



James Irwin Charter Middle School

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November 6, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians,

November is now upon us and there are many things to share with you as we learn from the experiences of the first quarter and look ahead to improve for the second quarter. We so appreciate all who were able to come in for Parent/Teacher Conferences on October 22 & 23. Your involvement in your child's education is an important part of his/her success. If you were unable to make it and would still like to meet with a teacher or teachers, please contact teachers directly to set up a conference that will work within the time frames that are agreeable to all the parties involved. Because 6th grade parent/teacher conferences are a mandatory part of our 6th grade program, 6th grade teachers have the report cards of those students whose parents have not been able to meet with them. For those parents, you may get your student's report card when you are able to schedule a meeting with his/her teacher.

Please take the time to read the following announcements. It is imperative that we work together to maintain consistency in expectations for the students. Something I have shared with the teachers that also applies to parenting is "What gets inspected is respected." When students know that the meaningful adults in their lives are going to "check up" on things, they will be much more likely to put forth the effort to accomplish what is expected of them. We are so proud of the students thus far and want to keep them moving in a positive direction. ☺

Points to Ponder:

- **Student Academic Performance**

Once the 1st quarter report cards were completed, I was thrilled to see how many of our students made the Honor Roll (317 out of 392!!!) Yet I also wanted to make sure that we as a school are not forgetting to address the needs of the students who did not make the Honor Roll or who are struggling significantly in one or more classes. An overwhelming majority of these students did not turn in homework consistently. Please help us in supporting your student by participating in the following ways:

 - Parents need to help by checking their student's planner to make sure the assignments are recorded. If your student does not have assignments written down, please email or call the teacher(s) directly. If you are not sure how to do that, call the front office at 302-9000, and Ms. Winkler will be happy to give you that information. (If your son or daughter has lost or can't find his/her

planner, please provide him/her with a spiral notebook that can be used in its place. Not having a consistent place to write down homework is not acceptable.).

- Parents, please verify that your son/daughter has completed the assigned work and brings it back to school the next day.
- Teachers will keep you apprised of your student's missing assignments should they occur and will assign your student to Homework Help Club.
- If your student is assigned to Homework Help Club, please make sure they can stay.
- If your student is struggling with the academic content of a class, please notify the teacher(s) as soon as possible so that strategies can be put in place to support your student.

- **Dress Code**

- Parents, we need your help in enforcing the written dress code. Students are to be in dress code upon entering and exiting the school. Please make sure your student's shirt is tucked in, belt is on, and buttons are appropriately buttoned before you leave them at school. Several students are forgetting their belts. Mr. Roots is tracking dress code violations. Please remember that once a student has five (5) violations, they will be required to wear a special white and tan uniform for nine weeks. Your assistance in helping your student remember his/her belt will help him/her prevent that uniform violation consequence.
- **Please note the dress code for Dress Up Days.** This is written on page 13 of the Student Planner/Handbook as well. When athletes have an away game, they are to dress up to represent JICMS with class. This dress code applies for athletic banquets as well. Also, please make sure your student is prepared for our upcoming NJHS Dress Up Day on November 19th.

Boys:

- Collared dress shirt (solid colors only), long or short sleeved and tucked in;
- A tie (We have extras here at school if your son does not own a tie.);
- Dress pants; and
- Dress shoes only (not work boots or athletic shoes)

Girls:

- Dress or skirt no higher than the kneecap
- Dresses/tops must have long or short sleeves and a conservative neckline (If in doubt about the neckline, don't wear it.)
- Dress slacks (no jean material) and skirts are acceptable with a dress shirt; and
- Dress shoes only
- **Please check what your student wears on Dress Up Days.**

Procedures for Students and Parents Before/After School

- Students are to wait in the yellow striped area or the adjacent sidewalk area, not in the mulch by the building or by the elementary school.
- Only those students who have a sibling at the elementary school and are picking up their younger sibling are allowed in the elementary school (i.e., friends should not go with them.)
- On cold mornings, below 32 degrees, students will be allowed into the office waiting area at 7:00 a.m. or as soon as a staff member is there to let them in. At 7:15 a.m. they will be allowed to wait in the MS gym until the bell rings at 7:30 a.m.
- Students are not allowed back in the building after 3:30 p.m. and should not be sitting in on practices unless they are the sibling of a team member. If so, they must remain in the gym during practice and leave with their sibling.
- There is to be no throwing of balls, rocks, snowballs, or other items. Students are not to be running or horseplay during carpool times. We have had several near misses between cars and students, and cannot stress this safety issue enough.
- Students should only be crossing the parking lot where there is a crossing attendant with a sign.
- **Drivers need to follow the directions of the carpool attendants. Even if you are being directed contrary to where you want to be, it is imperative for the safety of all involved that you adhere to this expectation.**
- **Please note that the curbed area closest to the elementary parking lot is off limits for parking and waiting. This is a designated FIRE LANE area where emergency vehicles must have access at all times. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.**
- **Parents, just as we expect our students to be respectful and polite, we need you to show respect and courtesy to our carpool helpers. If they motion for you to move, please follow their directions and do so in an appropriate manner. It's important that we all take seriously the role we have as adults to model the character that James Irwin Charter Schools seek to exemplify.**

Tardies (again⊗)

- Please make every effort to get your child to school on time and to pick them up in a timely manner. Encourage your student to be on time to class during the school day as well. Several students have already served in school suspension time for excessive tardiness. The goal is that these more extreme consequences will not be necessary. Every minute in class is an opportunity to learn. Please review the student handbook for our current school policy. Mr. Roots and Mrs. Shilling are already working on a revision to this policy that may be necessary to begin second semester.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Tuesday, November 10th, at 2:30 p.m. in the James Irwin Field House – the 1st annual Veteran's Day Assembly!
- Wednesday, November 18th, at 2:30 p.m. – a combined MS/HS character assembly featuring The Strength Team.

