platform, Actively Learn, to add to our lessons and make them engaging for our students. Great discussions and deeper critical thinking is what we are achieving through the use of these articles.

7th Grade Language Arts – Mindy Brinker, Brandy Hamilton

Seventh grade language arts classes hit the ground running this school year. During August, students demonstrated some self-reflection and excellent word choice when deciding what to choose as their “Walk Up Song” and writing Biopoems. We also focused briefly on informational writing when composing a paragraph describing or explaining some aspect of Lansing Middle School. We finished out the month with a writing conventions refresher by reviewing different types of nouns.

7th Grade Literature – Tom Cretors, Katie Larson, Becky Lowery, Brandy Hamilton, Rachel Sheeley, Stephanie Smalley

We began the year going over procedures, logging into StudySync, and “Getting to Know You” activities. Students also participated in Library Orientation and will start Library class about once every two weeks. Fall Benchmark Assessments have begun in our classes too.

A poem, “Oranges” and a short story, “Seventh Grade” both by Gary Soto will be early selections we read this year from StudySync. While reading these selections and several others this first nine weeks, we will focus on story elements (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution) including plot. The Common Formative Assessment for the first nine weeks will be over story elements.

Students will use the Frayer Model to delve into vocabulary words associated with our passages. There are four parts to the Frayer Model that can include any of the following: definition, drawing of the word, what the word is, what the word isn’t, synonyms, antonyms, and/or use of the word in a sentence. As a follow up, students will take vocabulary quizzes as well as comprehension quizzes to determine students’ understanding of the passages.

7th Grade Math – Denise Dixon, Theresa Jones, Angela Remington

Students began the year reviewing factoring and operations with fractions. Both concepts are notoriously difficult for students. We plan on spiraling those concepts throughout the year to provide more opportunities. After student schedules were finalized, we started our modern classroom training along with Module 1 (adding integers with same signs and adding integers with different signs).

Math enrichment students are struggling with basic math facts, so we started the year with multiplication facts. We will start MobyMax in a couple weeks.

7th Grade Science – Stacey Jenkins, Stephanie Smalley

In life science at 7th grade, students started the year with a tour of the gardens. They got to try some of the tomatoes, green beans, kale, and parsley that last year’s students started through a variety of experiments. Students then learned about the characteristics of life, clearing up some misconceptions about what qualifies as “living”. Now they are learning how to classify some of those organisms from broad kingdoms to the genus and species to create their scientific name.

7th Grade Social Studies – Tom Cretors, Edward Fenton

In 7th grade Social Studies, we have just started our first unit on Kansas History. We begin the Unit with understanding the location of Kansas while identifying and describing the physical regions of

our state. We end the unit discussing the climate of Kansas and explaining how Kansas was a crossroads for the movement of people, products, and ideas.

8th Grade Language Arts – Tracey Carney-Linn, Julie Price, Danielle Perry, Stacey Ward
8th Grade Literature – Dana Blew, Tracey Carney-Linn, Jessica Graves, Julie Price, Danielle Perry, Stacey Ward

Eighth grade has started out strong with our Unit on Suspense/Bad Behavior. We have central questions that they must answer while reading these stories: Why do we love suspense? How do you know what is right? Why do some people choose bad behavior? We have read several stories that look characters struggling between right and wrong. Most Dangerous Game, Ruthless, and Click, Clack the Rattlebag are the stories we have read in class so far. Students will practice their vocabulary and writing skills with all these stories throughout the unit.

For Language Arts, the first couple of days were getting baseline testing done for No Red Ink. Students have worked on Commonly Confused Words #3 and Modifiers.

8th Grade Math – Miranda Cote, Penny Wagner

In 8th grade Math 1, we have been reviewing important 7th grade skills such as integer operations, Order of Operations, and solving one and two-step equations. After this, we will work on solving multiple-step equations and finding solutions.

Math 2 is already working on 8th grade Module 7, Equations. They reviewed the same 7th grade skills prior to beginning this unit.

Algebra 1 is working on solving equations and gearing up to start additional equation manipulation to solve algebraic situations, finding solutions and solving for solutions with inequalities.

8th Grade Physical Science – Josh Yoakam

Students began the year reviewing safety rules in the physical science classroom. Students worked in groups to develop multimedia presentations for two safety rules. This offered an opportunity to do some community building and establish classroom culture. We began discussing the nature of science, recalling study terms from life science. Students will be practicing applying these terms designing their own experiments. We will begin to review scientific measurements and use of SI units in communicating scientific data.

