

# BIG RAPIDS MIDDLE SCHOOL HANDBOOK 2011-2012

## MISSION STATEMENT:

The Mission of Big Rapids Middle School is to ensure a safe, caring environment that prepares all students to:

- Achieve academic excellence
- Nurture positive attitudes
- Exhibit responsible behavior

## BELIEF STATEMENTS:

- We believe student, parent, teacher, staff, and administrative involvement in the learning process is essential.
- We believe all children can learn.
- We believe there must be mutual respect between students, staff, and parents.
- We believe all students are unique.

The following pages include, but are not limited to, the rules and regulations for the safe and efficient operation of the Big Rapids Middle School. Any student behavior which interrupts the educational process of our school will be dealt with accordingly.

## ATTENDANCE

At Big Rapids Middle School, we believe that regular attendance is essential for academic success and promotion. Furthermore, state law requires regular and consecutive attendance. When an absence is necessary, the following procedure must be followed:

1. On the day of the absence, the parent/guardian needs to call the BRMS office at 796-9965 by 8:30AM and give the following information:
  - a) Student's name and grade
  - b) Reason for the absence
2. If the student will be absent for more than one day, the parent/guardian should so indicate, otherwise a call will be necessary each day the student is out.
3. BRMS will phone ALL parents with students absent by 3<sup>rd</sup> hour if we do not hear from parents.
4. The student must bring a parent note stating the date of absence and explaining the reason for the absence. Until a note is received, the absence is considered unexcused.
5. Note: A behavioral warning slip is issued after the first unexcused tardy.

## TYPES OF ABSENCES

Absences can occur for a variety of reasons. Notifying the school of an absence and stating the reason does not automatically excuse the absence. With the exception of illness and family emergencies, all absences must be prearranged with the Middle School office before the absence. Prearranged absences will be excused, if the reason is acceptable and the student can afford to miss school. The assistant principal will use the following guidelines to determine what type of absence has occurred:

## EXCUSED ABSENCES

Examples are: illness, funerals, court appointments, doctor and dentist appointments, and certain family trips which cannot be scheduled other than when school is in session. However, we strongly discourage vacation times for students other than those which are already scheduled as part of the school calendar. The office will issue an Advanced Absence Permit to the student for teacher's signatures and assignments. An excused absence allows the student to make up all possible work in a reasonable amount of time. Normal time for make-up is equal to days absent. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain missed assignments. It is possible that certain kinds of schoolwork such as labs or skill practice sessions cannot be made up and, as a result, may negatively impact a student's grade.

## UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Any student who is absent from school for all or any part of the day without a legitimate excuse shall be considered truant and the student and his/her parents shall be subject to the truancy laws of the State. A student will not be given credit for schoolwork not completed as a result of truancy. If unexcused absences persist, a failing grade in a class may result and a parent notification and conference will be required. Students absent from school during the day may not attend any after school activities unless permission has been obtained from the principal. Exceptions will be granted for specific unavoidable circumstances. **Attendance at school is one of the most important factors in a student's school records.** Perfect attendance is acknowledged at the year end awards assembly. To receive this recognition, a student must not be absent at any time for any reason.

## EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

An excessive degree of absences excused or otherwise, will be subject to the review and limitation by the assistant principal and counseling department. Excessive absences may require a doctor's statement to be excused. Special handling for long term illness will be granted only at the discretion of the assistant principal. Excessive absences, without medical release, can also lead to prosecution for truancy. Letters will inform parents after five and ten days of absences. Excessive absences will result in a truant report being filed with the Intermediate School District Truancy Officer. Excessive absences may also result in a student being placed on co-curricular probation and the loss of other privileges.

## TARDINESS

Students are expected to be on time to all classes. When a student arrives at school after classes have begun, he/she must go to the office and sign in. The student will be given an unexcused tardy unless a parent/guardian signs him/her in, sends a note, or calls. Tardies will accumulate for each marking period. Students who are more than ten minutes late will be considered absent for that instructional period as follows:

1. 1<sup>st</sup> hour – Report to the office...
  - a) Excused –obtain pass to class.
  - b) Unexcused: First time the office issues a warning. Second and subsequent - the office assigns behavioral warning slip and sends student to 1<sup>st</sup> hour.
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> hours:
  - a) First time – teacher warns.
  - b) Second and subsequent – the teacher assigns behavioral warning slip.

