FREEDOM MIDDLE SCHOOL PARENT ACADEMY SESSION #4



Cherokee County School District

SUPPORTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY GOVERNANCE MODEL

Core Beliefs

1. All students are highly engaged in their education and capable of reaching their full learning potential.
2. Employees are trusted and supported as professionals and provided with resources to elevate student outcomes.
3. Families and our community are involved partners in student success and can expect all students to receive the best education possible.
4. Schools are positive and welcoming environments with clear expectations and accountability in all academic and operational areas.

Core Policies

Policy **BAB**: **School Board Governance**
Balanced Autonomy with Supportive Accountability
Cohesive System of Teaching & Learning
- Standards
- Instructional Resources
- Monitoring Student Learning

Accountability & Support
- Superintendent Evaluation
- Aligned School Improvement Goals
- Targeted Support

Policy **IFAD**: **Literacy in CCSD**

Student Achievement Goals

	READING Baseline (2024) / GOAL (2027)	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS Baseline (2024) / GOAL (2027)	MATHEMATICS Baseline (2024) / GOAL (2027)
3rd Grade	72% → 78%	47% → 53%	57% → 65%
4th Grade	65% → 71%	47% → 53%	61% → 70%
5th Grade	78% → 84%	56% → 62%	56% → 65%
6th Grade	63% → 69%	48% → 54%	44% → 50%
7th Grade	74% → 78%	45% → 54%	48% → 60%
8th Grade	75% → 81%	48% → 54%	51% → 59%
High School	80% → 86%	56% → 62%	49% → 55%

Key Priorities

1. Elevate the Excellence in academics and achievement for all students
2. Elevate the Excellence in effective School Board-Superintendent Governance
3. Elevate the Excellence in the district's coordination of goals, systems, and processes
4. Elevate the Excellence by embracing a pervasive high-quality school environment defined by high standards, effective supports, and consistent practices

Elevate the Excellence!

FLATT – Q1 CELEBRATIONS

Quarter 1 is complete!

7/9 content areas showed adequate improvement towards our FY27 School Improvement Plan (SIP) Goals

8th Grade Math achieved the FY27 SIP Goal!

6th Grade Class Transitions have been great!

6th Grade Behavior has been great!

Family support of Cell Phone protocols has been incredible!

FREEDOM SIP PROGRESS

READING & ELA

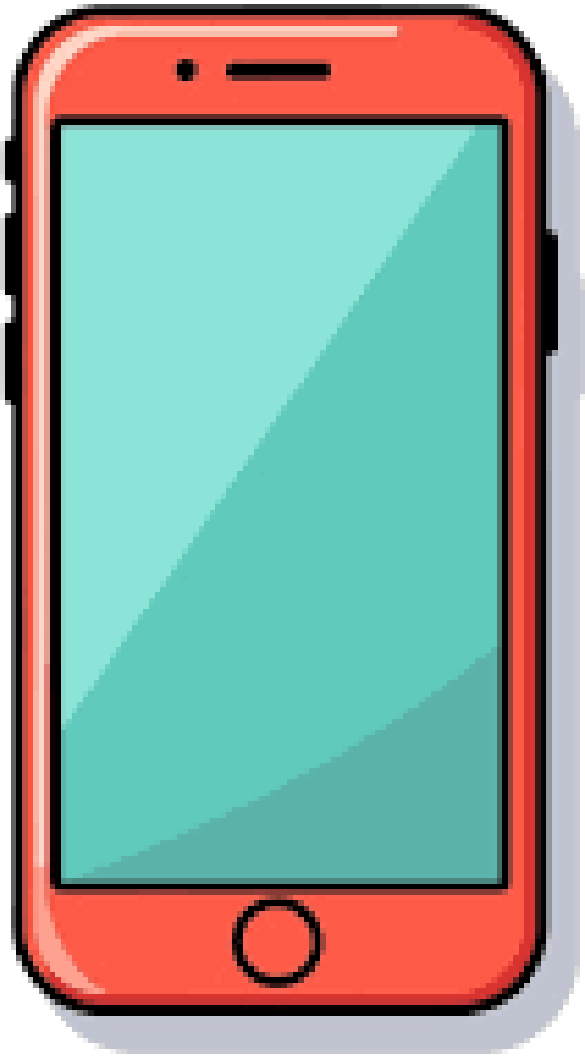
Reading Proficiency (% at/above target)				
Grade	23/24 (Baseline)	24/25 Progress	25/26 Progress	26/27 Goal
6th	65.2	71.9		75.2
7th	65.2	79.7		88.1
8th	65.2	75.9		88.7
ELA Milestones (% of 3's/4's)				
Grade	23/24 (Baseline)	24/25 Progress	25/26 Progress	26/27 Goal
6th	48.8	53.3		58.8
7th	50.7	54.1		60.7
8th	52.3	43.4		62.3