8th Grade Science – Jessica Graves, Kaylea Roth-Longe

We have great plans for 8th grade earth science, including solar system model projects where students will have choice in how they show us what they know and letters to NASA. This past week we had a mini-lab on gravity and inertia using cups and marbles to represent planets and orbits. Without gravity holding the galaxy together we would “lose our marbles”! Students have been engaged and have contributed to class discussions. Some really great questions have been asked! After investigating the path and pace of the curriculum we have rearranged the order of the curriculum to create a smoother transition for students. We begin with the solar system and will hopefully be back to earth around the winter break.

8th Grade Social Studies – Ann Andrews, Dana Blew

8th grade social studies classes are off to a great start. We have completed our review of the Declaration of Independence and have moved on to learning about the early government of the United States. USD 469 adopted a new curriculum resource last spring called Actively Learn. It is a

completely online resource with information from multiple sources. We have been incorporating that into our lessons so students should be feeling comfortable with it. Mr. Azzeh, Director of Teaching and Learning, created a video introduction to the program for parents, which we are emailing home via Skyward so that parents can see what students are using in class.

Advanced Studies – Josh Yoakam

Incoming sixth grade students and those new to the district started their year with a writing assignment: *What Gifted Means to Me*. The assignment is meant to be a reflective piece and allows me the opportunity to gain insight into what their experiences have been to this point. I am also able to learn about their writing capability and organization. Existing advanced studies students began their year with a writing assignment as well, *Reflection and Goal Setting* for this school year. Students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade advanced studies classes have expressed an interest in participating in the Future Cities Competition. The theme for this year's challenge centers around climate change. Students will be designing a city to address and mitigate the effects of climate change. There are a number of deliverables including a project plan, 1500 word essay, physical model, video presentation and question and answer session with engineers at the competition.

Art – Emily Bucher

6th Grade – 6th graders just completed a cave art pastel drawing after watching the "Cave of Forgotten Dreams" documentary about Chauvet cave France. Currently, students are creating their own soda pop can design encouraging creativity and free thinking with basic product design. Next, students will read and learn about the work and life of John James Audubon, watch a few videos about his work, and then create a colored pencil drawing alongside a cut construction paper collage.

7th Grade – Students just finished up a "Hands and Feet Self-Portrait" after learning about portrait art. Currently, they are learning about the life and work of contemporary artist Jen Stark. Recently, Stark designed work for MTV and FaceBook headquarters. Students create a drip drawing featuring their choice(s) of color family juxtaposing the use of black and white. For our next project, students will create galaxy chalk drawings inspired by planets and the milky way.

8th Grade – Our first project was the use of fluorescent paint to create students' name spelled out in graffiti font. With the same paint, students were asked to start a lava lamp design including ideas about themselves or a unique representation of the lamp and use of color. Currently, students just read and listened to a PowerPoint presentation about the history of Chinese ink landscape paintings. They will create their own landscape painting with ink on paper and also a panda painting featuring bamboo. Next, students will learn about the Koi fish, which also includes many ideas that Chinese landscape painting does.

Art Enrichment – Did some chalking outside during the first full week of school. We just started working today on bioluminescent deep-sea creatures using oil pastels on black paper. Some students are choosing to also work on the Jen Stark-inspired drip drawing. I'm not sure what's next, but I'm excited to try out new projects this time. It will be a new idea that I might also use for other students in general art classes in the future. I have many to choose from, so please stay tuned!

Band – Aaron Edwards

6th Grade Beginning Band is excited to begin playing their instruments next week. We have 90 total in the beginning band program. 7th grade band has had a great start and has retained a lot from last year.

Our 8th grade is one of the largest we've had with 63 and are busily preparing for performance with the LHS Marching Lions at the football game on September 16th.

Choir – Josiah Ketterman

LMS Choirs are kicking off strong! Students have begun prepping music for their fall concert. Students are actively learning musical literacy including rhythm and pitch identification. Students interested in Sound FX Select choir, have begun auditions. This school year, LMS is bringing back a Talent Show in the Fall and a Musical in the Spring. More information to follow. Additionally, the LMS Choirs now have a Facebook page. Follow @LansingMSChoirs to stay up to date with all the awesome things going on in choir at the Middle School.

Computers – Sara Meyers

As we begin the school year, each grade level of computers starts with a brief introduction (and reminder) of how our computer lab computers work. Students review expectations of computer lab procedures along with ensuring they can log in and out of the computer.

For the first quarter of the school year, each computer class will be piloting a new typing program that will help focus on state typing standards. 6th grade students will be working on learning how to type 20 words per minute with 90% accuracy. 7th grade students will be working on learning how to type 25 words per minute with 90% accuracy. 8th grade students will be working on learning how to type 30 words per minute with 90% accuracy. The program to which we are piloting will allow students to learn proper typing hand placement as well as show them their words per minute and accuracy of words typed. Classes spend 10 minutes daily typing as bellwork.

