



# MIDDLE OF THE KNIGHTS

Northeastern Middle School: Where Every Student Is Inspired to Learn and Empowered to Excel

## NMS Cross Country

By: Logan Stephen, Elijah Todd, Brian Campbell, and Gunnar Napier

Our amazing NMS cross country team has been extremely successful with many wins up their sleeve this season including the TEC meet, a large tournament with many competitive participating schools.

The NMS Cross Country roster is made up of sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. The sixth grade team has a strong roster made up of Winston Churchill, Broady Ross, Ian Webb and Matthew Kirkofe. The seventh grade runners, a competitive group, are Kaleb Moore, Aiden Shaffer, Logan Seal, Peter Hicks, Brandt Benjamin, Cooper Cline, Caleb Larsh, Aiden Brinker, and Lucas Chamness. The eighth grade team celebrating their final middle school season includes Dalton Justice, Matthew Truitt, Ayven Fields, Keenai Whiting, and Dylan Wood.

Logan Seal, a 7th grade runner tells us, “My favorite thing about cross country is being able to talk to my friends.” Logan looks forward to practices and meets to spend quality time with his teammates. His testimony reveals that athletics are a great way for NMS students to build lasting friendships through sportsmanship and camaraderie. Logan also says, “My personal record at a meet is 12:57 minutes.” Something that motivates him to do his best is listening to music while he runs.

Aiden Shaffer, another 7th grade runner states, “Cross Country has impacted me in a way that helps me persevere through tough times.” Cross Country requires great strength, and mental focus. Aiden's personal record on a 2.1 mile run is 16:48 minutes. Aiden has put in the work necessary to be a successful runner.

The NMS cross country team has worked so hard to achieve their goals. They've succeeded in amazing feats this year and have made the district proud.

## The NMS Volleyball Team

By: Ellie Warren, Olivia Null, Chloe Abney-Brotz



The NMS volleyball team, as their season comes to an end, is very happy with their progress this school year. Not only have they persevered through challenges on the court, but they have also made the best of their season while following the proper COVID safety measures. The team has bonded like a family throughout their time together this year.

Delighted about how her season turned out, Rachel Berry stated, “I think that our season went very well, and that we played very good for some of us being new to the sport, and we also got closer to our team.” Rachel, an eighth grade student at NMS, is still pleased with her season despite the added challenges due to COVID restrictions. She explained, “Although we wear a mask, we get to take it off while actually playing, I feel that it is not much different rather than us wearing a mask, and the limited number of people at our games.”

The team has worked very hard to make the season feel normal, and also prioritize student and spectator safety. It is a win, win. When asked about her overall experience, Rachel noted, “My favorite part of the season was the Blue River Tourney. Although we lost, I enjoyed the excitement of getting up early, and the bus rides, they're full of conversations. Overall, we had fun and got closer as a team.”

Overall the teams are very pleased with how their season ended. They were able to build strong friendships and memories that will last forever.

# Meet the 7th Grade Teachers

By: John Wallace, Ava Mikesell, Reese Dumford, Korbyn Lehman



## **Ms. Wetzel - Math, Math Lab, Geometric Art**

Ms. Wetzel radiates joy. When students have questions she never fails to answer them. Ms. Wetzel's favorite part about being a teacher is, "A chance to be a small part in a person's life. It is a gift to be able to help others." She loves helping people be successful, especially if it is something someone might struggle with or find difficult. She states, "I love solving problems, and my favorite topic to teach is solving two-step equations. That is why I wanted to teach math." Ms. Wetzel loves her dogs! If she could be anything besides a teacher she would run a doggy-daycare or work in a store with the coolest dog toys and supplies.

