



Edwardsburg Middle School

Middle School Matters

Friday, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019



**EMS FAMILIES –**

**It's homecoming week! Here are our spirit days -**

Monday (9/30/19)



Disney Day

Tuesday (10/01/19)



Throwback Decades Day

Wednesday (10/02/19)



Classic Movie Day

Thursday (10/03/19)



USA Day

Friday (10/04/19)



Orange and Blue Day



The championship intramural basketball program will focus on rules and fundamentals of the game. Emphasis will be placed on skills and participation. Skills competitions will be held each night. Any questions please contact: Coach Steve Wright or Coach Jeff Kozinski

\*Note: If players can't make it to every night, that's okay. There may be some schedule conflicts with other extracurricular activities. Players are just encouraged to make it to the nights they can.

Please also note: Players must be picked up promptly after practice.

Sign-up in one of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher classrooms by Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup>.

## **Student Support Services**

In our continued efforts to make Edwardsburg Schools a safe and bully free place for students to grow and learn, our administration invited the OK2SAY program to speak to all of our students during the week of September 23, 2019. The OK2SAY program is a statewide initiative from the Michigan office of Attorney General.

On Thursday, September 26, 2019 our Middle School students attended a presentation hosted by a representative of the OK2SAY program. Students were challenged to take a stand for student safety. Focusing on OK2SAY, the presentation covered bullying, cyber bullying, suicide talk, sexting, and threats. They also talked about the importance of empathy, perspective, and compassion. Students were challenged to pay attention to what is going on around them. If they see something that doesn't seem right, students were encouraged to step up and speak out. Students were also encouraged to be aware of the different ways they can submit a tip or report to OK2SAY. Reports can be made online, by phone or by text. The tip line number is 855-565-2729.



### **Teaching kids to stay focused under pressure**

For some kids, when the pressure's on, the ability to focus turns off. Here's how mindfulness lessons can help kids bypass distractions to do their best.

by: [Annie Murphy Paul](#) | September 23, 2019

If there's any time when we should be paying close attention to what we're doing, it's when we're under pressure to perform, whether on a test like the SAT or on a deadline at work. But too often, our minds wander even in these crucial moments, distracted by a ticking clock or consumed with worries about how well we're doing or how much time we have left.

Jonathan Schooler, a professor of psychology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, wondered if instruction in mindfulness — the capacity to focus on the here and now — could help. In a recent issue of the journal *Psychological Science*, he and his co-authors describe an experiment in which 48 undergraduates were randomly assigned to either a mindfulness class or a nutrition class. Both classes met for 45 minutes, four times a week, for two weeks. During the mindfulness class, participants sat on cushions in a circle; they were asked to pay focused attention to some aspect of sensory experience, like the sounds of their own breathing.

#### **Emotional spiral thinking**

They practiced distinguishing between the simple thoughts that naturally arise in our minds (I have a test tomorrow) and the thoughts that become “elaborated” with emotion (I'm really worried that I won't do well, and if I fail it, I'll have to take the class over, and then I won't graduate on time). The undergrads enrolled in the mindfulness class were taught how to reframe these more emotional concerns as mere “mental projections,” and how to allow their minds to rest naturally, rather than trying to suppress or get rid of their thoughts.

All of the participants, who had completed a measure of working memory and a verbal-reasoning section from the GRE (graduate school admissions exam) before the classes started, took these tests again after the classes were over. Researchers also checked how frequently the students' minds wandered while working on the tests. Schooler and his colleagues found that participants who had received the mindfulness training improved their GRE reading-comprehension scores and working-memory capacity, and experienced fewer distracting thoughts while completing the measures the second time.

Schooler notes that findings of his study are in line with other research showing that mindfulness training leads to reduced activation of the “default network,” a collection of regions in the brain that tend to become more active when our minds are at rest than when we're focused on a mentally challenging task. People who have been practicing meditation for many years — and even those who have undergone mindfulness training for just a couple of weeks — show reduced activation on brain

scans of this network, which has been associated with mind wandering. It may be the case, Schooler theorizes, that mindfulness training reduces mind wandering by “dampening” the activation of the default network, preventing our thoughts from straying.

### **IQ can be increased**

And this research carries an even more exciting implication, Schooler observes: “Counter to the long-standing assumption that mental aptitude is largely fixed across the life span,” he writes, a number of recent studies have indicated that IQ can be increased through targeted interventions like this one. “The present demonstration that mindfulness training improves cognitive function and minimizes mind wandering suggests that enhanced attentional focus may be key to unlocking skills that were, until recently, viewed as immutable.” Something to think about — or, actually, not think about — the next time you’re under pressure.



Middle school is a challenging time for the students as they often struggle to begin to find out who they are, or where they think they fit. The teachers, staff and administration, just as the parents and guardians work each day to help the students become the best version of themselves possible. With the upcoming homecoming week approaching, I am going to tap into my many years of coaching. I am constantly seeking knowledge from, and learning from those that are successful. Lou Holtz is one of the most inspirational coaches I have ever studied. Coach Holtz stated the following which has served as one of the building blocks of my personal and professional life. I believe these three rules are an excellent guide for students as they face their many decisions.



HAVE A GREAT WEEKEND EVERYONE!!

Rebecca Crocker

Middle School Principal

Andrew Jordan

Middle School Assistant Principal