6th grade computers – In both 6th grade computer classes, each class has successfully completed a Google Slides All About Me Project. With this project students are able to show off their Google Slides skills which they have learned throughout elementary and intermediate school. For this project all students tell a story about themselves as well as researching fun facts, such as: who the US President was during their birth year and popular trends that took place the year they were born. Currently, each class is diving a little deeper in learning more about Google Docs and will be participating in several Google Doc assignments.

7th grade computers – Both 7th grade class also just completed a different All About Me project using Google Slides. Since this grade level is familiar with how Google Slides work, students were asked to create a sixteen-slide show presentation telling me all about them. Slides ranged from their favorite school subject to their favorite quote. Students are currently learning about the importance of their digital footprint and digital safety. Each class has begun to research items that are considered okay to post as well as what is not ok to post. It is very important to teach this practice of becoming a good digital citizen.

8th grade Computer Applications – All 8th grade classes worked on completing an All About Me presentation in Google Slides. Students were encouraged to create 8 slides that were molded towards them, their family, and their favorite things. This was able to provide insight to who they are and allow me to get to know them a little better. 8th graders also began learning about their digital footprints, but we also focused on the importance of protecting our passwords, accounts, and social media. We have had several in-depth classroom discussions over real-life scenarios and what factors are seen when risks arise and how we can potentially avoid them. In the next coming weeks, our 8th graders will also begin their journey on being introduced to the various CTE

pathways that will align them and prepare them for high school. Classes will embark on hospitality and event planning by organizing and planning their own fictional Halloween party.

Math Intervention – Emerald Peters

During the first month of school, Tier II and Tier III groups were started at all grade levels based on Spring 2022 data. Math tier groups are utilizing spiral review tools to build missing skill gaps as well as MobyMax. All LMS students are receiving at least ten minutes of additional math instruction once a day through Moby Max addressing missing skills at an individual level. All LMS students were evaluated using Fastbridge aMath and Math CAP assessing current math skills and needs. Once assessment is done, data will be collected, and student tier placement will be reviewed.

PE – Jennifer Bishop, Jason Floetke

For the first few weeks of school, the 6th – 8th grade boys and girls are starting a unit on volleyball. Students have been introduced to the basic fundamentals of the game such as passing and serving, and basic rules in rotation. We have incorporated drills and games to teach these basic fundamentals. While we work on volleyball for two days a week, we also have fitness two days a week. Students have been introduced to dynamic stretching, agility drills, simple conditioning, and strength training using resistance bands. We combine classes on Friday's to play games with the focus being on participation, teamwork and sportsmanship.

Reading Intervention – Rachel Sheeley

Students are placed in Reading Strategies based on their aReading FastBridge scores. Every student is part of Tier I. Students whose scores fall below the Tier I level are placed in Tier II and Tier III respectively for further support to improve their scores. Tier II and III students meet in Reading Strategy classes during study hall or exploratory time. As students improve their scores from benchmarking, they move up the tier level. There are three benchmarking periods throughout the school year: Fall, Winter, and Spring. Currently, we placed students based on their spring score. Parents were notified via a letter if their child qualified for Tier II or Tier III. New classes will be formed at the beginning of the second nine weeks and after Christmas based on their benchmarking scores.

Students currently in Reading Strategies classes have been completing some placement tests to determine what skills we need to focus on. Each student has also started a reading passage along with comprehension questions. Going through each passage students identify unknown words, identify paragraphs, and use the comprehension questions to identify specific facts within the passage to assist in comprehension via highlighting/annotation skills.

Progress monitoring for fluency and comprehension will begin after Labor Day. We continue to evaluate our students every two weeks. As students show growth with these criteria, they will move up in the level of tier support. Be sure to ask to see their progress monitoring graphs to celebrate their progress at home as well.

Thursdays during class we use games to work on various skills. Games also build problem solving and communication skills. Feel free to stop by and join us in some games if you can.

Spanish – Cristy Quinn

In Spanish, students will be learning the name and location of the Spanish Speaking countries. They will learn how to greet people and to say goodbye, to introduce themselves and others, say where

they are from, how to spell names, say what day of the week it is, describe the weather, and to respond to classroom instructions.

Technology – Ron Averill

Technology classes have gotten off to a great start for this semester. We have worked our way through orientation and are beginning to work in the modules where the students will experience different areas of technologies as they are applied in various Expeditions of study. Hopefully, this will give them a direction that they want to follow as they pursue their educational experiences in high school.