## LEAVING SCHOOL DURING SCHOOL

If the student's parent/guardian wishes the student to be excused from school prior to the regular dismissal time, the office must be contacted in person or by note. The **parent/guardian must come into the building** and sign the student out with the office secretary.

## ASSEMBLIES AND PERFORMANCES

The behavior expectations for students at performances and assemblies are:

1. Be respectful during the performance.
2. Whistling, booing and yelling are not acceptable behavior.
3. Remain in seats until the performance is over.  
(During school day assemblies, you will sit with a teacher in an assigned area.)

## ATHLETICS

The BRMS athletic program should motivate and guide student athletes to meet their academic and athletic potential as individuals and team members. It should promote a positive attitude, fitness, respect for self and others, and sportsmanship. Our program encourages participation, the teaching of fundamental skills, and commitment to the team. It is our goal to provide the best possible athletic programs consistent with available facilities, personnel, and financial support. We offer the following sports for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders: (League-CSAA-Schools)

### FALL

Girls Basketball  
Cross Country

### WINTER

Boys Basketball  
Wrestling  
Girls Volleyball

### SPRING - Track

All students who want to play must have a physical and the doctor must sign the permission to participate. The physical must be for the current school year and the form must be on file in the main office. You may want to take care of this in the summer to avoid the rush when your child's sport season begins.

Sixth graders may train with the track, wrestling, and cross-country teams, depending on the number of participants, but cannot participate in competition (MHSSA Rule).

Students who are interested in participating should listen to announcements at school for practice times and starting times.

## ELIGIBILITY

Student athletes must be passing all classes at all times throughout their sports season. If a student is failing, the teacher will notify the office. Once the teacher notifies both the student and the office of a failure, the student will have one week to improve their grade. If their grade has not improved to at least a D-, the student will not be allowed to participate in the next scheduled game. Athletes will be given an eligibility letter each Friday, stating any failures and/or warnings. A parent must sign the letter and the student must return it to the school office the next school day or be ineligible for the first half of the next scheduled event (if they are not already ineligible for failures). Students absent from school during the day may not attend any after school activities unless permission has been obtained from the principal.

## SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER/STUDENT SERVICES

There are many issues that directly effect a student's learning every day such as academic difficulties, peer problems, family relationships and crisis situations. The student services team is committed to being a communication link between students, staff, parents, and teachers. If any problems arise, please contact one of them as soon as possible.

### RESPONSIBLE THINKING PROCESS (RTP)/DISCIPLINE POLICY

**It is important that parents, staff and students work together to maintain a positive educational atmosphere. Our goal is that each student learns to be responsible for his or her actions. Teachers have the right to teach, and students have the right to learn, in a safe and orderly environment!**

The Responsible Thinking Process (RTP) is a discipline process that teaches students how to think through what they are doing in relationship to the rules of wherever they are (i.e., classroom, cafeteria, playground, hallways, etc.). The key component of this process is its' focus on teaching students how to achieve their goals without getting in the way of others that are trying to do the same thing. It teaches students how to take responsibility for their actions by developing their ability to think for themselves while respecting the rights of others. The Responsible Thinking Classroom (RTC) is where students are referred when they continue to violate the rights of others. In RTC, students work on a plan to learn how to achieve what they want without interfering with the rights of others. If a student chooses to disrupt the learning process in the classroom, the teacher will initiate a series of questions that are designed to allow students to think about what they want in relationship to the rules of the classroom. If the student continues to be disruptive, then he/she has made the choice to go to RTC.

The discipline strategy of our school is not based on a "punitive" philosophy, but rather the consequences assigned are designed to motivate students to make better choices in the future. If it becomes apparent that the use of the RTC (multiple occasions out of a teacher's class) has not been effective, an after school or weekend commitment of the student will be required.

The following is an overview of the disciplinary strategy. The consequences below are cumulative for each marking period.

**\*Parents: Please consider participation in the Big Rapids Sports Boosters organization. Sports Boosters meet the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of every month at 7:00PM at the High School. Contact the High School at 796-7651 with questions.**

### BULLETIN BOARDS

All signs, announcements, posters, etc., put on the bulletin boards must first be approved by the office. All materials must be within the framework of the bulletin board. The office must approve all other posters on the walls before applying them.

