Beyond the Bell - Building Student Buy-In

Purposeful Homeroom, Academic Incentives, and Embedded Intervention at Eastbrook Middle School

Mr. Todd Lunsford, Principal

Mr. Samuel Garver, Assistant Principal

IASP Assistant Principals and Fall Professionals Conference

Please Share – Why Are You Here?

We are so glad you chose our session!

To maximize our time together, we would love to know:

- **What is the ONE thing that you are hoping to take from this session back to your own building?**



Photo Space: Daily Homeroom In Action

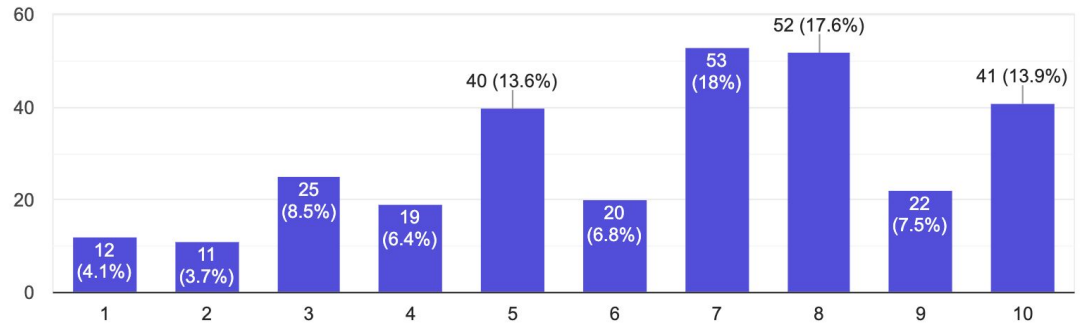
How We Got Here – What Our Students Told Us

- 95% of our students agreed that:
  - Having fun at school directly correlates to enjoying learning
  - Having positive relationships with teachers and staff impacts how much they enjoy school
  - Friends have a significant impact on their educational experience

How much do you enjoy homeroom?

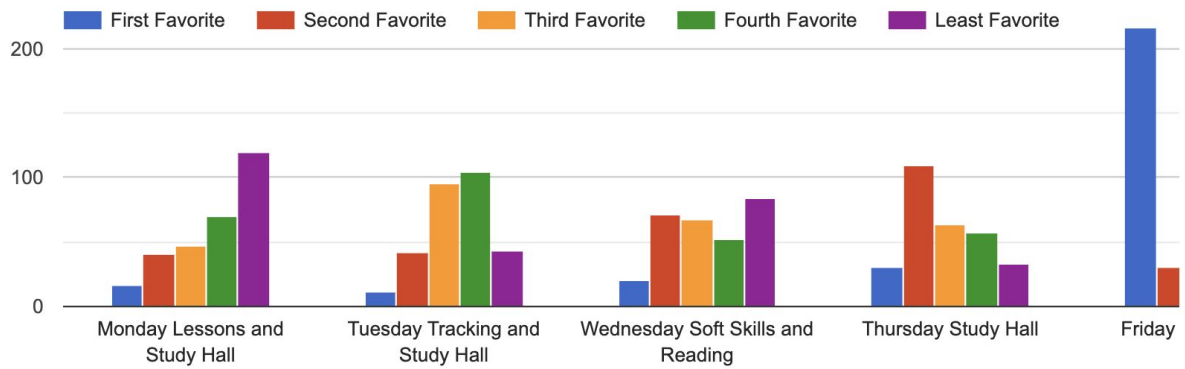
Copy chart

295 responses



Which is your favorite day of homeroom. Rank them.

Copy chart



Eastbrook Middle School

Academic Excellence

- **Grant County**
  Annually striving for the top scores in our county.
- **Regional Leader**
  Specific grade levels and subjects have ranked in the 80th percentile or higher or our area.
- **Beyond the Numbers**
  Our mission emphasizes high academic expectations, while also developing the character, interests, and passions of our students.

People & Community

Higher Ed Partners

Strong ties to nearby Taylor University and Indiana Wesleyan University.

Strong Tradition

Like many rural districts, we have multi-generation families with strong loyalties to our district and Grant County.

Supportive Families

Strong family involvement and active community backing for new school initiatives.