MATH & ATTENDANCE

Math Milestones (% of 3's/4's)				
Grade	23/24 (Baseline)	24/25 Progress	25/26 Progress	26/27 Goal
6th	46.6	55.9		58.6
7th	50.7	51.5		62.7
8th	59.2	74		71.2
Attendance				
	24/25 (Baseline)	25/26 Progress	26/27 Progress	27/28 Goal
Average Daily Attendance	94.6			97.5

FLATT – NOTE ABOUT CELL PHONES

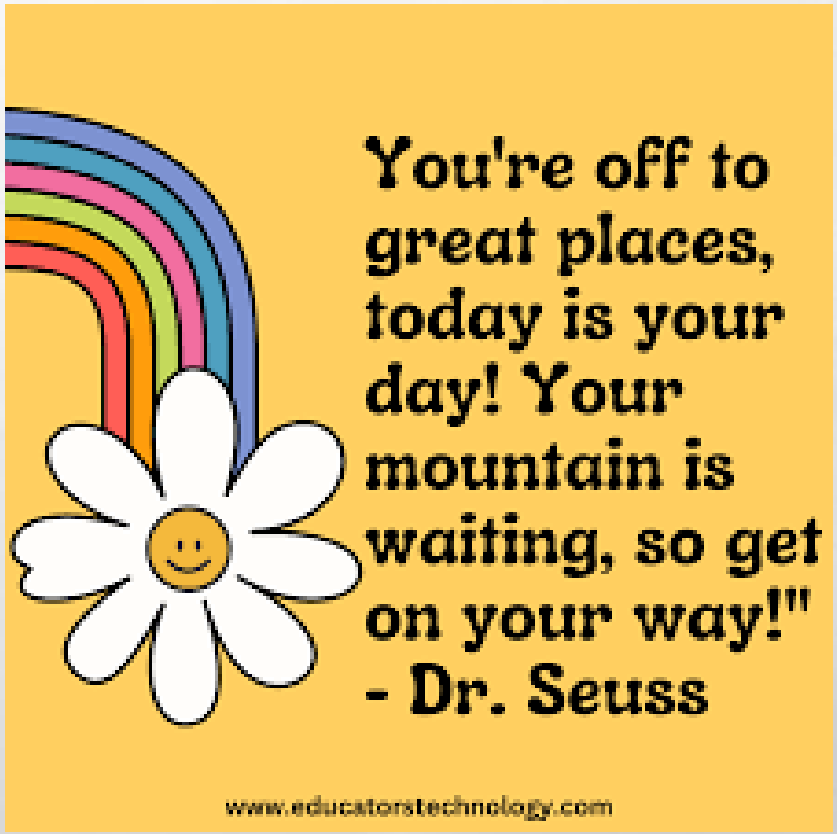
- SIX CELL PHONE WARNINGS FOR 6TH GRADE!!!!
- 52 WARNINGS/VIOLATIONS OVERALL FOR Q1—VAST IMPROVEMENT.



WELCOME

Welcome to the 2025-26 school year! Our hope in creating this PowerPoint is to introduce ourselves, help you understand our role as counselors, and provide a bit of insight into what the middle school experience may be like for both you as a parent and for your student.

We are eager to connect with you and your student as you navigate middle school. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us with any questions or concerns!



