

JAN/FEB 2023

DEAR TROJAN FAMILIES:

**Happy 2023!** As Fall Semester winds down our school leaders recently discussed important topics like workplace skills and positive habits that will help our students be more employable, more academically successful, and to develop many of the basic skills they will need to launch successfully into their futures upon graduation. At Auburn High School we want our students to be positively reinforced from 9th through 12th grades, and we need your support to help us teach and reinforce job skills and positive habits.

One such skill is **showing up on time**. Showing up on time isn't always the most important skill in life but it is a skill that has value for almost every wage earning job. Being on time also has value for academic learning in order to engage from the start of a lesson to the end. Being on time will serve students in high school and for almost all post-secondary learning endeavors they choose. True, there are many online colleges that allow students to virtually learn on their own time at their pace. However, to be successful one should still practice time management as there are components of meeting deadlines even with post-secondary education that is not on a set schedule. The structure and routines of time management for those who succeed most often will be on display if one takes a hard look.

**Recently, I was asked what is one thing that some AHS students can do to be more successful with learning and credit earning?** My response was, **"To be on time and to be present."** Our school data is very clear and as of the end of Quarter 1 (12/7/22), our on-track for credit attainment data supports a clear connection to being at school. Below are some comparisons at AHS between Quarter 1 2022, last year's Semester 1 and Semester 2 grades, and even a look at Semester 1 in 2019, prior to the pandemic.

| <b>Overall successful credit attainment percentages as aligned to daily school attendance</b> (source: Skyward/Tableau) |                                       |                                |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>ATTENDANCE % are based on daily attendance</b>   | <b>95% or better daily attendance</b> | <b>90-94% daily attendance</b> | <b>Less than 90% daily attendance</b> |
| <b>QTR 1 This year</b>  | 93.7% grades were passing             | 90.3% grades were passing      | 67.9% grades were passing             |
| <b>SEM 2 Last year</b>  | 97.5% grades were passing             | 96.1% grades were passing      | 73.7% grades were passing             |
| <b>SEM 1 Last year</b>  | 98.4% grades were passing             | 96.8% grades were passing      | 79% grades were passing               |
| <b>SEM 1 2019 before covid</b>  | 93.6% grades were passing             | 89.7% grades were passing      | 61.9% grades were passing             |

Data represent the % of credit earned grades (A,B,C,D) for each grading period. Typically, we do see a rise in % of credit earned grades go up from Quarter to Semester.

At AHS we understand that our students are more than just data points, but data can provide us clues for success as to what is working. **Attendance matters.** Attendance with engagement matters even more. I often say that when students are in class they and their teachers can work magic together. We realize the bond between our teachers and their students truly matters, but we also believe there are other factors at work that go beyond classroom relationships that are more centered with each student.

Perhaps the main reasons for a habit of strong attendance and success is motivation and purpose. We see students who succeed often demonstrating a higher level of motivation and when asked, readily provide reasons for the energy and effort we see from them. They have found purpose and seem to have goals.

I realize my newsletter is well beyond long but I want to recruit the help of our families and especially from our parents and guardians to help their students' discover their purpose and motivations, if they haven't already.

If your student happens to be struggling with their purpose for attending school, I encourage you to take the initiative to capture more time to have conversations with them. Invest time to listen and reflect on what your students are telling you. Try to not rush to solutions or advice and keep an ongoing conversation alive.

Maybe be curious about what they share, and ask more open ended questions. Casual dialogue is a way to learn even more about your own student and what makes them tick and what challenges they might be experiencing at school. As they respond to your asks, chances are they will be listening to themselves, and they too will have something to reflect upon. Our students are super smart and once they begin to connect more dots in their own thinking perhaps they'll be that much closer to finding that important motivation or purpose. It's a process and the more our parents and families can be part of that process, so much the better.

As always, feel free to email or call, should you have questions or just want to share your insights with me.

***Thank you for your support!***



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If you continue to scroll down I have included two Capturing Kids' Hearts Family Newsletters for January on respect and February on kindness. I hope you'll find the resources helpful, as there are some great conversation starters in each of them.

# Spark the Heart

Be friendly and compassionate.

This month we are challenging your student to be kind to others, even when it's hard. **We are partnering with you to help your child grow in kindness.** Most children learn new behaviors by copying those around them; we have a powerful opportunity and responsibility to teach kindness by example. This month, model kindness and empower your children to show compassion to those around them with these activities.



## 1 Engage: Self-Love Letter

Carve out ten minutes and challenge your family to write themselves a love letter. Follow these simple steps: 1.) Kick it off with "Dear Me," and don't stop writing until the timer goes off. 2.) Tell yourself how amazing you are and list some of your positive qualities. Younger children may need some help with writing or thinking. They may want to draw a picture instead. 3.) Share your letters as a family when you finish. Be sure to affirm each other as you share.



## 2 Empower: Affirmation Boxes

Have each family member make and decorate their own "Affirmation Box" or bag to display in a central location in your home this month. At least three times a week, write a family member an affirmation and place it in their box. On the last day of the month, ask everyone to read their affirmations and feel the love!



## 3 Excel: Intentional Act of Kindness

As a family, make a list of 25 random acts of kindness you can accomplish this month. Then, make a plan for how you'll do each act. At the end of the month, reflect and celebrate. Encourage your child to share how it made them feel completing these random acts of kindness.

## Conversation Starters

♥ Why do you think it's important to be kind to others? To yourself?

♥ Describe a time when someone was kind to you. How did it make you feel?

♥ What is something kind you have done for someone else? How did it make you feel?

# Honor Me. Honor You.

Give honor and value to ourselves and others.

This month, we're focusing on respect, which comes in many forms: respect for life, for property, for parents, for elders, for nature, and for the beliefs and rights of others. **Respect includes being courteous and polite, as well as respecting yourself by avoiding self-criticism.** We can model respect for our children regarding how we speak to and treat them. Respect is not only an important character trait, but it can also be a source of real joy! Respect implies a certain appreciation, which makes us more aware of other people's needs and feelings.



## 1 Engage: Honor Board

As a family, create an Honor Board where family members and friends can write affirmations to the person of honor. (Make sure each family member gets to be the honoree.) The Honor Board can be made of construction paper, poster board, or a blank piece of paper. Once the board is complete, encourage the family member to display it so they can see it often and remember the great things others see in them.



## 2 Empower: Practice Forgiveness

Everyone makes mistakes. Ask each family member to share a story about a time they made a mistake (at school, work, home, etc.) and discuss what lessons they learned. Share this quote: "Mistakes don't define us, but how we respond to mistakes will." Ask, "How can we show honor for each other, even when we make a mistake or disagree?" Process each person's response and thank everyone for their willingness to share. Challenge each other to respond to mistakes this week with love and respect.



## 3 Excel: Honor Those Who Serve

Celebrate members of your community who lead through service to others. Write "Thank You" notes to someone that has helped or served your family. Consider people in your community like veterans, teachers, nurses/doctors, ministers, bus drivers, police officers, firefighters, mail carriers, etc. Deliver these notes with a special treat.

## Conversation Starters

- ♥ What is the biggest lesson you learned last year?
- ♥ What is something you want LESS of in the next year? Why?
- ♥ What is something you want MORE of this next year? Why?
- ♥ What makes you feel respected? Disrespected? Why?