

Fall/Winter  
Newsletter

November 2016



O.W. BEST MIDDLE SCHOOL

# Counseling News

## Career Development

During the Fall Months, Ms. Herd and Mrs. Stubbs, have been working on Career Development with all O.W. Best Students. The 6th graders were introduced to Career Cruising, which is the web based program that we use throughout middle school for Career Development. Students looked at their favorite school subject and which careers it is related to, while becoming familiar with the website.

The 7th grade students started their Educational Development Plan in November. This plan is also known as an E.D.P. An E.D.P. is like an online filing cabinet where students can store their accomplishments, extra curricular activities, hobbies and interests, as well as their career and academic interests. 7th graders also took the Career Matchmaker Quiz which helped identify careers best suited for them based on their

likes and dislikes. They also were introduced to the 6 Career Pathways.

Our 8th grade students will update their E.D.P.'s that they began last year sometime before Holiday Break. They will take another Career Matchmaker Quiz along with a My Skills Inventory. Students then look at the careers best suited for them based on the results of these inventories and research these careers. They save careers of interest to their E.D.P. along with schools that they would like to learn more about by that offer programs related to their career interests.

We also have the students establish both short term and long term educational and career goals. It is important for students to start identifying what they wish to accomplish as they near high

school. Additionally, students select their Career Pathways of interest and will devote some time to thinking about which level of education they plan to pursue in the future. All of this information can be found on [www.careercruising.com](http://www.careercruising.com). The user ID is **best** and the Password is **royals**. The 7th and 8th graders also have additional login information that they used upon starting their E.D.P.

This year we will be sending home 7th and 8th grade E.D.P. parent signature sheets. We are asking each of you to take time to review your child's E.D.P. with them and discuss their career and educational goals. It is important to start having these conversations now so students are planning for the future. Once you sign this form, your child will be asked to turn it into their Science

## 2017 M-Step Test Information

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) will again continue the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) for the 2016/2017 school year. In June of 2014, legislation was passed requiring the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to develop a new summative assessment that aligns to Michigan's challenging learning standards. The 2017 M-STEP test offers a comprehensive view of student progress and achievement. The test consists of fewer multiple choice questions and more questions that require in depth problem solving and critical thinking. These types of questions will help schools gauge how well students are mastering the Common Core state standards.

At O.W. Best, English Language Arts and Mathematics will be assessed in grades 6-8. Science will be assessed in grade 7. Social Studies will be assessed in grade 8. The M-STEP will be administered online to all students at O.W. Best. The testing window is as follows:

8<sup>th</sup> Grade: 4/10 – 5/5

6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: 5/1 – 5/26

Mrs. Stubbs is the M-STEP building coordinator at O. W. Best. She will provide specific

## How Can I Help My Child With Homework?

Kids are more successful in school when parents take an active interest in their homework as it shows kids that what they do is important.

Of course, helping with homework shouldn't mean spending hours hunched over a desk. Parents can be supportive by demonstrating study and organizational skills, explaining a tricky problem, or just encouraging kids to take a break. Parents might even learn a thing or two!

Here are some tips to guide the way:

**Know the teachers and what they're looking for.** Attend school events, such as parent-teacher conferences, to meet your child's teachers. Ask about their homework policies and how you should be involved. Call your child's teachers if you have questions or concerns.

**Set up a homework-friendly area.** Make sure kids have a well-lit place to complete homework. Keep supplies such as

paper, pencils, glue, scissors within reach.

**Schedule a regular study time.** Some kids work best in the afternoon, following a snack and rest period; others may prefer to wait until after dinner. Find out what works best for your child and stick to that routine.

**Help them make a plan.** On heavy homework nights or when there's an especially hefty assignment to tackle, encourage your child to break up the work into manageable chunks. Create a work schedule for the night if necessary and take time for a 15 minute break every hour if possible.

**Keep distractions to a minimum.** This means no TV, loud music, internet, or phone calls.

**Make sure kids do their own work.** They won't learn if they don't think for themselves and make their own mistakes. Parents can make suggestions and help with directions, but it is a kid's job to do the

learning.

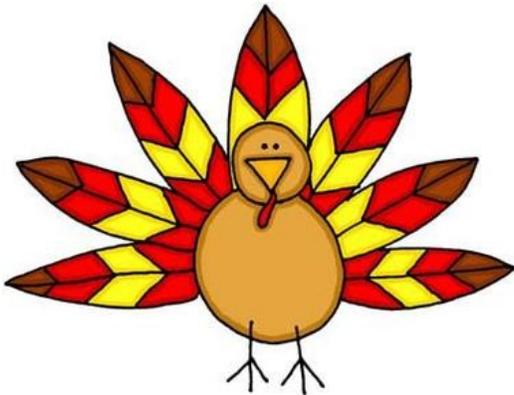
**Be a motivator and monitor.** Ask about assignments, quizzes, and tests. Give encouragement, check completed homework, and make yourself available for questions and concerns. [Check Parent Connect regularly.](#)

**Set a good example.** Do your kids ever see you diligently balancing your budget or reading a book? Kids are more likely to follow their parents' examples than their advice.

**Praise their work and efforts.** Post an A test or art project on the refrigerator. Mention academic achievements to relatives. Brag!