- **Opportunity for NJHS!** –The National Junior Honor Society is a prestigious organization that requires scholarship, character, leadership, service, and citizenship of all its members. We are excited to offer this opportunity for our students here at JICMS. The process for selection is as follows:
 - A list of all students in 7th & 8th grades (only 7th-9th grades are eligible for membership in NJHS) who have a Grade Point Average of 3.5 or above is printed out and distributed to the teachers.
 - Teachers are asked to highlight the names of the students on this list who exhibit strong character, leadership, and concern for others in doing what's right at their school.
 - After these lists are received back at the office, tardies and detentions of each student are checked. Those with more than 3 tardies or 2 lunch detentions or more extreme consequences in a quarter are ineligible. Please note also that it is a national rule that to be appointed to NJHS, a student must have attended the current school for at least one semester. New students will be eligible for our spring induction into NJHS.
 - The remaining students on the GPA list who were not disqualified by tardies or discipline consequences are then given an information packet to fill out. These were distributed Monday in school. In this packet are 3 faculty recommendation forms. The student is to give a form to three different teachers of his/her choice and ask them to fill it out and return it to the front office. The student were instructed to fill out the Student Information Form and return it to the front office by Friday, November 6th. **NO EXCEPTIONS ARE MADE TO THIS DEADLINE.** Parents, if your student received a packet, please *do not* fill this out for him/her. You may assist, but the student needs to be the one to fill out the information to show that consideration for membership is his/her desire.
 - On November 6th, the appointed Faculty Council (Teachers on the Faculty Council will remain anonymous to keep the selection process above reproach.) will meet to review the information for each student. They will then vote to accept or not accept each student who turned in a packet. If a student is not selected, a letter of explanation will be sent to the family. Sometimes it's as simple as the student not having developed enough leadership skills to make it evident that he/she is indeed a leader.
 - The selection process is very objective, and it is important that parents understand that it is **NOT** a popularity contest. Very few nominees actually make it through the whole process. Those who do are given very high expectations and are asked to be actively involved in leadership opportunities in their school and community.
 - All nominees who turned in their packets will be notified by November 10th if they are appointed to NJHS membership or not. If not, an explanation as to the criteria not met will be included so that the student will know what to work on for a future appointment.
 - We will hold a formal NJHS Induction Ceremony in the James Irwin Field House on Thursday, November 19th, at 8:00 a.m. Family members are invited to attend and dress up for this prestigious event. You may park in the high school parking area which will be vacant for NJHS/NHS parking purposes.

- **No School** – Wednesday, November 11th due to Veterans’ Day or November 25-27 due to Thanksgiving Break. Winter Break starts Friday, December 18th and goes through Monday, January 4th. Students return to school on Tuesday, January 5th.
- **Boys Basketball Schedule – We want to encourage you to come out in support of our 7th/8th Grade boys home basketball teams. Here’s their schedule:**
 - Tuesday, Nov. 10 – CSCS @ JICMS
 - Monday, Nov. 16 – Banning Lewis @ JICMS
 - Thursday, Nov. 19 – Peyton @ JICMS
 - Monday, Nov. 30 – Ellicott @ JICMS

Each 7th Grade game begins at 4:00 p.m. followed by the 8th Grade game.

- **PTO Project:** Thank you to all parents and students who helped with our Butter Braids fundraiser. Orders can be picked up on Thursday, November 19th, at 3:30 p.m. in our entry hallway past the MS lobby. Students will be dismissed by grade to get their orders at the end of the final period.
- **Our Quarter Finals for 2nd Quarter will be as follows:**
 - Monday, December 14th – 7th & 8th period exams will be given first thing in the morning with a built-in review session for each. The remainder of the day will include other activities. This day is a regular length school day.
 - Tuesday, December 15th – 1st & 2nd period exams (School will be dismissed at 11:00 a.m.)
 - Wednesday, December 16th – 3rd & 4th period exams (School will be dismissed at 11:00 a.m.)
 - Thursday, December 17th – 5th & 6th period exams (School will be dismissed at 11:00 a.m. for those who have finished exams.) Makeup exams will be conducted from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Thursday as well.
- **Second Quarter report cards** will be mailed home January 5th though you have open access to your student’s grades on Infinite Campus at any time. Please notify the office if you didn’t receive your 1st Quarter report card (unless you have a 6th grader and haven’t attended a P/T conference) or got it much later than others so that we can verify that we have the correct address for you in our records.
- **Second Semester schedules** will be given to the students on January 5th, their first day back from their Winter Break.

With appreciation,

Mrs. Holly Varnum, Principal
James Irwin Charter Middle School