## **Miss Emrick - English, English Lab, Creative Writing for Publications**

Miss Emrick is a positive teacher. Students love being in her class not only because of the good vibes but because of her positive attitude. When asked about her favorite part of being a teacher, she states, "My favorite part about being a teacher is interacting with my students while reading books and stories they've never read before. I love seeing how students react to the big plot moments in the novels they read and hearing their opinions." Miss Emrick enjoyed school as a student. She was involved in sports and clubs such as cheerleading, volleyball, and FFA. She decided her junior year that she would attend a career technical school for their teacher academy program. Miss Emrick has always wanted to be a teacher, but if she wasn't a teacher she states, "I would love to do any type of job that deals with organization."

## **Mrs. Mitchell - Science, Medical Detectives, App Creators**

Mrs. Mitchell creates a happy and safe environment for her students. She always has a big smile on her face. Mrs. Mitchell says her favorite part about being a teacher is she loves the "Ah-ha!" moments. She states, "Those are the moments when students have been thinking and trying to figure something out and then it finally clicks!" Mrs. Mitchell loves working with people and learning new things. She states, "I worked in a factory for 15 years after highschool. Some of my favorite tasks at work were when I got to train people on new tasks." Mrs. Mitchell thought she would originally teach math, but in college she realized she enjoyed science classes. She states, "Academically I always did pretty well, but I also loved getting to be with my friends." If Mrs. Mitchell was anything else, she would be a singer. She loves to sing!

## **Ms. Reno - Geography, Exploring Colleges and Careers, Genius Hour**

Ms. Reno is an amazing social studies teacher. Ms. Reno loves being a teacher because she enjoys seeing the "lightbulb" go off when she's teaching. Ms Reno stated, "I decided I wanted to become a teacher after I'd been working at Girls Inc. in Richmond while in college." Ms. Reno has always had a passion for history and enjoys teaching all types of history. Some of her favorite subjects to teach are Greek Mythology, WWII, and ancient Egypt. Ms. Reno loved school as a student because she loved learning new things and trying new subjects. Mrs. Reno also states, "If I could be anything else, I would be an author. I absolutely love to read fiction, and fantasy books." She would love to have a book published of her own.

## **Ms. Hendrickson - Wellness 7, Lifetime Fitness, Health Skills and Careers**

Ms. Hendrickson is the one of the middle school physical education and health teachers. She is an awesome teacher that develops strong relationships with her students. She states, "I had a very positive role model in middle school who made learning fun. In high school, she was my tennis coach and she encouraged me to go into teaching and coaching." Ms. Hendrickson's favorite part of teaching is when the students get a content click of an "ah-ha" moment. This led Ms. Hendrickson to become a teacher of physical education and health. In gym class, she enjoys all sport units. In health class, her favorite unit is teaching about tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs. If Ms. Hendrickson wasn't a teacher, she would like to be an athletic trainer for a professional sports team.

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# Virtual Learning Spotlight - Student Activities

By: Marissa Gordnier

Northeastern Middle School students have been very busy the past few months. With studying, friends, and school, there is a lot on their plates. Have you ever been curious about what your classmates are up to outside of school? Many students enjoy different parts of their school day compared to what they enjoy at home.

When asked about her overall feelings about this school year, sixth grade student, Brooklyn Stevens, explained, “I feel that this year is a little stressful on behalf of the masks and how we have to be isolated from our classmates, our other friends, etc.” Like Brooklyn, some students are missing the close interaction between friends and classmates they were once able to have, but are making the absolute best out of keeping one another safe this school year. To keep her head up, Brooklyn shared what she likes to do in her spare time. She shared, “I usually read, watch YouTube, draw, or watch tik-tok.” This is Brooklyn’s first year at Northeastern Middle School, so it was naturally stressful at first. The students and staff at NMS have relieved a lot of her stress, though.

Virtual learners, students who are completing coursework at home, are being creative in finding ways to take brain breaks and disconnect from the screen to recharge. To help her reset and refocus on her school work, seventh grade student, Isabelle Brown, shared that playing with playdough would often help her refocus. To keep up with activities she enjoys during this time, Isabelle mentioned drawing and watching YouTube are activities she enjoys. NMS students have a range of ideas on how to stay connected, but great ideas on what to do when it’s time to disconnect, too.