**If there are continuing problems with homework, get help.** Talk about it with your child's teacher. Have your child set up an appointment to meet their teacher during MP2, or before/after school for additional help. [Homework Helpers too is available M-Th for an hour after school.](#)

## Holiday Assistance



*If you are in need of assistance this holiday season, **Goodfellows applications** are available from Mrs. Stubbs. Applicants must live in Dearborn Heights. Once you complete the application, you are responsible for submitting it to the Goodfellows location no later than November 23rd. Please contact Mrs. Stubbs for additional information.*

***Happy Thanksgiving to all of our O.W. Best Families!***

## Clothing Closet



As winter approaches, we are aware that students often need new clothing, winter coats, and hats/gloves/boots. O.W. Best has a Clothing Closet for families who need assistance. If your child needs clothing, please don't hesitate to contact your child's counselor to let them know. We will see if we have clothing available in our Clothing Closet. If we don't have anything in your child's size, we can provide you with information regarding other places that can offer assistance.



## Social Media and Parenting

It is very important that today's parents aren't just setting rules regarding social media but that they also understand the culture and nuances of social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, Ask.FM, Snapchat, KIK, and more because there are new social networks popping up every day.

The absolute most important thing to remember is that if your kids come to you with complaints that others have been mean to them either directly or indirectly online, please take them seriously.

If it turns out that tweeting or some other form of cyber bullying is taking place, ask them to see the messages and either take screen shots or pictures of them. Print them out so you have some concrete evidence of what is going on and help your child do some of their own problem solving by asking them how they might like to handle the situation. You should also consider talking with other parents and kids to let them

know what is going on and find out if they are also having trouble. Please too let your child's counselor or principal know so they can address the situation, as it may carry over to school.

Teach your children about appropriate etiquette online. Perhaps your child isn't the recipient of the mean side of subtweeting but is the one sending them or starting the problems. Kids learn more from what we do than what we say; while it is very important to teach your kids about how to conduct themselves online, it is equally important to model genuine kindness, compassion, and respect for others in your daily life.

While it may be unrealistic for you to be as adept as your kids are on social media sites, it is beneficial to at least learn the basics. **Here are some simple steps you can take that will help:**

1. Carve out some time to read about or watch YouTube videos on how these sites work and

why kids are using them.

2. Create your own account and spend some time exploring. See if your kids will take you on virtual tour. Treat it the same way you would when learning and understanding any of your children's hobbies and activities so that you can talk with them about what they are doing and not be so completely in the dark.

3. Please install some safety software that can help protect your children when you are not there watching their screens.

While lots of kids use their smartphones and technology for appropriate purposes, the three ways that kids seem most likely to get in trouble is by sending inappropriate pictures (sexting), being mean to others by cyberbullying, and by meeting strangers. **Please be aware of these risks and keep your eyes open. Kids need supervision!**

Information from the Huffington Post

## Peer Mediation

The Peer Mediation Program continues this year at O.W. Best. Ms. Herd runs the program and has found that students really do have the ability to help their peers with conflict. The Peer Mediators must apply to become a Peer Mediator and then have a substantial amount of training which is geared at helping them become successful mediators.

Peer Mediators visited all of the MP2 classes to talk about the program with their

peers. They have encouraged others to sign up for a Peer Mediation if they are struggling with a conflict with a peer. We are hopeful that this program will not only help students but will also result in a strong set of Peer Mediators that students look to for assistance.

Applications for New 6/7 grade Peer Mediators will be available from Ms. Herd beginning on November 14th and are due no later than November 30th.



## Student of the Month Program

We are always very excited about our Student of the Month program. Every month we have 2 students per grade level who are recognized as Student of the Month. These students are selected by their teachers based upon qualities such as good character, leadership, academic success, and effort.

Once selected, we reward the students in multiple ways. First, the students receive a certificate for this accomplishment and a Student of the Month T-shirt. They then

can wear their T-shirt while they get their picture taken by Mr. James. Their picture is displayed in our showcase in the entry, as we want everyone to see who was recognized! Students also are rewarded with a pass to go to the front of the lunch line for the month in which they are selected at Student of the Month. We are all very proud of these students as this is a admirable distinction. Thus far this year, the students who have received this award are:

### 6th Grade:

*Lily DePaulis, Erika Garcia, Charlie Kurkowski, Karen Servin*

### 7th Grade:

*Nick Cannon, Alysa Chamberlain, Kasey Goldsmith, Madison Heady*

### 8th Grade:

*Zacharia Kassim, Charlayne-Aye Ole-*

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*The O.W. Best Counseling program adheres to the American School Counseling standards and follows the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance Curriculum. We assure that all students acquire and demonstrate competencies in Career Planning and Exploration, Knowledge of Self and Others, and Educational Development as they learn to live, work and learn over their lifetime. The Counseling program is delivered through individual counseling, group counseling, large group lessons, consultation, coordination, and system/school support. We abide by the ethical standards set by the American School Counselor Association, Ethical Standards for School Counselors (2010). We will guard your privacy as much as is permitted by law, ethics, and district policies.*

**Happy Holidays!**

## Counseling Appointments

Ms. Herd and Mrs. Stubbs are available to meet with you regarding any academic, social, or emotional concerns with your child. It is recommended that you call or email your child's counselor to set up an appointment to see them ahead of time. Often the counselors have their day scheduled or have other situations that arise during the day and are not available to give you their full attention when you stop in without an appointment. The counselors want to be sure to devote time to you and your child, so having an appointment scheduled allows them to free up time for you as well as gather any infor-



## Counseling Resources

Counseling Resources can be found on the Counseling Page of the O.W. Best School website. There is a listing of Emergency Agencies as well as outside counseling agencies. O.W. Best does not endorse these agencies, but rather it is a list that parents often find helpful as it includes agencies and organizations in the surrounding area.