School Profile

- **Student Body**
  Serve 340 students Grades 6–8
- **Rural Setting**
  Tight-knit community in eastern Grant County.
- **Demographics**
  87% White, 6% Hispanic, 5% Multiracial, 1% Black, 1% Other
- **Economic Diversity**
  43% (155 students) eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

EASTBROOK MIDDLE SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Eastbrook Middle School commits to **engaging students** in **taking ownership** of their learning, promoting the **highest level** of **student achievement**, and **inspiring** the development of **character, interests, and passions** that lead students to **serve and care for others.**

VISION STATEMENT

At Eastbrook Middle School, we envision students developing a **strong sense of self**—understanding their unique strengths, academic skills, and creative passions—and leaving middle school **prepared for success in high school, life, and beyond.**

BELIEFS

At Eastbrook Middle School:

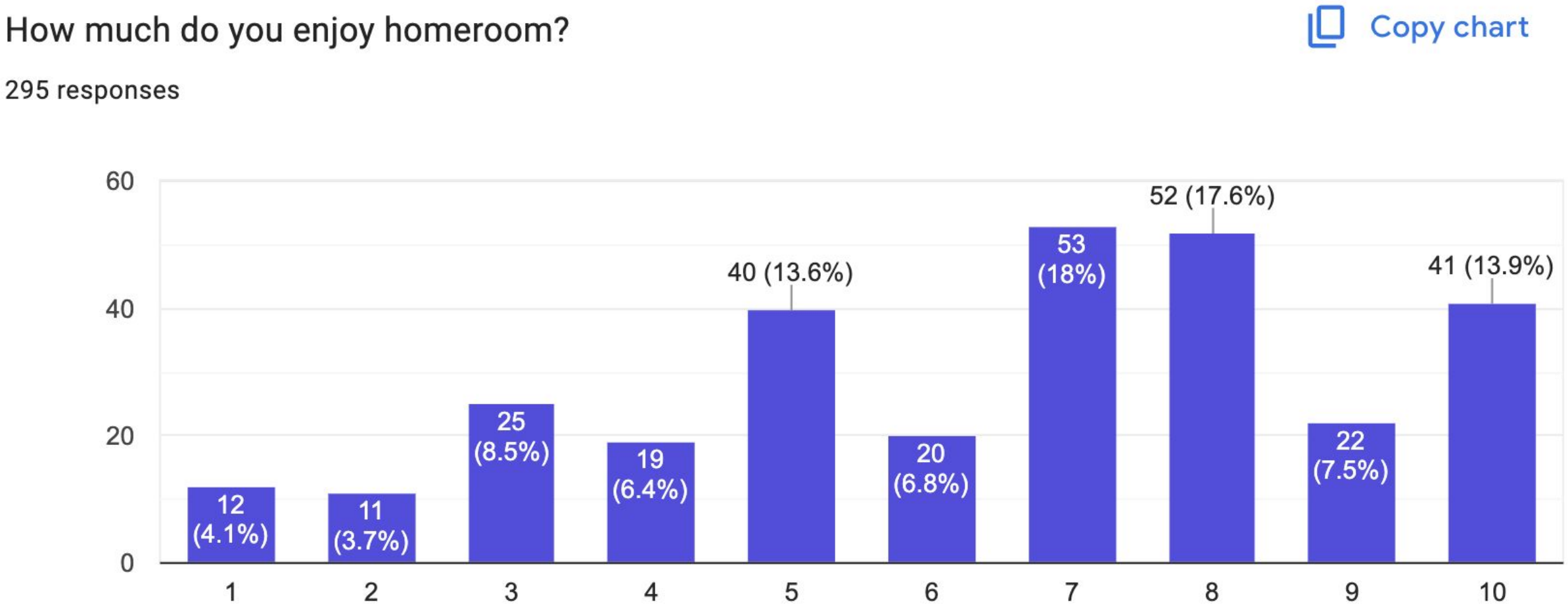
- We believe all students **can learn, grow,** and **succeed.**
- We believe all students have **strengths, talents,** and **passions** that can be elevated.
- We believe all students should learn in a **safe and supportive** learning environment.
- We believe **digital citizenship** and **responsible technology use** are essential for students' safety and well-being.
- We believe students thrive when **school and home work together** in partnership.

ENGAGE - ACHIEVE - SERVE

Why Homeroom Matters

Shifting homeroom from "extra time" into an intentional 30-minute cornerstone period that drives engagement, relationships, and culture every day.

How Much Do You Enjoy Homeroom?



Rethinking the 30-Minute Homeroom Block

The Challenge

- Traditional homeroom often becomes unstructured or lost time.
- Middle schoolers need daily reset, reconnect, and refocus opportunities.
- Creating meaningful connections outside core academic periods can be difficult.