ABOUT US

Mrs. Sarah Bigelow



My name is Sarah Bigelow, and I am the counselor for 6th and 7th grade (A-K) students this year. This is my 10th year at Freedom Middle School, and the time has flown by! Prior to being a school counselor, I worked in child advocacy, adolescent residential, school based mental health, and child protective services. When I'm not at work, I love to explore the outdoors with my family and cheering my daughter on in her various activities.

Ms. Leslie Holley



My name is Leslie Holley, and I am the counselor for 7th (L-Z) and 8th grade students this year. This is my first year at Freedom Middle School and my 7th year as a school counselor. I previously worked at a middle and elementary school and am very excited to get back to middle school counseling. My daughter and I are new to Cherokee County and are looking forward to building a beautiful life here!

💙 THE ROLE OF YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR

- HERE'S HOW WE SUPPORT YOU AND YOUR STUDENT:
- 📘 INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING
- 👥 SMALL GROUP SESSIONS
- 🤝 CONFLICT RESOLUTION
- 🏠 PARENT CONSULTATION
- 📅 ATTENDANCE SUPPORT
- 🎯 STUDENT COACHING



THE MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

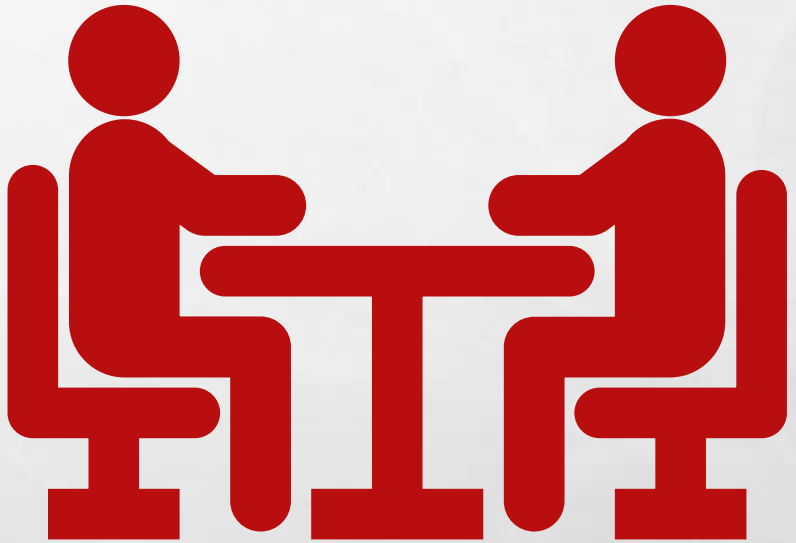
- AN EXCITING TIME OF GROWTH AND DISCOVERY!
- STUDENTS ARE BECOMING MORE INDEPENDENT AND EXPLORING NEW INTERESTS
- ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS RISE — SIX CLASSES, MORE RESPONSIBILITY
- 6TH GRADE IS A BIG TRANSITION, BUT KIDS ADJUST QUICKLY AND THRIVE
- YOU'LL BE AMAZED BY THEIR GROWTH FROM 6TH TO 8TH GRADE!



THE MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

WHAT YOU MIGHT NOTICE ABOUT YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER:

- FRIENDS RULE THE WORLD! THEY CARE DEEPLY ABOUT WHAT PEERS THINK
- BIG CHANGES AHEAD — NEW EMOTIONS, NEW PRIORITIES, LOTS OF GROWTH.
- UPS AND DOWNS HAPPEN — CONFIDENCE AND GRADES MAY DIP (IT'S TEMPORARY!)
- FITTING IN IS EVERYTHING — EXPECT SHIFTS IN STYLE, INTERESTS, AND FRIENDS
- THEY'RE FIGURING OUT WHO THEY ARE — AND IT CAN CHANGE DAILY!
- PUSHING LIMITS IS PART OF LEARNING INDEPENDENCE.
- THEY STILL NEED YOU — EVEN WHEN THEY ROLL THEIR EYES ABOUT IT 💔



