

SPRING 2016

Graves Middle School

School Newsletter



Principal's Corner

Wow, the 2015-2016 school year is already winding down! It was a great year at Graves and we are excited about many things. One of the things we are most excited about is that we are 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, and in the nation. In fact, we attended a training last summer where we were told the steps we would need to take to become a National Demonstration school and we are working very hard and making great progress.

We had a couple of visits and we were commended for many strong aspects we already have in place and we were given really smart next steps. We are excited because we have the structures in place to achieve our goals. As I have said in the past, "Come See the Difference at Graves Middle School!"

Great Staff Training at GMS!

We were fortunate to have the opportunity to work with some great people and organizations to further train our staff on the Common Core State Standards. We worked with a professor from Whittier College, the Leverage Learning Group, and we sent a number of teachers to AVID training in Downey and Anaheim. Our science department worked with a science professor from Whittier College on the eight practices that scientists use when they are doing science-related things. The math department worked with Leverage Learning so our kids can learn how to think like a mathematician when they are learning new concepts and applying what they learn in their math class to the "real world".

Save the Date!

8th grade promotion

May 31st

Please join us at Whittier High School's Vic Lopez Auditorium at 2:00 pm for our class of 2016, 8th grade Promotion Ceremony.

Last day of school

June 1st

Please note that the last day of school is Wednesday, June 1st and it is a minimum day. This is also the 8th grade Knott's field trip.

8th grade awards

May 19th

Thanks to our PTSA for sponsoring our annual 8th Grade Awards Night. It will be held in the cafeteria from 6:00-7:00 pm.

SB Assessment 2016

As you may know, GMS is in the process of completing the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SB) of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). This was the third year the SB was given and the second year that the full assessment was given. Same as last year, 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 SB 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). Again, it would be like comparing a sports car (SB) 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 SB is a much harder test, the state knew that the number of kids who would get a rating of "standard met" would be lower, regardless of what school students attend. Our results from last year were comparable to other middle schools in the Whittier Area and equal to other schools in California with students who are similar to our students. Our goal as a school is to always get better and help our kids grow academically, thus, we strive to improve every year.



Great Staff Training at GMS cont.

We also sent a TEAM of teachers to the AVID Summer Institute last summer and to Downey so they could learn what we affectionately call WICOR strategies. WICOR strategies are teaching strategies that help kids write better and take good notes, ask and answer high level questions, and work together to learn new things and to perform various tasks. In addition, WICOR includes helping kids get organized with orderly binders, and by having them complete a daily agenda so they keep track of their homework, tests, and activities. It also includes helping kids use different strategies to comprehend what they read. Our teachers work closely with Mr. Honeycutt, our instructional coach, to use the various strategies they learned in their classrooms so we can help our kids learn the material and information. Although we have a very effective veteran staff, we always want to learn and get smarter about how we support our kids' learning.



Spring Sports Finish Strong

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 dominated some of their opponents. They finished toward the top of the league. During the tournament they played two close games (they won the second one) and blew one team out 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. They really came together, were undefeated, and won league. The TEAMS worked hard all season and had an outstanding year, so congratulate them!

Our 8th grade girls' basketball team played well and finished toward the top of the league too. They improved a lot over the season and played well during the tournament. They lost their first game, but bounced back and had two dominant games and finished in third place. Our 7th grade girls' basketball team had some success this year. They had some impressive wins and a few losses. They dominated some teams and played well during the season. 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, photos, and the banquet. 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 the kids. ***We want to give a huge thanks to Coach Lynne McIntosh for 30 years of dedicated and professional service as our awesome Athletic Director. She spent thousands of hours over as AD, and we are all better for it. Thanks Miss Mac, you're the best!***