What We Tried

- Team building exercises to help bond homerooms.
- Short movie clips where classes discussed character traits.
- Weekly soft skills lessons—too much rotation for teachers to track.

Our Solution

- Scheduled daily in the middle of the school day for maximum impact.
- Daily Focuses for Each Homeroom Period
- Designed to provide predictable routines while honoring staff and student ownership.
- Annually Reviewed - We seek student and staff feedback to continue to improve the use of this time.

Homeroom Structure

Consistency Drives Culture

- Each day of the week serves a distinct, dedicated purpose.
- This gives students clear expectations.
- Grants staff creative ownership over student growth.
- Meeting mid-day allows students to decompress, address missing work, and build lifelong connections before afternoon classes.



2026-2027 EMS Daily Schedule

MIDDLE SCHOOL DAILY SCHEDULE	
1st	8:05 - 8:52
2nd	8:56 - 9:43
3rd	9:47 - 10:34
4th (HR):	10:38 - 11:08
5th	11:12 - 11:59
6th	12:03 - 1:23
6A - Lunch	12:23 - 12:53
6B - Lunch	12:53 - 1:23
7th	1:27 - 2:14
8th	2:18 - 3:05

MIDDLE SCHOOL 2-HOUR DELAY SCHEDULE	
1st	10:05 - 10:40
2nd	10:44 - 11:19
3rd	11:23 - 11:58
5th	12:02 - 12:37
6th	12:41 - 1:47
6A - Lunch	12:37 - 1:07
6B - Lunch	1:17 - 1:47
7th	1:51 - 2:26
8th	2:30 - 3:05

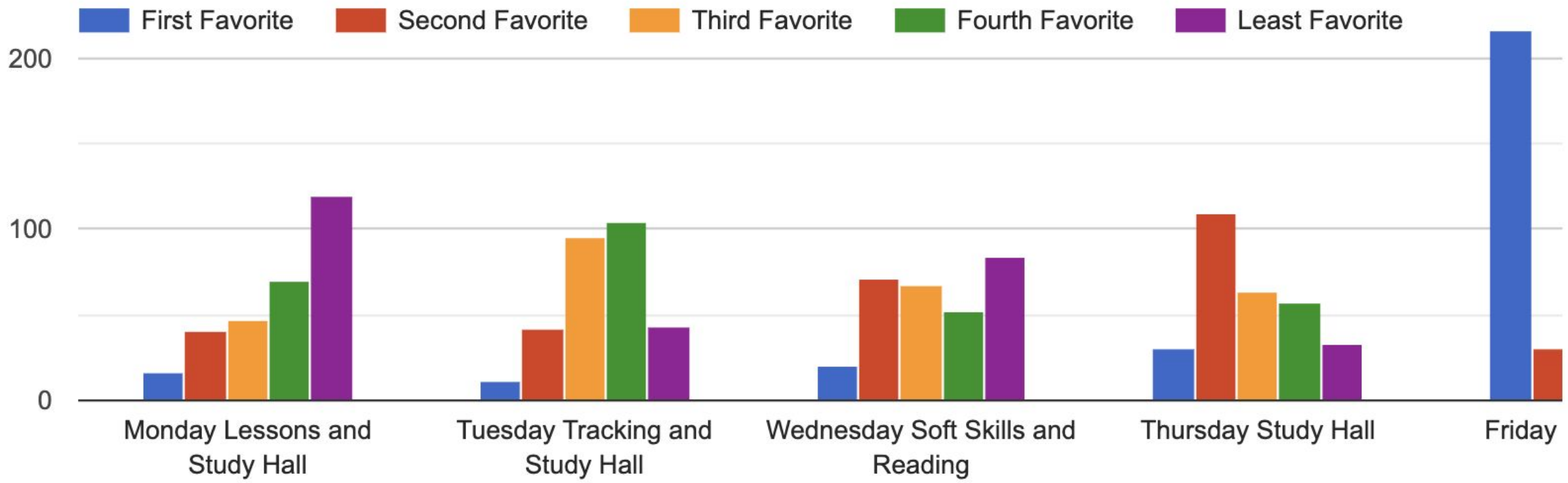
Weekly Homeroom Framework

Day	Focus Area	Key Activity / Objective
Monday	Character and Citizenship	Lessons and Activities from our School Counselor and Technology Integration Specialist
Tuesday	Goal Setting and Teacher Check-In	Each Student Completes their Folder and Checks in with their Homeroom Teacher, Followed by Homework Time
Wednesday	Soft Skills/DEAR	Weeks 1 & 2 - Soft Skills instruction (Ex. - How to do laundry, How to Read a Nutrition Label, Cursive Writing How to Play Chess Weeks 3 & 4 - Silent Reading
Thursday	SPARE Time	Homework Time and Intervention Support
Friday	Fun Friday	Choice activities for eligible students; Study Hall for support

Favorite Day of Homeroom

Which is your favorite day of homeroom. Rank them.

