

St. Sebastian School

Middle School Honor Roll - 2nd Quarter

Grade 8

High Honors

Holahan, Fiona
Wilkening, Lauren

Honors

Burzynski, Quinn
Cappon, Samuel
Duffy, Colin
Earle, Robert
Engelmann, Haley
Koch, Benjamin
Lamers, Abby

Madigan, Kyle
McCauley, Cassidy
Neumann, Emily
Ogorek, Tyler
Sealey, Elizabeth
Smrz, Lauren
Swanson, Rebecca
Wright, Olivia

Effort

Hayden, Donald
Jashinsky, Kayla
Smith, Alex
Walker, Adam
Yang, Shirley
Yanisch, Kelsey

Grade 7

High Honors

Barrett, Erin
Hanley, Aiofe
Hudson, Devin
Klein, Maggie
Steimle, Christopher
*Utschig, Henry

Honors

Bohlmann, Leo
Delgadillo, Claudia
Doll, Caitlin
Falk, Elizabeth
Krier, Samuel
McCarthy, Emma
Miller, Blayr
Morales, Nicole

Mullen, Daniel
Pruhs, Simon
Rodriguez, Alyssa
Runnoe, Emma
Sahid, Yasmine
Young, Katelyn
Zaffiro, Emily

Effort

Ewig, Cassie
Green, Alexis
Mason, Eaven
Park, Jessica
Yang, Kaosheng

Grade 6

High Honors

Altenburg, Sophia
Macheel, William
*McCauley, Alanna

Honors

Cappon, Will
Gratz, Zack
Hanley, Maeve
Kertscher, Hailey
Lichucki, Allie
Lustig, Leah
Mullen, Will
Nguyen, Jamie
Nguyen, Jessica

Pruhs, Sebastian
Schissler, Evan
Sobczak, Calvin
Soleski, Emily
Treacy, Kylie
Villa, Maria
Walker, Margaret
Wright, Nolan

Effort

Bosch, Tristan
Brame, Makayla
Desotelle, Gen
Howard, Jordon
Kopchinski, Abigail
Mitten, Angie
Perleberg, Natalie
Pieper, Emma
Walker, Ronaja

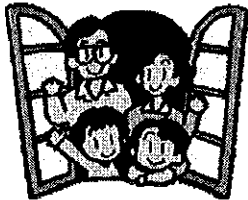
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Current information on learning, education and parenting issues.

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St. Sebastian School Scholars by Nancy Meier, MA

What Your Middle School Child Wants You to Know

If young parents are gathered at their child's soccer game, playground or PTO meeting, inevitably the topic of conversation will get around to discussing their kids. It usually ends with "At least they're not at that dreaded middle school age!"

There is a reason for this concern as raging hormones, friendships with "drama," cyberspace worries, academic issues and the change from elementary to middle school can make for a few very difficult years.

But they don't have to be!

Joe Bruzzese, MA, a professor at the Univ. of California and author of A Parents Guide to the Middle School Years (2009), has worked with this age group

long enough to develop what he calls an "unofficial adolescent credo." Mr. Bruzzese describes it as a resource that can help parents understand the "basic underpinnings of the adolescent mindset."

"Before you engage me in a conversation, please consider my schedule." You would think that the ideal time to have a discussion with your middle school child would be on the way to or from school. According to Mr. B., "a day at school requires incredible focus for most kids and the minutes before and after school can be filled with emotion." A parent's job is to **"find a way to remain present, yet invisible."** You may notice your
(cont. on page 2)

Granted, my children are no longer adolescents so you could say that I may view that time more nostalgically.

You would be wrong. I still remember those days, sometimes fondly, other times, not so much.

I've never figured out why I love to teach middle school children better than having one in my home. Maybe I took the less than desirable behavior of my adolescent too personally. That is something I would do differently if I had a "do over." Perhaps the suggestions to your left will help improve the relationship you have with your adolescent.

Your child probably doesn't want to see the data that says practice IS important for retention. "It's boring," they say. Perhaps, but there are ways to practice and chunk information that might convince your child that these skills make studying easier, quicker and produce better grades. It might benefit your child to look at assignments differently and even ask her teacher how she would chunk the information.

You Were Right: Practice Improves Results

Imagine that you are the new basketball coach for the 5th grade girls (or boys) team. These novice players need to learn the rudimentary skills of the game, first and foremost, dribbling. Mastering this basic skill will free up the child's working memory so he/she can concentrate on strategic plays.

Life is filled with these "lower level" skills to be learned. Remember when you learned how to drive? You needed to concentrate on every element of the task until it became automatic.

Your brain helps you learn information when you use your working memory to your advantage. (cont. on page 2)

What Your Middle School Child Wants You To Know (cont.)

child asking for help less often, but your advice does have an impact.

"I'm moody at times. I may be having a bad day and just need some time to cool off." Most parents see themselves as the elected problem solver in their child's life. "It takes a shift in your parental mind-set to not jump in and try to make everything all right." Let some time pass before asking, "Is there anything you want to talk about?"

"Your continued caring tells me you still want me around even when I'm difficult." During this tumultuous time, many parents are saddened by what appears to be a personality change. Discussions can become quite heated. You're advised to walk away with the promise that you will be back when both of you are less volatile and your conversation can be more productive.

"My friends are really important to me right now. Help me to see the importance of family while still finding time to spend with my friends." One moment your child is holding your hand, the next moment your child won't let you kiss her goodbye when her friends are present. You can still find ways to emphasize "family togetherness" with your family traditions and patience for this temporary stage in your adolescent's life.

"Teach me how to make choices and accept consequences. Don't bail me out when accepting the consequences of my choices would help me learn important life lessons." The freedom that this age says they need and want usually isn't the best for their optimal development. Don't "cheat" your child out of the consequences.

"Please don't choose my extracurricular activities for me or push me to participate in an activity when it's obvious I'm not interested." How would you feel if your husband or best friend nagged you relentlessly to join the local volleyball team when you don't have the interest, skill or inclination to play? You would think that they weren't listening to you or respecting you. That is how your child feels. Drop the activity and look for other activities of interest.

Just when we think we have parenting skills mastered and we think we know our child's personality and temperament, we could be surprised.

Be prepared to roll with the changes and challenges. We don't want these years to just be a time of survival. "Parenting is a process that happens over time. Taking time to acknowledge and celebrate the small wins in your child's life builds momentum for the bigger achievements to come."

You Were Right: Practice Improves Results (cont.)

"Working memory is the part of your mind in which you combine and manipulate information," so says Daniel Willingham, PhD. The bad news about working memory is that it is limited and not expandable. You get what you get, BUT you can work with working memory.

The two most effective ways to improve a child's capacity for learning is with *chunking and memorization*. For example, when children are taught to read, they are not taught to look at letters individually forever. They are taught to chunk groups of letters to form syllables. Hence, reading becomes automatic.

In addition, there are skills that need to be memorized.

Dr. Willingham, a cognitive psychologist, says that

"drilling" or the less offensive term, practice, "yields three important benefits: it reinforces the basic skills that are required for the learning of more advanced skills, it protects against forgetting, and it improves transfer to new situations."

So when you tell your child that it is extremely important to learn his basic math facts, it's not just for the test he's going to take on Friday. It's for ease of learning any kind of math problem in the later grades. Most current research also says that it's important to not cram all the information on the night before the test. It's best to study for an hour every day for several days before the test if a student wants better retention.

For more information, see *Why Don't Students Like School?* by Daniel Willingham (2009)



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January 21, 2010

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James M. Brennan
Interim Executive Director

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