This school year, the learning environment around NMS students seems to be changing by the minute. Some moments are moving faster than others, and it can sometimes be hard or stressful to adjust to this new learning environment, but NMS students are doing a wonderful job of trying hard, persevering, and adapting providing them with important life skills they can use for the future.

## The NMS Cheer Squad

By: Ellie Warren, Olivia Null, Chloe Abney-Brotz



The NMS cheer squad had a great season. While they wish it wasn’t coming to an end, everyone had a great time. They have connected as a team, and are now like a family.

Seventh grade student and cheer squad member, Chloe Abney-Brotz stated, “I feel like the season went well even considering COVID-19. While there were some restrictions with COVID, the season wasn’t that different. We all wore masks, which really wasn’t a problem. My favorite part of the season was riding the bus for away games. We all sang songs and bonded really well. Overall, I feel like the season was great.”

The whole squad echoes Chloe’s positive feelings as the season comes to an end. The football team had some wins and losses, and the cheer squad was there to keep them energized the whole way. They loved being together and are already looking forward to next season.



# NMS COVID-19 Updates

By: Josie Retz, Tiffany Horner, and Karissa Toney

This school year has started out as one students will never forget, and the routines and COVID restrictions have quickly become second nature for the students and staff at NMS. While this year has presented challenges, students are still able to have a great school experience. Some recent updates have been put in place in terms of COVID safety guidelines. Recently, some of the restrictions were lifted giving students a little more freedom. These updates include getting lockers, having five people instead of three at the lunch tables, and many virtual students opting to come back to NMS.

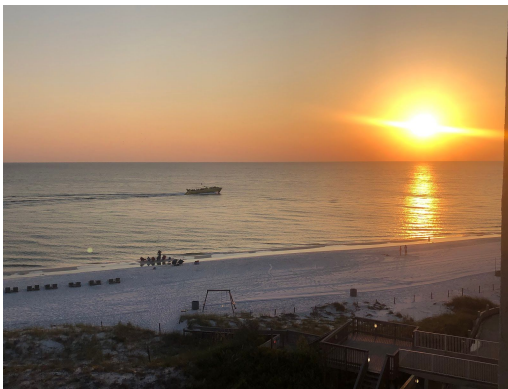
Mrs. Plank, the NMS principal, stated, “I think the students do enjoy the lockers, but I also think that there’s a balance between having backpacks and having lockers.” Students now get lockers, but they will continue to carry their backpacks with them. Currently, students are permitted to use their lockers in the morning for coats and in the afternoon to take their coats home. Mrs. Plank stated, “I think that COVID has positively affected this school by all of us having to work together to make sure everything works.” Simply put, NMS students have definitely come together for the best during this time period.

Lucy Couch, an eighth grade student that was previously virtual, stated, “Coming back to school is actually a big change from being virtual, but I do like it after not being at school all year.” Lucy recently came back from being virtual and is now at school for in person coursework. Lucy stated, “I like school because I can listen to the teachers and ask questions more easily.” From Lucy’s experience, in person instruction is a little more time consuming than virtual learning, but she feels it is much easier to learn and pay attention. Lucy shared, “I prefer in person school more, but virtual was also pretty cool. At school I get to see more people rather than just my family.” There are pros and cons about both learning options, but at NMS students get a great social interaction experience.

Even through challenging times, NMS always focuses on the positive. While the school has gone through some difficult changes, NMS is staying strong and sticking together.

## Fall Break

By: Jenna Buckler and Brooklynn Creech



Many people decided not to travel over Fall Break due to COVID-19, so many students and staff stayed home and found other fun activities to do. Traveling or not, students and staff, along with their families looked forward to the short break from school.

