



SIMONS MIDDLE SCHOOL

"Home of the Cougars"
242 W. Water Street
Flemingsburg, KY 41041

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Principal

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Jesse Bacon
Stacey Fite
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May 27, 2016

SUBJECT: 2017 8th Grade Party

Parents and Students,

We would like to take a moment and thank all of you for an outstanding first year of middle school. We have thoroughly enjoyed working with you this year and look forward to an even better year in 2016-2017. There are many plans already in the works to improve your experience here at Simons Middle School.

As you know, the 8th Grade Party is a long-standing tradition in Fleming County. Its purpose is to provide our students an opportunity to celebrate the completion of one chapter in their lives as they prepare to embark upon another. Dating back to the time when I was a student at SMS, the event has been staged as a formal of sorts. What started out as young men dressing in shirts, ties and blazers, has transformed into tuxedo rentals and transportation in fancy cars and even busses. Young women who once attended in church dresses now feel as if they need a formal gown in order to fit in. It is our belief that this was not the intention when the 8th Grade Party was first conceived.

During my time as principal, we have been concerned with the number of students that are not attending the party. Our participation rate over the course of the last two years has been about 60%. We would like to see an 85%-90% participation rate. When I talk with students and their families about why they do not attend, one answer that is almost always constant is the financial hardship that families face when trying to ensure their students "fit in" at the party. To combat this issue we are exploring the possibility of changing the format of the 8th Grade Party to ensure that all of our students can participate without hardships, if they are eligible and wish to attend.

Ideally, we would provide students with the option of several themes to choose from. These could include themes such as 80s night, Country Western, Beach Bash, Hawaiian Luau, 50s Sock Hop, Disco, etc. Once students select a theme, we would then provide them with food, music, games, and fun centered on this theme. Student dress would also be consistent with the chosen theme.

We understand the importance of special events for our students. With this in mind, we want you to know that your student(s) will still have opportunities for "dress up" experiences in their school careers. As is tradition, we will still host the winter semi-formal event in December. Additionally, students will still have their Junior/Senior Prom to look forward to as students at FCHS. Please know that our ultimate goal is to make sure that all of our students can attend the 8th Grade Party.

At the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year we will seek your input on this idea. This letter is just to make you aware of the changes, so that you may thoughtfully consider our intentions over the summer, and be ready to provide us with any feedback you might have about the issue.

Thank you for your time. We hope you have a great summer and we look forward to seeing you next fall.

Respectfully,

Jesse Bacon
SMS Principal