

Interesting Facts about 8TH Graders and Math at Burnet Middle School

- There are **305** 8th graders at Burnet Middle School.
- An additional **10** 8th graders belong to Burnet but are temporarily at other campuses.
 - 3 students are currently at the Travis County Juvenile Detention Center (serious criminal offenses).
 - 7 students are currently at the AISD Alternative Learning Center (temporarily removed from Burnet after serious discipline issues).
- **240** of the 315 students are identified “at risk” based on the following factors:
 - **150** students have a TAKS score of 2100 or below on the 2009 Math TAKS test. Since these students did not meet the minimum passing standard for the state assessment, they are considered “below grade level”. Approximately 75 of the 150 are more than one year behind in their math.
 - **33** students failed their math class first semester.
 - **85** students have 5 or more daily absences this year. **49** of these students have missed 10 or more days. The highest number of days absent is 66 days.
 - **18** students have spent 5 or more days at ALC or TCJDC.
 - **15** students have spent 5 or more days in Home School Suspension.
 - **22** students have spent 5 or more days in In-School Suspension.
 - **174** students scored below 50% on the Middle of Year Math Benchmark test.
- Our population is very mobile. Since November there have been **31** new 8th graders enrolled and **47** 8th graders who withdrew.
- Only **75** students have no identified “at risk” factors.
- All Burnet students have 90 minutes of math a day.
- Most 8th grade math classrooms have APIE tutors on Wednesdays.
- All math teachers tutor a minimum of one hour a week, usually on Tuesday from 3:45 – 4:45 PM)
- Two certified teachers tutor 8th grade students in small groups on Thursday during math computer lab time.
- Students can attend Saturday TAKS camps from 9-12 PM to study math and science. TAKS camp is offered on 10 Saturdays from January to April.

Hidden Rules of Economic Class

	POVERTY	MIDDLE CLASS	WEALTH
POSSESSIONS	People.	Things.	"One of a kind" objects, legacies, pedigrees.
MONEY	To be used, spent.	To be managed.	To be conserved, invested.
PERSONALITY	Is for entertainment. Sense of humor is highly valued.	Is for acquisition and stability. Achievement is highly valued.	Is for connections. Financial, political, social connections are highly valued.
SOCIAL EMPHASIS	Social inclusion of the people they like.	Emphasis is on self-governance and self-sufficiency.	Emphasis is on social exclusion.
FOOD	Key question: Did you have enough? Quantity important.	Key question: Did you like it? Quality important.	Key question: Was it presented well? Presentation important.
CLOTHING	Clothing valued for individual style and expression of personality.	Clothing valued for its quality and acceptance into the norms of middle class. Label important.	Clothing valued for its artistic sense and expression. Designer important.
TIME	Present most important. Decisions made for moment based on feelings or survival.	Future most important. Decisions made against future ramifications.	Traditions and past history most important. Decisions made partially on basis of tradition decorum.
EDUCATION	Valued and revered as abstract but not as reality. Education is about facts.	Crucial for climbing success ladder and making money.	Necessary tradition for making and maintaining connections.
DESTINY	Believes in fate. Cannot do much to mitigate chance.	Believes in choice. Can change future with good choices now.	Noblesse oblige.
LANGUAGE	Casual register. Language is about survival.	Formal register. Language is about negotiation.	Formal register. Language is about connection.
FAMILY STRUCTURE	Tends to be matriarchal.	Tends to be patriarchal.	Depends on who has/controls money.
WORLD VIEW	Sees world in terms of local setting.	Sees world in terms of national setting.	Sees world in terms of an international view.
LOVE	Love and acceptance conditional, based on whether individual is liked.	Love and acceptance conditional, based largely on achievement.	Love and acceptance conditional, related to social standing and connections.
DRIVING FORCES	Survival, relationships, entertainment.	Work and achievement.	Financial, political, social connections.