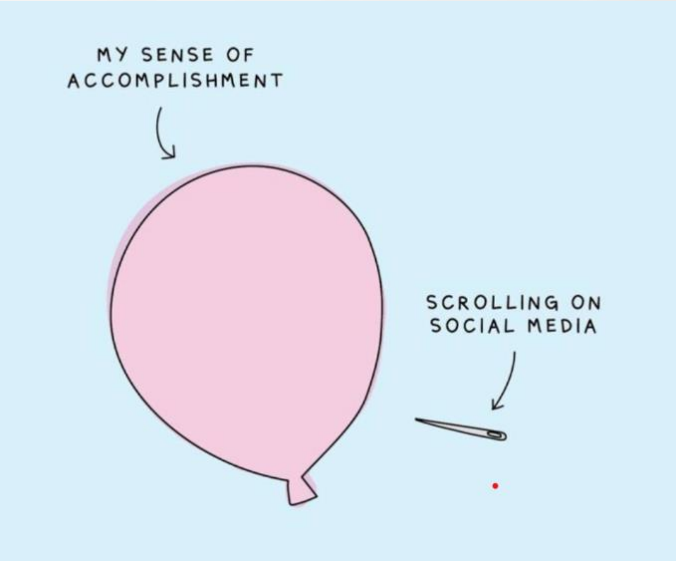
HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER

- ENCOURAGE BALANCE: HEALTHY HABITS, FUN ACTIVITIES, AND LESS SCREEN TIME
- STAY CONNECTED: SPEND TIME TOGETHER AND KEEP CONVERSATIONS OPEN
- LISTEN MORE, LECTURE LESS: ASK QUESTIONS AND VALIDATE THEIR FEELINGS
- BE PATIENT: INDEPENDENCE TESTING IS PART OF GROWING UP
- MODEL WHAT MATTERS: SHOW KINDNESS, COURAGE, AND HOW TO HANDLE MISTAKES
- PROMOTE INCLUSION: HELP THEM BUILD POSITIVE FRIENDSHIPS
- LET THEM PROBLEM-SOLVE: SUPPORT WITHOUT RESCUING — CONFIDENCE GROWS THROUGH CHALLENGES



TECH TALK: FINDING BALANCE

- MONITOR DEVICES CLOSELY — EVEN “SAFE” APPS CAN HAVE HIDDEN ACCESS
- KEEP AN EYE ON CONTENT — NOT EVERYTHING ONLINE IS AGE-APPROPRIATE
- REMEMBER: NO APP? THEY CAN STILL ACCESS THINGS THROUGH BROWSERS
- WATCH THE SCROLL TIME — SOCIAL MEDIA CAN CHIP AWAY AT SELF-ESTEEM
- “COMPARISON IS THE THIEF OF JOY” — REMIND THEM REAL LIFE > ONLINE LIFE
- COLLECT DEVICES AT BEDTIME — EVEN GOOD KIDS CAN’T RESIST TEMPTATION!
- AT SCHOOL: NO PHONES DURING THE DAY — AND THAT’S A GOOD THING!



ATTENDANCE MATTERS

- NEW STATE LAW (SB123): SCHOOLS MUST CLOSELY MONITOR ATTENDANCE
- AFTER 5 UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:
  - THE FMS ATTENDANCE REVIEW TEAM (A.R.T.) MEETS WITH FAMILIES
  - TOGETHER, WE CREATE A PLAN TO SUPPORT CONSISTENT ATTENDANCE
- OUR GOAL: PARTNER WITH FAMILIES TO KEEP STUDENTS PRESENT, LEARNING, AND GROWING
- WHEN YOUR STUDENT IS SICK: PLEASE SEND A PARENT OR DOCTOR'S NOTE TO EXCUSE THE ABSENCE





- **EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING IS STILL DEVELOPING** – AND NOW THEY JUGGLE **6 CLASSES!**
- THEY MAY NEED GUIDANCE WITH:
  - TIME MANAGEMENT
  - STUDY SKILLS
  - ORGANIZATION
- TEACH - **PRACTICING GOOD HABITS** AND **LEARNING FROM MISTAKES**

BUILDING INDEPENDENCE & GOOD HABITS

ACADEMIC SUPPORT-STUDY SKILLS

1. ORGANIZATION & PLANNING
   - **PLAN DUE DATES** - WHAT IS DUE SOON? MAKE A PLAN. WHAT IS DUE LATER AND WHAT PARTS CAN I WORK ON NOW? (I.E., PROJECTS).
   - **CHECK WEEKLY PLANNER** DAILY
   - **BREAK LARGE TASKS INTO CHUNKS** - DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO STUDY.
   - **MONTHLY TRANSFER** - CLEAN OUT BINDERS, FOLDERS, AND BACKPACKS MONTHLY TO PREVENT BUILDUP.

