

LaBrae Middle Schools February News



Newsletter

February 2013



MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents/Guardians: We've entered the final semester of the 2012-13 school year. This is my 4th year at LaBrae, and I have always requested your support when needed. Well, I need your support again. Education is a three-legged stool that stands when those legs are securely under the seat. I'm feeling the stool start to wobble or give a little. The three legs of the stool are schools, teachers, and parents. As education continues to evolve, additional responsibilities are placed upon the district. Several of these responsibilities the district has a minimal impact on, yet parents have a huge impact on. I recently called each grade level down to the auditorium to discuss several issues and what they mean as we move forward. I will explain these issues here:

- 1) **Attendance** – Very basic. A student not in school cannot learn, period. I just ran the 1st semester's attendance data and after comparing that with school policy (page 2 student handbook), I/we have a concern. To summarize, our policy states that a student can miss 9 days per semester (counting excused and unexcused days.) My concern are the unexcused days without a physician's note. The district is accountable for our average daily membership to the state. The district holds the child accountable, which in turn holds the parent accountable. Currently 16% of my student population by definition are truant. Each student is a separate case, but unfortunately I am required to and will file truancy charges in some cases. I am responsible for student attendance if they miss excessive days, but in reality the parent is responsible for making sure their student come to school.
- 2) **Homework/Classwork**-These items are vital for a teacher to track student progress and to improve student performance. We spend a great deal of time collecting data and adjusting instruction based on that data. When students refuse to complete their work, it makes it very difficult to determine what a student does or doesn't know. I support my teachers in their work, and it makes it very difficult to determine what a student does or doesn't know. I support my teachers in their efforts to obtain this work. I cannot and will not ignore the fact that some students turn in zero work. Every two weeks, Saturday detentions are issued to students missing 4 or more assignments in an effort to obtain their work. If a student skips Saturday detention, I have and will continue to remove them from school until the work is completed. This issue too can be greatly impacted through parental support.
- 3) **Behavior/Facebook**-Middle school students are and will continue to be the most challenging group. Their bodies and thinking are in a constant state of flux for several years. I/we anticipate certain behaviors and for the most part we work through them with your child. My concern is the usage of Facebook, Twitter and other forms of "social networking" that is being used to make threats, intimidate, and/or "bullying." This "social media" is a major concern when it is used for the wrong purposes. State law was enacted (Jessica's Law) to hold a district accountable for "bullying" through the use of social media. If a student makes a threat on a weekend using social-media and that print-out is brought to my attention, then I will respond to it and it can lead to suspension or worse. This too is an issue that the parent has more impact on.

The home/parents have a huge impact on a child's progress or lack of progress, which will result in better educating your children. All 3 legs of that stool need to be in place and securely fastened to get the most out of our students. We are doing what we can here to provide the best education and experience for your students. The 3rd leg of the stool (home) is the leg we have the least impact on and is the most important leg. Again, everyone wants their child to be successful, so let's keep it simple-come to school, do your work, behave, and we'll do the rest together.

Mr. Martin Kelly, Principal

Mr. Martin Kelly
Principal
Grades 6-7-8

www.labrae.k12.oh.us/



DATES

February 11 & 13.....P-T Conferences
February 15 & 18No School
February 22.....Interims