

SPRING 2015

Graves Middle School

School Newsletter



Principal's Corner

Wow, the 2014-2015 school year is already winding down! It was a great year at Graves and we are excited about many things. As you will hear about in this newsletter, we are excited that we were selected to be a California Gold Ribbon School. We were also selected to be a Title I Academic Achievement School. What this means is that the state has designated Graves as one of the top middle schools in the entire state of California.

We are also on the path to becoming an AVID National Demonstration Site. This means that we may be identified as one of the best AVID programs in the state of California. In fact, we have six AVID students who will be talking at a conference about Graves' AVID program this summer with teachers from several states. We are very proud of our kids for this awesome distinction. We are so proud of our staff, students, parents, and community for the accolades we have received at Graves, thank you.

GMS is a Gold Ribbon School!

We are proud to announce that Graves Middle School was selected to be a California Gold Ribbon School and a Title I Academic Achievement School. We were one of only 193 middle schools in the entire state to receive this prestigious distinction (about 12% of the middle schools in the state received this designation). We went through a valuable training process and a demanding application process that teachers, district administrators, and school administrators worked on together before sending it to the state. We then had a visit at Graves by a team of school administrators who represented the state of California. They had to verify the information we put in the report was true.

Save the Date!

8th grade promotion

May 27th

Please join us at the Cal High School Stadium at 5:00 pm for our class of 2015 8th grade promotion ceremony.

Last Day of School

May 28th

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

First Day of School

August 12th

We start school on Wednesday, August 12th. Have a great summer, we will see you then!

SBAC Assessment 2015

As I mentioned previously, GMS is in the process of completing the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) test of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). This was the second year the SBAC was given, but it is the first year that the full assessment was given (a full set of questions in language arts and math and two performance tasks). Last year we gave half the questions in language arts, half in math, and did one performance task. The performance task is based on students doing group work, doing some research, and then answering some tough questions. It is a very rigorous test.

The state of California wants schools to communicate two important things about this year's test. The first thing is that you can't compare the new SBAC state test to the old CST state test because they are very different tests (computer based with a lot of writing v. paper and pencil with multiple choice only). It would be like comparing a sports car (SBAC) to a horse (CST) because they are both forms of transportation, it just wouldn't make sense. The other thing we need to communicate is that because the SBAC is a much harder test, the state thinks that the number of kids who have a rating of "standard met" will start out pretty low, regardless of what school students attend. This happened with the old CST too. We know that this a better test, so we will strive to improve every year.



GMS is a Gold Ribbon School cont.

So the team received a presentation about our school, they interviewed students, parents, district administrators, and our partner from Biola University. They also went on a tour of our school and visited several classrooms. When the exit interview took place the team communicated that they were very impressed with our school, our staff, and most importantly our students. They thanked us for "never giving up on our students." Additionally, California State Superintendent of Public Education Tom Torlakson stated, "These schools provide great examples of the things educators are doing right—embracing rigorous academic standards, providing excellence and creativity in teaching, and creating a positive school climate."

So, we just want to thank our teachers, students, parents, and our community for helping us achieve this very prestigious award. We also want to continue to work hard and always strive to achieve more and more!



Spring Sports Fight On

Our spring sports program concluded with our 8th grade boys' soccer team having had a lot of success and our 7th grade boys' soccer team dominating the league. Our 8th grade boys' soccer team had some great games this year. During the season they played very well and really took it to some of their opponents. They finished toward the top of the league. They played three close games during the tournament and ended up taking 3rd place overall. Our 7th grade boys' soccer team was awesome and dominated the league. They had a few games where they won by 5-10 goals, as they really came together as a team. The coaches and kids worked very hard all season and had an outstanding year, so congratulate them when you see them!

Our 8th grade girls' basketball team played well and finished in the middle of the league. They improved a lot over the season and played well during the tournament. Unfortunately, they ran into some tough teams during the tournament and lost their first two games. Our 7th grade girls' basketball team had great success this year. They had some impressive wins and a couple of losses, mostly due to injuries. They dominated some teams and won by 15-20 points on average. Wish our girls well when you see them. The track season is upon us and our boys' and girls' track teams are working hard for the track meet. We will close out the season with a team party and photos, as is our custom. 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 your 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.