### BUS REGULATIONS

The driver of a bus has a great responsibility. Students are reminded that the bus regulations are made in the interest of safety. A mistake by the driver could mean injury or death to students on the bus. Students are also reminded that buses operate for their convenience and that it is a privilege to ride the bus.

Misconduct on a bus will not be tolerated. The bus driver is in charge at all times. The bus driver must be given the same respect as your teachers. Failure to comply with bus regulations may result in suspension from bus privileges until a conference has been held with your parents and the bus supervisor. Violators will receive appropriate disciplinary action.

### CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Cell phones are not allowed on school property. Use of cell phones, including camera functions, during the school day is strictly prohibited. We do make exceptions for extenuating circumstances by allowing students to bring their phone to the office to be held until the end of the day. Parents are always welcome to call our office in order to contact their student and students have ready access to school phones throughout the day. First offense the student will receive a behavior warning. Second offense a parent will be contacted and the parent will be asked to pick up the phone. The third and subsequent offenses will result in progressive discipline steps.

### CLOSED CAMPUS

The Board of Education policy is a closed campus for BRMS. Students leaving the grounds must check with the office and be signed out by their parent or guardian.

Students may not leave campus and come back to catch the bus for home unless approved by the principal.

The Responsible Thinking Classroom (RTC) will be used for:

1. Classroom and activity time offenses.
2. Lunchtime isolation.
3. Extreme cases: all-day in-school suspension.

RTC Procedures:

1. Student completes plan and discusses with the teacher.
2. Student gets the plan signed by the parent. (*All plans must be signed by the parent and the teacher*).
3. Student returns plan before 1<sup>st</sup> hour to the office.
4. If plan is not returned, the office will call home.  
\*On the 5<sup>th</sup> visit to the RTC, the student will complete a plan *and* also receive an after school detention.

Tardies:

1<sup>st</sup> hour – Report to the office....

1. Excused – obtain pass to class.
2. Unexcused: First time the office initiates RTP, “what are you doing....etc) Second and subsequent – the office assigns behavioral warning slip and sends student to 1<sup>st</sup> hour.

2<sup>nd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> hours

1<sup>st</sup> time....teacher initiates RTP

2<sup>nd</sup> & subsequent times.....Behavioral Warning Slip

Behavioral Warning Slips:

Used for hallway and out-of-class disruptions.

Example...pushing/tripping others in the hallway.

*\*On the 3<sup>rd</sup> warning slip, the student will receive an after school detention.*

Detentions: after school, 3:20 – 4:20 (usually Friday)

Issued:

1. Immediately by the office...example: use of profanity and blatant disrespect of teachers.
2. On the 5<sup>th</sup> visit to RTC
3. On 3<sup>rd</sup> behavioral warning slip

Saturday School:

*Saturday, 8:00 – 11:00AM*

1. On the 9<sup>th</sup> behavioral warning slip
2. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> detention

Students who receive 10 warning slips and/or a fourth detention will also be assigned a one day in-school suspension and be placed on co-curricular probation for 30 calendar days.

Major discipline problems will be dealt with immediately and parents will be contacted.

Excessive referrals to the RTC may result in suspension. Parents will be contacted.

Office referrals could mean extra commitments, suspension, or expulsion:

1. Skipped Class
2. Cheating on any Assignments
3. Insolent and Disrespectful
4. Fighting
5. Possession of Lighters/Matches etc.
6. Possession of Tobacco/Weapons, knives, etc
7. Smoking in or around the school building
8. Threatening/Bodily Harm
9. Skipped School
10. Use or Possession of Alcohol/Illegal Drugs
11. Vandalism/Stealing
12. Gang Symbol Clothing or Paraphernalia
13. Downloading inappropriate material from computer – loss of privileges and suspension one day
14. Racist Comments, Remarks, or Behaviors

**Weapons: Students in possession or use of knives, guns, or other objects which can do bodily harm may be expelled from school for at least 180 days and the incident will be reported to the police.**

**STUDENT DISCIPLINE AND DUE PROCESS**

The principal may impose discipline including Short-Term suspension (from one up to ten days). In such situations, the student shall be given the following due process rights:

- Oral or written notice of the charges against him/her,
- an explanation of the evidence against him/her and,
- an opportunity to present his/her side of the story.