Copy chart



Monday Homeroom - Character and Citizenship

Developing Who Students Are and How They Treat Others

Dedicated time for the Technology and School Counseling Departments to deliver essential, whole-group instruction. Homeroom teachers facilitate provided materials and lesson plans directly with their students.

KEY FOCUS AREAS & REQUIRED TOPICS

- **Digital Citizenship**
- **Bullying & Child Abuse Prevention**
- **Character Lessons, College & Career Readiness**

2026–2027 Year Focus: The Amazing Generation

Most Monday lessons will revolve around activities and discussions anchored in **The Amazing Generation**.

Students will actively engage with the book's core themes, applying impactful concepts directly to their daily lives, personal experiences, and peer relationships.

Tuesday Homeroom - Establishing Rapport

Targeted Advisory Check-Ins

Teachers conduct intentional, private one-on-one check-ins with a minimum of four to five students every Tuesday to build trust, accountability, and positive relationships.

Parent Communication - Many of our staff set goals to communicate with three to five parents weekly.

High-Ability students have their own homeroom that has unique and targeted instructions for those students.

Student-Led Progress Tracking

Students actively monitor their own performance using the "Tracking My Weekly Progress" sheet, logging current grades, absences, tardies, missing assignments, and hall passes used across all eight classes.

Student planners are checked weekly during homeroom time to ensure students are writing down daily assignments in their classes.

Weekly Goal Setting

Each student sets a personal or school-related weekly goal. Teachers verify whether previous goals were met and provide a confirmation check for new objectives.

Wednesday Homeroom - Soft Skills and D.E.A.R

WEEKS 1 & 2

Soft Skills Spotlight

Interactive lessons on practical, real-world life skills. Staff are encouraged to choose a relevant life skill that they believe is relevant and meaningful in the real-world to students.

WEEKS 3 & 4

D.E.A.R. (Drop Everything And Read)

Students drop everything to read independently during the last two weeks of the month.



Practical Skills

Teachers share life skills they are passionate about—Ex. - Drilling a Nail, Solving a Rubik's Cube, Calculating A Bowling Score, Writing a Thank You Note, etc.



D.E.A.R. Reading Time

During the final two weeks of the month, students Drop Everything And Read books of their choice to develop their passions and practice reading for pleasure.



Staff Buy-In & Modeling

Staff share personal interests during soft skills weeks and model active reading during D.E.A.R., revealing that reading isn't something that stops in adulthood.

Thursday Homeroom – Academic Intervention

Proactive Support… Before Failure Occurs

- **Early Identification:** Real-time tracking of struggling students rather than waiting for quarter marks.
- **Homework Time:** More dedicated time for assignment completion, goal setting, and progress monitoring.
- **Continue to Adapt:** Study Hall Time
  - Teachers Spoke and We Listened
  - Teachers Need Time to Establish Relationships and Rapport with Homeroom Students



SPARE TIME AT EMS

SERVE

Your Classmates - Teachers - Families - Community

PASSION PROJECTS

Research and learn more about something you enjoy. Present your findings to others.*

ALEKS

Complete Homework and Topics - Build Your Math Skills!

READ

Reading as little as 20 minutes per day means you will read 1.8 million words in one year's time!

EVERY DAY



In middle school - high school - and beyond - practice and learn how to best use your SPARE time each and every day!

