

December 19, 2008

Dear parents,

Communicating well with young adolescents involves much more than setting rules and demanding compliance. Communication builds from strong connections, nurtured throughout childhood. Middle-grades students need advice about a multitude of decisions from eating a healthy diet and managing their time wisely to negotiating their neighborhoods safely and choosing challenging courses in school. Yet precisely at the point when adolescents are trying to decide whether to turn to their parents or their peers, family conversations often cease.

Middle-grades students want and need greater freedom than younger children, but they still require close monitoring and supervision and it's easy to miss the signals that young adolescents send our way. The messages can change from day to day and even hour to hour. The same question might earn a smile on one occasion and make the child apoplectic the next. The conflicting responses often lead to consternation and confusion on the part of the parent.

Young adolescents want their parents to pay attention to them, but not too much. They're despondent when their parents don't show up to watch their performance or sports games, but they'd rather that you not acknowledge them in public especially when their friends are around. Middle school students want their parents to remain active in their lives but not to hug them in front of their friends. The best advice is to develop a sense of humor and perspective about this look-at-me, don't look-at-me syndrome because by the time you fully understand it, your child will probably moved on to a new phase. In the end, keeping the communication lines open with middle-grades students is essential to helping them become healthy, happy, productive adults.

Steve Goar

Principal, McGinnis Middle School

As we head into the New Year here are a few important bits of information:

There will be no school the week of December 22 - January 2 due to the Winter Holiday/Christmas Break.

Also, there is no school on January 5 due to a staff workday. The beginning of the second semester and students return to classes on January 6.

Reports cards for the second quarter will be mailed home by Friday, January 9th.

The Student Council is sponsoring a Winter Dance on Friday, January 30 from 7:00-9:00 pm.