If an out of school suspension is warranted, the principal shall attempt to contact the parent by phone prior to the beginning of the suspension and shall send written notification home with the student. This written notification shall include the parental rights to appeal as outlined in Board Policy and the associated Administrative Guidelines.

In cases of Long-Term suspension (more than 10 days) or expulsion, the principal shall refer the case to the Superintendent with the appropriate documentation.

## **APPEAL OF SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION**

Suspension of more than one day but not more than ten days may be appealed to the principal in writing.

- Such appeal must be made within one school day of the implementation of the suspension and must include the reason(s) why the suspension is being appealed.
- The student shall be reinstated during the appeal process unless it is determined that the student's attendance would jeopardize the safety of the student or others.
- Upon receipt of the appeal, the principal shall review the situation and meet with the student, parents and/or staff if deemed necessary and appropriate.
- The principal shall reach a decision and inform the parents within 10 school days.

The decision of the Principal may be appealed in writing to the Superintendent.

- Such appeal must be made to the Superintendent within two school days of receipt of the Principal's decision.
- The Superintendent shall gather such information as deemed necessary, make a decision and inform the parents within 10 school days.
- In cases of Short-Term suspension, the Superintendent's decision shall be final.

NOTE: The Principal and/or Superintendent may designate another district administrator to hear an appeal when, in the Principal's or Superintendent's opinion, it would be appropriate and/or more efficient.

## **DRESS**

Middle School promotes standards of "Dressing for Success". Common sense is the standard for dress and appearance. Students are expected to dress in a fashion that is conducive to a positive learning environment, is not disruptive or distracting to the educational process, and meets health and safety standards.

- All students must wear some type of shoes or sandals at all times.
- Coats, hats, jackets, and backpacks are to be put in the student's locker upon arrival and should remain there until leaving the building for the day.
- An adequate covering of the body is required. Clothing that is too tight, too revealing, or too large is not allowed. Tops that reveal cleavage and/or do not cover the shoulder are not allowed. All skirts and shorts must be below finger-tip length. Skirts, shorts, and pants may

not have tears/rips/shredding of the material above the fingertip length. Any clothing with excessive holes/rips is subject to review by school administration. Mini-skirts/dresses, bare midriffs, strapless or thin straps, see-through clothing, sagging pants, pants that expose undergarments, or drag on the floor are not appropriate.

- Clothing and jewelry bearing demeaning messages, insignias or logos identifying alcoholic beverages, tobacco, narcotics, obscene, profane, vulgar, of a sexual nature or other socially inappropriate message demeaning to any race, religion, sex or ethnic group or which advocate the violation of the law are not permitted.
- Chains, sharp protruding objects, safety pins as clothing, or other potentially dangerous items are unacceptable.
- Items which can pose as a distraction such as hats, sunglasses, visors, headbands, do-rags, or other items, which can be the object of "keep away" games, are banned.
- In addition, BRMS prohibits the presence of any apparel, jewelry, accessory, notebook or manner of grooming which, by virtue of its color, arrangement, trademark or any attribute, denotes membership in gangs and/ or which advocates drug use, violence or disruptive behavior.
- Consequences for wearing inappropriate items can include:
  - You will be asked to make a "change" for the positive.
  - Continued dress code violations may include parent notification, detention slips, office referrals, and suspension for insubordination, and even long-term suspension for repeated offenses.

*As with any policy, inclusion of all possible situations is difficult. Please remember, the BRMS staff may sometimes have to use its discretion regarding student dress.*

## **FIRE DRILLS**

Fire drills, at regular intervals, are required by law and are an important safety precaution. It is essential that when the first signal is given, everyone obeys promptly and clears the building as soon as possible. Cards are posted in each room to assist your proper movement. The teacher in the classroom will give students instructions. Students are to walk fast but not run; are to stay clear of the building and driveway; and are to remain with the teacher for attendance procedures.

## HALL REGULATIONS

Students are to:

- be especially quiet while in the halls during a class period.
- have a pass to enter the halls while classes are in session.
- not loiter.
- avoid forming a line across the halls at the drinking fountains.
  - keep halls clean.