Fun Friday – Recognizing Students Meeting the Mark

Student Choice Activities

Eligible students select from rotating enrichment rooms across our campus:

- Board & card game rooms
- Art and GeoGuessr Rooms
- Traditional Recess - Football Field, Gym, and/or Panther Cove





Accountability Standard

Students are assigned to Study Hall during Fun Friday if they have:

- At least one D or F in any academic course
- 2+ unexcused absences during the week
- Any discipline referrals that week

The Panther Cove – Student Rewards Lounge

An exclusive space celebrating academic performance, growth, and positive student leadership:

How Rewards Are Earned

Teachers individually issue access passes to recognize student success across multiple areas:

- **Academic Excellence:** Outstanding grades and top test scores
- **Growth & Effort:** Individual milestone progress and checkpoint gains
- **Teacher Recognition:** Exemplary behavior and classroom leadership

The Perfect Hang-Out Space for MS Students

Fully equipped recreation lounge for student relaxation and social engagement:

- **Gaming Systems:** 2 Nintendo Switch Consoles
- **Table Games:** Ping Pong, Air Hockey, Bumper Pool
- **Arcade Classics:** Arcade Cabinets, Pop-A-Shot, Skee-Ball
- **VIP Lunch Privilege:** Student of the Month nominees bring their full lunch table up for the entire week





ILEARN Checkpoints & Badges

Connecting academic growth with immediate recognition:

Earn Badges

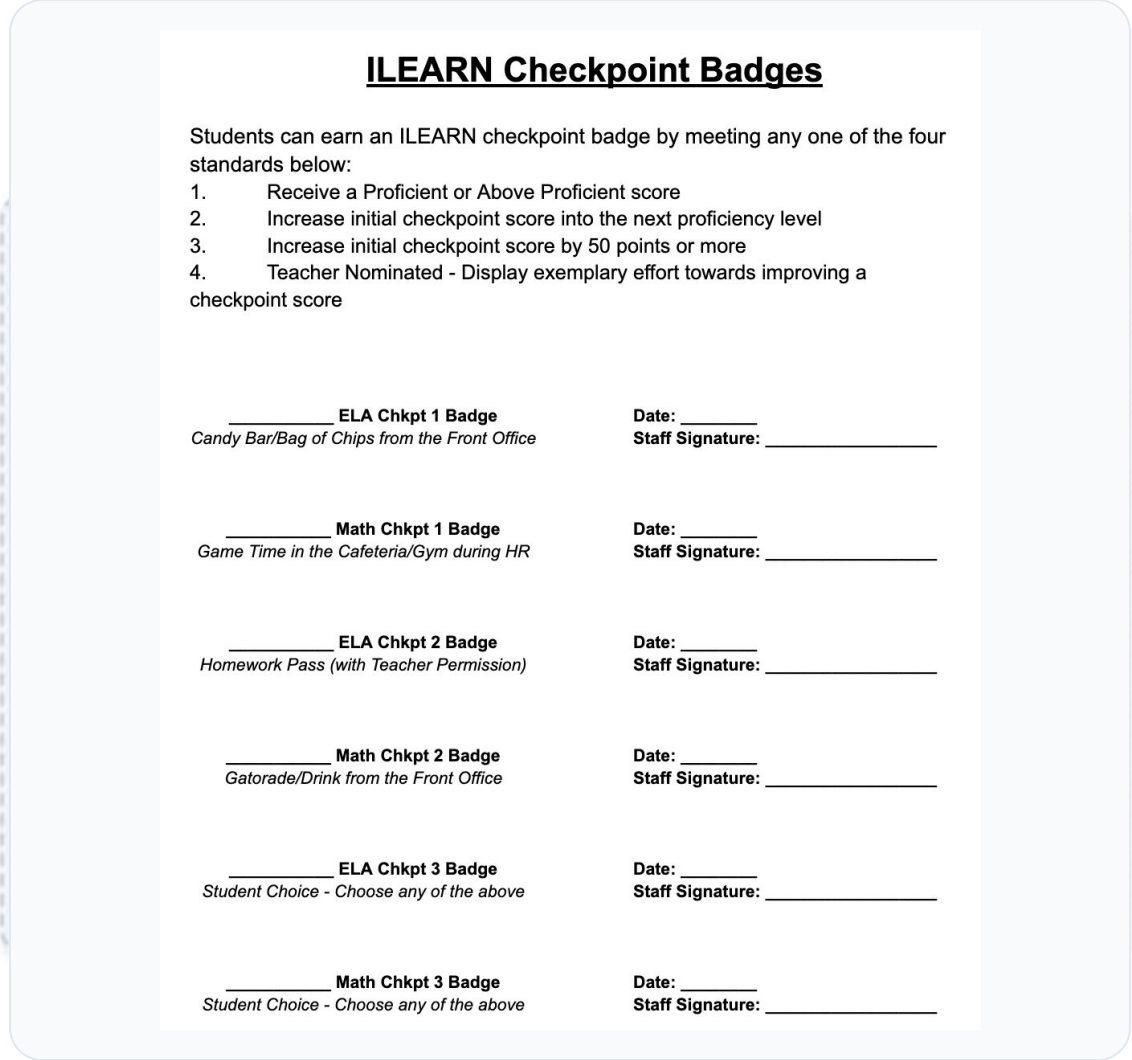
Awarded for passing ILEARN checkpoints, moving levels (Below → Approaching), increasing by 50 or more point, or teacher recognition.

