

Dear parents, guardians, and students:

July 6, 2011

I would like to take a minute to introduce myself; my name is Dr. Matthew C. Fraijo and I am the newly appointed principal at Graves Middle School. I want to share a little bit about myself with you and some thoughts about Graves Middle School. I have been in the field of education for many years and have served in various educational positions at every level, and I have visited a lot of schools in many districts. First I want to say that I am very excited about serving the students and community of South Whittier. Graves is taking many steps to improve our instructional program and the climate and culture of our school. I would encourage you to come by the school if you would like to speak with me or would just like a tour of our beautiful campus.

To begin, I received my Bachelor's Degree and Teaching Credential from Cal State University Los Angeles and began my career in education sixteen years ago as a high school Social Studies teacher in nearby Montebello Unified School District. I then earned my Master's Degree in Urban Education Administration from UCLA as part of the Principal's Leadership Institute (PLI). From there I moved to the Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District as a high school assistant principal. I also served as an elementary school principal in the same district. Subsequently, I earned my Ph.D. in Education Administration from Claremont Graduate University. I then became a middle school principal in Norwalk-La Mirada. I am currently concluding my tenure at Azusa Pacific University where I trained teachers and worked with various school leadership teams to help them improve their instructional programs and leadership teams. My time at Azusa Pacific University has given me the opportunity to conduct exciting research about curriculum, instruction, assessment, and educational leadership that will help me to be an effective principal at Graves.

My passion lies with assisting and supporting underserved students, so I am excited about helping take Graves Middle School to the next level by building on the successful programs and systems that are already in place. As many of you know, Graves has a strong AVID program and fine academy classes that challenge our high achieving students. In addition, we have added a band program that is gaining recognition for their outstanding performance, and we have a comprehensive after school sports program that our students love. We are also working with Action Learning Systems to improve our instructional program so that we can do whatever it takes to make every student a success. In addition, we are devising a new school wide discipline plan and getting a small facelift in various parts of our campus so that we can maintain the beauty of our school. Moreover, we are laying the foundation for our STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) Academy and an Arts Academy with the introduction of the "Arts for All" program. As you can see, we have many exciting things going on at Graves and we would love to show you how the TEAM at Graves can help make your child successful in high school and college. Please feel free to give me a call or stop by the school if you have any questions or would like a tour of our beautiful campus.

Sincerely,

Matthew C. Fraijo, Ph.D.
Principal
Richard L. Graves Middle School