## HOMEWORK MAKE-UP POLICY

When a student has been absent from school and has received an excused absence, the student assumes the responsibility for getting the information from the teachers. He/she also assumes the responsibility for turning the completed assignments in to the teacher. Students are given one day for each day absent to complete assignment.

## LOCKERS

Lockers will be issued to each individual student. Students are strongly encouraged to not share their combination with anyone. The security of lockers is dependent upon the student's ability to keep the combination to themselves.

Locker inspections are held periodically to encourage neatness, cleanliness, and good housekeeping.

Gym lockers and locks are issued from the physical education offices.

Note: Big Rapids Middle School is the owner of all student lockers and reserves the right upon reasonable suspicion to search any locker without permission. Any additional locks placed on a locker by a student will be removed.

## LOST & FOUND

Students should report any loss to their teacher, the counselor or the principal. Students having any sizable amount of money or other valuables are urged to leave them in the office for safe keeping. There is a lost and found box in the main office.

## LUNCH PERIOD

Students are expected to cooperate in the lunchroom by observing established rules created to ensure a clean, safe and orderly environment. Lunch supervisors will discuss rules at the start of the school year.

Students who choose not to cooperate during lunch may be required to serve as clean-up helpers, spend some time in the RTC, or lose their lunchroom privileges.

## MEDICATION ADMINISTERED IN SCHOOL

### ***PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS:***

1. Before any prescription medications or treatments can be administered at school, the building **must** have on **file both** of the following:
  - a. written authorization/consent from the parent/guardian including authorization for the student to self-administer if so desired. No student is allowed to possess and/or self-administer prescription medication(s) or treatment; (this includes carrying medication to and from school) unless ordered by a doctor.
  - b. prescription information from the physician, including approval for the student to self-administer if requested by the parent.
2. Only medications in their original containers labeled with the date, student's name, name of the prescription, exact dosage, and doctor's name may be administered by any school personnel.
3. School personnel are to administer medication or treatment only in the presence of another adult.
4. All medications are to be kept in a locked storage area of the office.
5. A log of each prescribed medication for each student shall be maintained which will note the staff person giving the medication, the date and time of day. This log shall be kept in the locked storage area along with authorization forms and medications.

### ***NON-PRESCRIPTION/Over the Counter (OTC) Medications:***

1. Students in grades K-8 are NOT allowed to possess and/or self-administer OTC medications.
2. OTC medications for students in grades K-8 must be kept in the school office and administered by school personnel.
3. Written authorization/consent of the parent/guardian for administering an OTC medication must also be on file in the office and contain the name of the student, the name of the medication, the dosage, and time of day to administer.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION

Big Rapids Middle School is committed to a policy of non-discrimination in relation to race, religion, sex, age, national origin and handicap in all programs.

## PROGRAM AND PROGRAM CHANGES

Class schedules are made during the spring. Usually, students are assigned randomly to teachers and subjects offered in grades 6, 7, and 8. A schedule may not be changed without parent and/or teacher written permission and consulting the counselor. Please note that there are many considerations that go into scheduling and they may prohibit changes.

## PROGRESS REPORTS

Student progress reports are mailed home at the midpoint of the 12 week trimester to parents. We encourage parents to call the school for conferences with the teacher(s).

## RETENTION

Typically, students are promoted to the next grade each spring based on academic performance. Factors such as academic progress measured by whether the academic standards in each subject have been met, maturity level, and attendance record are taken into account when promotion decisions are made. However, the school administration reserves the right to retain a student in the same grade when, in their judgment, a combination of the above listed factors suggest that a student needs to have another year of growth in order to be successful at the next grade level.

There are many strategies that the Middle School staff has put into place which assist students. Some of which are listed below:

- Daily Homework Support (DHS)
- Academic Support Labs
- Family Access to grade reports
- Grade reports sent home eight times per year
- Built in class time to start homework
- TAT's (Teacher Assistance Teams)

Certainly the decision to retain a student will be made only after multiple communications between the school and parents throughout the school year.

## REPORT CARDS

Students are graded on scholarship, work habits, and citizenship once every nine week marking period. Report cards are issued to students approximately one week after the end of the marking period.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is **unlawful** under both Michigan and federal law and is contrary to the commitment of this district to provide an effective learning environment. Behavior which is unwelcome, which is personally offensive, which fails to respect the rights of others, or which otherwise creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment is inappropriate behavior.