School Currency

Badges redeemable for candy, drinks, extra gym time, or homework passes.

Growth Over Perfection

Celebrates individual effort and improvement so every student can experience success.



ILEARN Checkpoint Badges

Students can earn an ILEARN checkpoint badge by meeting any one of the four standards below:

1. Receive a Proficient or Above Proficient score
2. Increase initial checkpoint score into the next proficiency level
3. Increase initial checkpoint score by 50 points or more
4. Teacher Nominated - Display exemplary effort towards improving a checkpoint score

_____ **ELA Chkpt 1 Badge** — **Date:** _____
Candy Bar/Bag of Chips from the Front Office — **Staff Signature:** _____

_____ **Math Chkpt 1 Badge** — **Date:** _____
Game Time in the Cafeteria/Gym during HR — **Staff Signature:** _____

_____ **ELA Chkpt 2 Badge** — **Date:** _____
Homework Pass (with Teacher Permission) — **Staff Signature:** _____

_____ **Math Chkpt 2 Badge** — **Date:** _____
Gatorade/Drink from the Front Office — **Staff Signature:** _____

_____ **ELA Chkpt 3 Badge** — **Date:** _____
Student Choice - Choose any of the above — **Staff Signature:** _____

_____ **Math Chkpt 3 Badge** — **Date:** _____
Student Choice - Choose any of the above — **Staff Signature:** _____

Academic Probation Protocol

Structured accountability and individualized support for students finishing a quarter with 2 or more Fs:

Criteria & Accountability Guidelines

Enforced when proactive interventions and student data-ownership do not meet academic marks:

- **Trigger Criteria:** Assigned to any student ending a quarter with 2 or more failing grades (Fs).
- **Mandatory After-School Stay:** Required to remain after school a minimum of 12 times during the quarter.
- **Activity Restriction:** Prohibited from attending or participating in any extra-curricular after-school activities.
- **Administrative Oversight:** Subject to scheduled, routine check-ins with administration to monitor progress.
- **Summer School Placement:** Automatically placed on the priority roster for mandatory summer school.

Dual-Purpose Support Model

Balancing firm accountability with dedicated academic remediation:

Accountability Measure

Addresses the lack of academic ownership and work completion through direct, structured consequences and restricted privileges.

Individualized Support

Provides dedicated, one-on-one tutoring and targeted skill intervention during every mandatory after-school session.

Key Lessons & Takeaways

- **Protect Teachers' Passions:** Staff buy-in increased when teachers were allowed to share authentic personal interests during Soft Skills Wednesdays.
- **Reward Growth, Not Just Mastery:** Checkpoint badges for checkpoint improvements ensure every student can earn rewards regardless of starting point.
- **Consistency is Crucial:** Clear Friday eligibility guidelines - communicated to students, staff, and parents at the beginning of the year - create automatic peer accountability and encourage positive attendance and behavior.
- **Adaptable Resources:** Attendees receive Sample Schedules, Soft Skills lesson lists, and Incentive Tracking Tempaltes ready for Immediate School Implementation.



Questions & Discussion

Resource Directory

Quick access to essential schedules, templates, and links:

9th Period Resources

- 9th Period Notification
- Summer School Notification
- 9th Period Attendance

Homeroom Section

- Passion Project Application
- Tracking Weekly Progress
- Homeroom Overview
- Panther Cove Schedule
- SPARE Time Poster

Incentives and Other Documents

- ILEARN Checkpoint Badges
- Student of the Month
- Student Planner Passes
- Classroom Passes

Fun Friday Section

- Grade Level Fun Friday Choice
- Fun Friday Exclusion List
- Teacher Choice for Fun Friday
- Fun Friday Missing Student List

Thank you for attending our session at the Assistant Principals Conference!

Todd Lunsford
Principal

Samuel Garver
Assistant Principal

Eastbrook Middle School • Marion / Upland, Indiana