

THE 8TH GRADE PLAY

The 8th grade play is a lot of work and a lot of fun! The 8th grade teachers will meet several times during the fall term to review play options, choose a play for the year, and make alterations necessary to fit the year's class (adjust number of roles for each gender, etc). Just before Thanksgiving, the play will be announced to the class, and there will be a parent meeting to discuss various volunteer opportunities for parents, some large and some small. To make the play a success, we need the participation of all students and at least one parent from each family.

After Thanksgiving break, the students will participate in some warm-up drama games and exercises. This will help them to loosen up and be willing to "put themselves out there" in front of others. We will read through the play, so that everyone gets a sense of what it is about and what parts they might like to try out for. Then there are auditions. Students will be asked to read for several parts, and may be called back to read again before the parts are assigned.

Before Christmas break, parts will be announced. This is always a stressful time, as not everyone will get the part they have their heart set on. Students will be encouraged to accept their part, whatever it is, looking for ways to have fun with it and make it their own. Truly, even a "small" part can be important and has sometimes stolen the show for our young audiences.

In January, we start play practices in earnest. They do not, however, replace regular classes or homework. While scenes are being rehearsed in Heilman Hall, students not in that scene will be making set and props. Near the end of our weeks of rehearsals, students will learn the basics of makeup, lights, sound or stage crew. Rehearsals happen Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons, as well as the last hour of school on Fridays.

A detailed schedule will be given to all parents and students at the beginning of the play process. We ask that personal appointments not be made for times when your student is scheduled to rehearse. Believe it or not, each scene only gets one day to block and perhaps two days to rehearse before dress rehearsal. We really need "all hands on deck" or we end up with actors who don't know what they're supposed to be doing.

Yes, the play is a major undertaking, and because it is, it brings the class together in ways that are hard to describe. It breaks down boundaries between groups of students, it challenges students to do things which are new to them, it builds up confidence in individuals, and breeds respect and friendship between them. Producing a play is well worth the time and effort we all put into it.