Mrs. Moreland stayed home with her family during break. Before leaving, she mentioned, “The kids and I are going to have a pajama day, where we stay in our jammies ALL DAY LONG!” She shared her plans on going to a pumpkin patch and a wedding. She was excited to spend an entire week with her family.

Ava Mikesell, an eighth grade student, was able to travel. She shared her plan for break as well. She explained, “I am going to Panama City in Florida.” She also mentioned that the plan was to stay there for the entire week with a friend and some of her family. When asked what they did upon her return, she shared, “We spent most of the time at the beach and played some games like corn hole and just did some fun activities.”

As mentioned, some people didn’t travel because of COVID-19. Here are some activities some of them did at home during this break.

Pajama Day

Picnics

Outside Play

At Home Movie Theater

Decorating for Holidays

Baking

Pulling an “All Nighter”

Sleepover with Friend

# NMS Adopts a Unified Positive Behavior Reward System

By: Alexis Booher, Aiden Shaffer, Samara Carr

This school year NMS is excited to introduce a new platform called PBIS to the middle school staff and students. PBIS is a positive behavioral interventions and support program where students can earn points to spend on rewards they choose based on their demonstration of positive behavior while at school. Last year, NMS grade levels all had a system in place, but each used something different. For example, sixth grade used Class Dojo, seventh grade used Liveschool, and eighth grade piloted the PBIS program. Each program was similar, but after deliberating as a middle school staff, PBIS appeared to be the best fit for the middle school as a whole.

PBIS is an online point system, also found on student iPads as an app, used to incentivize students to follow the Three Rs which are the fundamental NMS Knight expectations. These expectations are to be respectful, responsible and ready to learn. Throughout the school day, teachers work diligently to spot students following these expectations and award points to students practicing these positive behaviors on the spot. For example, points can be awarded while in the classroom for being organized, on time, having assignments completed, helping out a peer or staff member, and participating in class discussions. Clear expectations for each “R” are specified to students at the beginning of the year and throughout. There are clear expectations for following the Three Rs in the classroom, hallway, restroom, cafeteria, and bus.

Some positive behaviors students have highlighted that they have earned points for so far this school year include wearing their mask properly and picking up trash. Students can check their awarded points by opening the app and viewing their profile. The number of points they’ve earned appear there. 8th grade teacher, Mr. Avery states, “I like the new system. It is the same one that the 8th grade team used last year so I was used to it.” To earn points, students know they must exhibit behavior that is responsible, respectful, and ready to learn. Bringing all necessary materials to class and being on task when class begins can help students earn points for the responsible expectation, actively listening and following directions are a great way for students to earn points for the respect expectation, and checking the Canvas agenda and following step by step procedures can help students earn points for the ready to learn expectation.

With their points earned, students can make purchases from a reward menu provided by the office. Students can view this menu on the PBIS app at their convenience. This is especially great for students to be able to plan and set goals for themselves. A menu based on point value is included below. This menu is expected to grow as students and staff become more familiar with PBIS.

20 Points	40 Points	60 Points
First in Lunch Line	Bag of Chips	Tik Tok Challenge
Positive Call Home	Hat Day	Breakfast with the Principal
Stickers	Stylus	Lunch in Court Yard with Two Friends
Brain Break Pass	Song of the Day	
Mechanical Pencils	Candy Bar	
Say the Pledge on Announcements	Pajama Day	
Hot Chocolate or Lemonade		

Northeastern is very excited to use PBIS. NMS principal, Mrs. Plank states, “I love it. I love being able to give student rewards for the efforts that they are making at school to be a good Knight and make responsible and respectful decisions towards their peers and teachers.” Mrs. Plank is just as excited about PBIS as the students. She explains, “PBIS is always a work in progress. I would like to start a student advisory committee to help guide the PBIS store in the future. That will probably begin next year. This year is just a learning and adjusting year.” While students and staff have a lot to learn about the new program, PBIS is already off to a fantastic start pushing students to bring their best selves each day.

