

Graves Middle School

School Newsletter



Principal's Corner

We first want to wish you a Happy New Year and we want to share a few really exciting things that are occurring at GMS. First, we are happy to share that GMS is eligible for the prestigious Gold Ribbon Program and we have decided to apply. We will focus on our Language Arts program for the Gold Ribbon for our implementation of the Common Core State Standards. We'll let you know how it goes.

Next, our GMS for Africa Campaign was a great success, as we raised more than \$1,320 for Caregiver Kits for people in Africa who are fighting HIV/AIDS. That was 120% of our goal, so we just want to thank our staff, students, families and everyone who supported this important event.

We also wanted to share that we are implementing two class sets of iPads in one of our Language Arts classrooms with numerous English Learners and in one of our math classes that also has several English Learners.

Common Core State Standards

We wanted to take time to share more information about how we are addressing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) at GMS. As I have mentioned in the past, our English/Language Arts (ELA) teachers are using a computer program that ensures that they teach and assess all of the CCSS. In addition, we are using a software program that allows our students to take the assessment online and it allows us to analyze their data so we know how to improve our instruction. We have been encouraged by what we have seen in ELA so far this year.

In our math department our teachers are using a new CCSS math textbook that is also online and we are using

Save the Date!

2nd Trimester Ends

February 25th

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. 9th & 16th

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

School Site Council

February 11th

Join us for the SSC meeting in the Parent Center from 2:45-3:45 pm.



CCSS continued

two computer programs that allow our students to learn at their individual levels while using the internet. With our ALEKS program our at-risk kids have made about 100% growth this year on the test.

Our social studies and science teachers have begun to incorporate a lot of critical reading and short answer questions as they prepare our kids for the CCSS and the Smarter Balanced state test. There have been some challenges during our transition to the CCSS because so much of the information and programs are so new and the standards are very challenging, but our teachers and support staff have done an excellent job working together and adjusting in order to support our students.

As mentioned previously, we also know that the new AVID Excel program will help our English Learners prepare for the CCSS and the Smarter Balanced test. We will keep you posted on our progress this year.

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium/CAASPP

As you already know, we are in the second year of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) test. The SBAC is part of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) and it is the state test that most of our students take every year. Last year the results from the SBAC were not given to the schools, the students, or the parents because it was a “test of the test”. In other words, they were deciding what worked well on the test and what they needed to change. This year students, parents, and schools will get individual test results, but schools may not receive a state ranking based on the tests.

Once again, the SBAC 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. The test will be longer this year too, as we will take full assessments and there will be a performance task in both language arts and math. Our window for the SBAC assessment is between March 30th and May 22nd and we are in the process of developing the testing schedule, which will be released in the near future, we’ll keep you updated.



Winter Sports in Full Swing

Our winter sports teams have been working hard to prepare for the new season. Our 7th and 8th grade boys' basketball teams have some good size and talent and they are hoping to challenge to win the league title. Our 8th grade boys' basketball team had an exciting nail biter victory against Los Nietos in the first game of the season, as they came back from 10 down and won a close game before the home crowd. Our 7th grade boys' basketball team dominated Los Nietos and won by about 30 points for an awesome victory at home in the season opener. Our coaches and our kids are working very hard and are excited about the season, so come out and cheer them on.

Our 7th and 8th grade girls' soccer teams have also been working hard preparing for the new season. They combined and beat Los Nietos at home during the season opener. Our 8th graders played great against Los Nietos and dominated them. Our 7th grade team then came out and battled Los Nietos closely to the delight of the home crowd. We want to congratulate our girls for such a strong win to open the season and we want to encourage them to keep up the hard work for the rest of the season. We want to encourage our girls to aim high and shoot to win the league title. We also want to thank our coaches for their good work and encourage our kids to display good sportsmanship and strong effort. We look forward to the rest of the season, fight on Panthers!