2. NOTE-TAKING SKILLS
   - **DON'T RELY ON MEMORY** - USE A PLANNER; IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE 9AM 😉
   - **TAKE NOTES**: SUMMARIZE, RATHER THAN COPY WORD FOR WORD 💡

STUDY SKILLS CONTINUED

3. **FOCUS & ENVIRONMENT**
   - **DESIGNATE A STUDY SPACE** – QUIET, WELL-LIT, WITH MINIMAL DISTRACTIONS.
   - **USE TIMERS** – 20 MINUTES WORK, 5 MINUTES BREAK.
   - **LIMIT DISTRACTIONS** – KEEP PHONES/TABLETS AWAY UNLESS NEEDED FOR STUDYING.

STUDY SKILLS CONTINUED

4. COMMUNICATION & ASKING FOR HELP

- **TEACH** THEM TO EMAIL TEACHERS POLITELY WITH QUESTIONS (SELF-ADVOCACY).
- **ENCOURAGE** THEM TO ASK FOR CLARIFICATION DURING CLASS.
- **TALK** WITH YOUR CHILD AND ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DAY AND ASSIGNMENTS. STAY INVOLVED!

STUDY SKILLS CONTINUED

- 5. **WELLNESS & MOTIVATION**
  - **TEACH BALANCE** – BREAKS, SNACKS, AND MOVEMENT IMPROVE FOCUS.
  - **SLEEP MATTERS** – AT LEAST 8–9 HOURS PER NIGHT.
  - **SET SMALL GOALS AND REWARDS** (WHEN-THEN) – "WHEN I FINISH MATH, THEN I'LL PLAY OUTSIDE FOR 15 MINUTES."
  - **ENCOURAGE A GROWTH MINDSET** – "I CAN'T DO THIS *YET*" INSTEAD OF "I CAN'T."

CANVAS INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO

WATCH THIS CANVAS TUTORIAL FOR INFORMATION REGARDING:

- CHECKING GRADES
- ACCESSING ASSIGNMENTS
- VIEWING WEEKLY PLANNERS

- CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE VIDEO

JOIN PTSA

- ABOUT YOUR FMS PTSA:
- OUR MISSION IS TO MAKE EVERY CHILD'S POTENTIAL A REALITY BY ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES TO ADVOCATE FOR ALL CHILDREN. WITH YOUR HELP, WE CAN CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARDS PTSA'S GOAL OF A QUALITY EDUCATION AND NURTURING ENVIRONMENT FOR EVERY CHILD.
- INCOME FROM MEMBERSHIPS IS THE MAIN WAY WE FUND STUDENT AND TEACHER INCENTIVES. PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING!

CONTACT INFORMATION

- IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS RELATED TO YOUR STUDENT, PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO REACH OUT TO US! WE LOOK FORWARD TO PARTNERING WITH YOU TO HELP YOUR STUDENT BE AS SUCCESSFUL AS THEY CAN BE.

- MRS. SARAH BIGELOW IS THE COUNSELOR FOR STUDENTS IN 6TH AND 7TH (A-K) GRADE. HER EMAIL ADDRESS IS SARAH.BIGELOW@CHEROKEEK12.NET AND HER PHONE NUMBER IS 770-704-1124.

- MS. LESLIE HOLLEY IS THE COUNSELOR FOR 7TH (L-Z) AND 8TH GRADE STUDENTS. SHE IS ALSO THE SECTION 504 CHAIR THIS YEAR. HER EMAIL ADDRESS IS LESLIE.HOLLEY@CHEROKEEK12.NET AND HER PHONE NUMBER IS 770-704-1130.