## SOCIAL LIFE

Activity Nights and other social events are for BRMS students only. A BRMS student may invite a student from either St. Mary's or St. Peter's as a guest. In this situation, the BRMS student must register the guest in advance in the office and may only invite **one** guest. All events are supervised by BRMS staff and parents.

## TEXTBOOKS/FINES

All textbooks are furnished by the school district. When a book is issued to a student, the condition of the book is recorded. If, during the course of the year, the book is abused and the life span of the book is reduced beyond normal usage, a fine is issued. A new book will be issued to a student upon receipt of payment for the lost/damaged textbook.

## TORNADO WARNINGS OR SIMILAR EMERGENCIES

Parents, please be aware of the following procedures in such an emergency:

1. Our school system will receive its notice from the Big Rapids Police Department. We will immediately set the time that students will be sent home and start proceedings to have the buses ready.
2. We will report to radio stations WBRN and WYBR what action we have taken, and they will broadcast this information.
3. In the event schools are dismissed, any school programs scheduled for that evening will be canceled unless the all-clear signal has been given prior to 6:00 PM.
4. Students living within the city or those not riding buses will be dismissed to go home at once.
5. Bus students will assemble in rooms assigned at time of emergency to await transportation home.
6. **During this time, phone calls should not be made to the schools unless absolutely necessary.**

## SELLING ARTICLES

In general, students are not allowed to sell items in school that are not school-sponsored fundraisers. Permission must be obtained from the building principal before any articles can be sold in the building. If a student is selling articles without permission, the principal may confiscate these articles.

### INCLEMENT WEATHER

Our procedure during inclement weather is to inspect road conditions between 5:30AM and 6:15AM. In the event of a two hour delay, please be aware of the following:

1. Buses will arrive at bus stops two hours later than usual. (If the usual pick up is at 7:30AM, the delay pick up time will be 9:30AM.)
2. A.M. Career Center buses will not operate.
3. Students should not be dropped off or arrive at any school before 9:45AM. (Please help us).
4. It is possible that a decision to cancel school will be made during the two hour delay. An example would be if severe fog does not "lift" during the delay. This decision will be made by 8:30 AM and reported to the news media. Please contact Steve Hoffman at the Bus Garage (796 -5406) if you have any questions.

### VISITORS

Any person who is not a regularly enrolled student or staff employee must report to the office to check in.

Primarily because of safety concerns and supervision concerns, student visitors are not allowed at BRMS.

### CARE OF PROPERTY

Students are responsible for the care of their own personal property. Valuables such as jewelry, money, all electronic devices (except those associated with A.D.A. assistance) CD's, trading cards and other non-school items should not be brought to school. The school may confiscate such items and return them to the student's parent. The school is not responsible for personal property. \*Cell phones are to be kept secured in the office during school hours (see Cell Phone Policy).

Damage to or loss of school equipment and facilities wastes taxpayer money and undermines the school program. Therefore, if a student does damage to or loses school property, the student or his/her parents will be required to pay for the replacement or damage. If the damage or loss was intentional, the student will also be subject to discipline according to the Student Discipline Code.

### QUALITY PRODUCT REMINDER

Adopted for use by all instructional staff by the BRPS Curriculum Council March 26, 2003

All BRPS students will use the following editing and revising skills on work brought to a completed or published level in every subject and all classrooms.

Basic Editing and *Revising* for Every Classroom

- Editing-correcting what is written
- Revising- improving or embellishing what is written*

Grades 3-5 all students will edit and *Revise* for:

- Ending punctuation
- Internal punctuation for commas
- All capitals
- Subject/Verb tense
- Spelling
- Complete sentences
- Embellished adjectives*
- Variation in sentence length*
- Paragraph formation*
- Engaging openings*

Grades 6-8 all students will Edit and *Revise* in all subjects for:

- Ending punctuation
- Internal punctuation (comma, semi-colon, quotation marks, etc.)
- All capitalization
- Complete sentences
- Run-on sentences
- Proper tense
- Spelling
- Precise and rich vocabulary with a focus on adjectives and adverbs*
- Sentence variety*
- Paragraph information*
- Engaging openings*