Behavior Related to Poverty

Laughs when disciplined. A way to save face in matriarchal poverty.

Argues loudly with the teacher. Poverty is participatory, and the culture has a distrust of authority. Sees the system as inherently dishonest and unfair.

Angry response. Anger is based on fear. The question is what the fear is – loss of face?

Inappropriate or vulgar comments. They rely on casual register, may not know formal register.

Physically fights. Necessary to survive in poverty. Only knows the language of survival. Does not have language or belief system to use conflict resolution. Sees himself as less than a man if does not fight.

Hands always on someone else. Poverty has a heavy reliance on nonverbal data and touch.

Cannot follow directions. Little procedural memory used in poverty. Sequence not used or valued.

Extremely disorganized. Lack of planning, scheduling or prioritizing skills. Not taught in poverty. Also, probably does not have a place to put things at home so they can be found.

Only completed part of a task. No procedural self talk. Does not "see" the whole task.

Disrespectful to teacher. Has lack of respect for authority and the system. May not know any adults worthy of respect.

Harms other students, verbally or physically. This may be a way of life. Probably a way to buy space or distance. May have become a habitual response. Poverty tends to address issues in the negative.

Cheats or steals. Indicative of weak support system, weak role models/emotional resources. May indicate extreme financial need. May indicate no instruction/guidance during formative years.

Constantly talks. Poverty is very participatory.

Intervention

Understand the reason for the behavior. Tell the student three or four other behaviors that would be more appropriate.

Don't argue with the student. Have them complete the four-part questionnaire on page 1. Model respect for students.

Respond in the adult voice. When the student cools down, discuss other responses that could be used.

Make students generate or teach students other phrases that could be used to say the same thing.

Stress that fighting is unacceptable in school. Examine other options the student could live with at school. One option is not to settle the business at school.

Allow them to draw or doodle. Have them hold their hands behind their backs when in line or standing. Give them as much to do with their hands as possible in a constructive way.

Write steps on the board. Have them write at the top of the paper the steps needed to finish the task. Have them practice procedural self-talk.

Teach a simple color-coded method of organization in the classroom. Use the five-finger method for memory at the end of the day. Make students give a plan for their own organization.

Write on the board all the parts of the task. Make students check off each part when finished.

Tell students that approach is not a choice. Identify for students the correct voice tone and word choice that is acceptable. Make them practice.

Tell the students that approach is not a choice. Have the students generate other options. Give students alternative verbal phrases.

Use metaphor story to find the reason or need the cheating and stealing met. Address the reason or need. Stress that the behavior is illegal and not a choice at school.

Make students write all questions and responses on a note card two days a week. Tell students they get five comments a day. Build participatory activities into the lesson.

VOICES

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- Quit picking on me.
- You don't love me.
- You want me to leave.
- Nobody likes (loves) me.
- I hate you.
- You're ugly.
- You make me sick.
- It's your fault.
- Don't blame me.
- She, he, _____ did it.
- You make me mad.
- You made me do it.



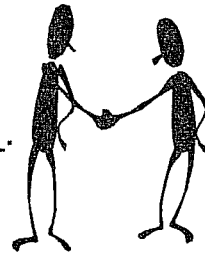
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- You shouldn't (should) do that.
- It's wrong (right) to do _____.
- That's stupid, immature, out of line, ridiculous.
- Life's not fair. Get busy.
- You are good, bad, worthless, beautiful (any judgmental, evaluative comment).
- You do as I say.
- If you weren't so _____, this wouldn't happen to you.
- Why can't you be like _____?

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- In what ways could this be resolved?
- What factors will be used to determine the effectiveness, quality, of _____?
- I would like to recommend _____.
- What are choices in this situation?
- I am comfortable (uncomfortable) with _____.
- Options that could be considered are _____.
- For me to be comfortable, I need the following things to occur: _____.
- These are the consequences of that choice/action: _____.
- We agree to disagree.



Adapted from work of Eric Berne