

Graves Middle School

School Newsletter



Principal's Corner

Can you believe that it is 2014 already? As we are well into the 2nd trimester, I wanted to share a few thoughts with you about this school year. Graves Middle School has really beefed up the technology and we are working closely with Spiritt Family Services as they host the Parent Education Series at GMS.

As I mentioned previously, we have increased our use of technology at GMS. First, we now have four full computer labs and an iPad cart for our students and teachers. We are also exploring the possibility of adding an additional portable lab. We are now using the IXL math program and the Moby Max program in our English classes and our reading classes. We are really expanding our use of technology at Graves.

We also want to invite you to participate in the anti-drug education series that Spiritt Family Services is providing to our GMS families. Please give us a call if you have any questions about this series.

Common Core State Standards

As many of you have heard, we are in the process of several major changes in the field of education. We are changing the standards (the information we teach the kids), the test (how we know that the kids are learning the information), how we teach the kids, and how we receive funding. I want to focus on the standards, and specifically the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). We have been using the California State Standards for about the last fifteen years, but those are no longer being used. The CCSS are standards that are very rigorous, are very clear, will make us competitive within the U.S. and internationally, and they have been accepted

Save the Date!

2nd Trimester Ends

February 26th

Please ensure that your student(s) make up all incomplete work and do their best to receive "C's" or above in all classes.

No School

Feb. 10th & 17th

No school on these two days for Lincoln's birthday & Presidents' Day, enjoy your time off!

School Site Council

February 19th

Join us for the SSC meeting in the Parent Center from 2:50-3:50 pm.



CCSS continued

by about 46 states and D.C. Although they are very challenging standards, they are well written and well organized. They are written in a way that you can see how the kids' skills and knowledge are supposed to progress over time. The CCSS also really push kids to think critically, work together, be creative, and communicate effectively. They will also help us focus on technology so that our kids have all the skills they need to function in a global economy with 21st Century technology skills. At GMS we have been training our teachers so they understand the new CCSS and use best teaching strategies so our kids can access these new challenging standards. We are very excited because this is one of the most exhilarating times in public education in the last 50 or more years. We are excited because we know that the CCSS and all the change that will come with it will help us prepare our kids for college or a great career. I will keep you posted on our progress.

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC)

As I mentioned, the state test that our students take is also changing this year. In the past we took the California Standards Test (CST), now we will be taking the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) test. This year results from the SBAC will not be given to the schools, the students, or the parents because it is a "test of the test". In other words, they are deciding what works well with the test, what they will need to change and which test questions to keep and which ones to throw away. But there are some major changes with this new assessment. For example, the CST only had one type of question, a multiple choice question with just one correct answer and it was a paper and pencil test. The Smarter Balanced Assessment will have seven different types of questions and it will be done on computer. The types of questions will include multiple choice with one correct answer, multiple choice with more than one correct answer, short answer written responses, and long answer written responses among other types. So, the level of difficulty of the questions this year will be much harder than before. By next year the computer will adjust the level of difficulty of the questions (both easier and harder) for every student. As you can see, these are exciting times for schools, so I will keep you updated.



Winter Sports in Full Swing

Our winter sports program is finishing up the season and our 8th grade teams are preparing for the end of season tournaments. Our 7th and 8th grade boys' basketball teams have battled hard and had some close wins, but they also had some hard losses. Our 8th grade boys' basketball team had an exciting nail biter victory against Los Nietos at home earlier this season, as they won at the buzzer in overtime. Our 7th grade boys' basketball team played hard and dominated Los Nietos for a great win at home, as they won by almost 10 points. The coaches have worked very hard with our kids this season and their improvement is obvious. Good luck 8th graders in the tournament!

Our 7th and 8th grade girls' soccer teams have also had some exciting battles this season. The 8th graders have had some solid wins this year, including great wins against Los Nietos and Dexter at home. We are proud of our 8th graders for their strong season and wish them good luck in the tournament. Our 7th grade team battled closely and beat Los Nietos and Dexter at home for impressive wins. Congrats girls, keep up the good work as the season comes to a close. We want to thank all of the coaches for their great work and countless hours, our kids for their fine sportsmanship and strong effort, and our families for supporting their kids' sports and academic achievements. We look forward to girls' basketball and boys' soccer, which is up next.

