

# Graves Middle School

School Newsletter



## Principal's Corner

Wow, the 2013-14 school year is already winding down! With the early start this year (mid-August of 2013) and the early finish (May 28<sup>th</sup> of 2014), I don't know where the year went. It was a very transitional year for Graves, but we are excited about many things. We are excited about the amount of technology we have (four labs and an iPad cart), the success we had with many of our programs (AVID, STEM, Academy, our Washington D.C. trip, our Catalina trip, and how well our 8<sup>th</sup> graders have stepped up to improve their grades and citizenship), and the CCSS and SBAC professional development that our teachers and staff received this year. As you will hear about in this newsletter, we also look forward to some upcoming changes for next year. As I have said in the past, come by any time you like and see all the changes at Graves Middle School. We are so proud of all the wonderful opportunities we offer to our students, Go Panthers!

## Changes for 2014-2015

As we look forward to the 2014-2015 we are excited about quite a few things. First, we will be increasing our band offerings to include two periods of orchestra/strings with our band teacher, Mr. Shiffermiller. He will be working with our elementary schools to expose them to instruments and music too. We are going to increase the number of math classes, as we will ask Mrs. Weiss to take on a full time position. We are also hoping to add an ELD teacher who will work with our English Learners

### Save the Date!

#### 8<sup>th</sup> grade promotion

**May 27<sup>th</sup>**

Please join us at the Cal High School Stadium at 5:00 pm for our class of 2014 8<sup>th</sup> grade promotion ceremony.

#### Last Day of School

**May 28<sup>th</sup>**

Please note that the last day of school is Wednesday, May 28<sup>th</sup> and it is a minimum day. This is also the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Knott's field trip.

#### First Day of School

**August 13<sup>th</sup>**

Please notice the early start for the new-year. Like the high school district, we start school on Wednesday, August 13<sup>th</sup>. See you then!

## The CCSS & the SBAC

As I mentioned previously, GMS has entered the era of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). California and about 45 other states joined the CCSS movement and we have begun to implement the CCSS and we administered the SBAC this year. Although there will be no published results from this year's test because it is a "test of the test", we learned a lot as a staff from giving the test. We learned that our technology is solidly in place and it is capable of handling the test. There were some glitches, but they were mostly with the assessment itself, not our own issues.

Just as most of the nation learned when the exam was given, we also learned that the assessment was very demanding. As a result, we will have to ensure that we make adjustments to our instruction so that our students are prepared for the rigor of the test. Fortunately, we have already made adjustments and have trained our teachers, so we will be ready!



### Changes for 2014-2015 continued

in AVID Excel and with our students who don't speak much English. We are going to use computer stations with these students so they communicate with one another while using technology. We also want to pilot a one-to-one iPad program with our 7<sup>th</sup> grade AVID students. In addition, we are going to increase the funding for our science teachers so they can do hands-on CCSS science labs/activities and for our P.E. teachers so they can monitor student fitness. In addition, we are going to increase our Arts for All program so our students who are gifted in the arts can develop their skills. Finally, we are hoping to get additional support for our at-risk kids. As I have said, come see the difference at GMS!



## Spring Sports Fight On

Our spring sports program concluded with our 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys' soccer team having had a lot of success and our 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys' soccer team having had success too. Our 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys' soccer team dominated during the season, but they lost a tough game in the tournament due to injuries and ended up taking 3<sup>rd</sup> place overall. Our 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys' soccer team had a solid season and finished in the middle of the league. They had a few kids move up during the tournament and they helped the team finish strong. The coaches and kids worked very hard all season, so let's congratulate them!

Our 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls' basketball team finished the regular season on a strong note with two big wins. They ran into some tough teams during the tournament and lost their first two games. Our 7<sup>th</sup> grade girls' basketball team had some success as well. They had some impressive wins and some tough losses, but we could see their progress throughout the season. Unfortunately, the track meets for our boys' and girls' track teams were cancelled due to the extreme heat. But we closed out the season with a team party and photos so we could end on a positive note. We want to thank all of the coaches for their great effort and long hours, our kids for their good sportsmanship, and our families for supporting their kids' various endeavors at GMS. We'll continue with our strong commitment to the middle school sports program because we know that it is good for kids, it is good for school spirit, and it helps with peer socialization too. We'll see you on August 13<sup>th</sup>, our first day of school!

