



# Griswold Public Schools Superintendent's Update

February 2016

The community of the Griswold Public Schools educates for excellence by empowering students to become compassionate, confident, creative, and resourceful members of society.

*From the Office of the Interim Superintendent...*



Dear Parents and/or Guardians:

Please consider attending our Board of Education Budget Hearing which will be held on Monday, February 1<sup>st</sup> in the Griswold Middle School auditorium at 6:00pm.

Our focus in preparing the budget is to meet the needs of our students during a time of dramatic change in education in a difficult fiscal climate.

The Board of Education will present the 2016-17 budget as currently proposed which maintains current staffing and programs, but also requires reductions in other areas.

Please join us and listen, share your thoughts and ask questions. We value your input.

Sincerely,

Susan Rourke  
Interim Superintendent of Schools

### Important January District Dates to Know....

**February 1<sup>st</sup>** – Board of Education, Budget Hearing, GMS Cafeteria

**February 4<sup>th</sup>**- GMS 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Transition Night-6:00pm Café

**February 6<sup>th</sup>**-Berklee Jazz Fest (Chamber Choir)

**February 8<sup>th</sup>**-Board of Education-6:00 GMS LMC

**February 9<sup>th</sup>**-GES PTO Meeting-6:00-7:00 Library

**February 12<sup>th</sup>**-GES Book Character Dress up Day

**February 12<sup>th</sup>**-Early Dismissal-Professional Development Staff

**February 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup>** - President's Day/Winter Recess

**February 19<sup>th</sup>**- GMS-Gr 5/6 Fun Night sponsored by GMS PTO 5:00-7:00pm

**February 22<sup>nd</sup>** Board of Education-6:00 GMS LMC

**February 25<sup>th</sup>** – GES Guys and Games Night (6:00-8:00, Cafeteria)

**February 29<sup>th</sup>** - GHS Music Trip Student/Parent Meeting 7:00 GHS Aud



**Griswold Public Schools would not be successful without the continued support of all parents and community members.**

We are appreciative of you and invite your continued participation with all we do. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to communicate with your child's school or with the Superintendent's office directly. The Superintendent can be reached by calling 860-376-7600 or email: [srouke@griswoldpublicschools.org](mailto:srouke@griswoldpublicschools.org)



## Smiles on the Move

In-school dental program

A registered hygienist provides:  
cleanings, xrays, sealants, fluoride  
**Coming in April to GPS!**



## *Informational Notes from Our Schools*

### ***GES Notes...***

At Griswold Elementary School, we are gearing up for an action-packed February. We will kick-off with exciting events, beginning on Thursday, February 4. As part of our Character Rally about honesty, fourth grade students will share ways to promote honesty through our school, followed by a staff song! On February 5, students will participate in the annual Jump Rope for Heart to help to raise money for the American Heart Association. The excitement continues with our Character Dress Up day on the 12<sup>th</sup>, to further promote reading. And the end of the month further builds the connection between school and families with Guys and Games Night on February 25 and the start of our reading challenge. At GES, February is shaping up to be an eventful month to keep students excited to come to school!

***GMS Notes....*** February is a busy time in the classrooms of Griswold Middle School. Teachers are getting students ready for the standardized testing that will begin on March 10<sup>th</sup> with the CMT Science for grades 5 & 8 and then the SBAC that starts March 14<sup>th</sup>. Our Character Counts Program is focusing on fairness this month with our advisories creating activities to reinforce this attribute. A few items that parents need to be aware: Thursday Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> is our 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Transition Night for 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents and students. Our guidance counselor Karen Scholl will present all the information that families need in helping their student transition from the middle school. Also on Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> our Exploratory Team is sponsoring their annual Exploratory Night which showcases all the wonderful opportunities our E-Team provides for our students!

### ***Special Education Notes....***

The CT State Department of Education has implemented new pages in the Individualized Education Program (IEP). Page number nine, "State and District Testing and Accommodations," now includes SAT as the mandated testing option for any student in grade 11. Page number ten, "Special Factors, Progress Reporting, Exit Criteria," now includes a section on "Information on IEPs and Secondary Transition." This references important and informative materials for parents of students receiving special education services. This information can also be found on the Griswold Public Schools website, the Special Education Office, and in each of the buildings across the District.

### ***GHS Notes...***

Have you ever had a student ask you about what he or she can do after school, and you're just not sure? The Griswold Youth and Community Center - located close by at 68 Ashland Street in the borough - is a great place to start. The Youth Center is open Monday through Thursday from 2:30-5pm. Our kids can hang out together at the Center, but there are also structured activities offered including youth sports and Karate, among many others. Interested students can access the website online [www.griswoldyfs.com](http://www.griswoldyfs.com) and complete an application, or contact Ryan Aubin, Director, at 860-376-7026.



## Teens and Smartphones

Source-Common Sense Media

If your teen is among the [73% of teens who have access to a smartphone](#), you're well aware of the app obsession that can take over a brain and body in seconds. For teens, smartphones + apps = social networking. And where there's social networking, there's sure to be drama. While [a lot of social networking is harmless -- and even beneficial](#) -- some apps are specifically designed to appeal to users' darker impulses. Confessionals, anonymous comments, incriminating photos, rumor-mongering -- that sort of thing. Worse, some apps apply location services to this already combustible mix, connecting everyone in a school and magnifying problems like cyberbullying, gossip, and physical threats.

Keep these apps on your radar, and talk to your kids about responsible social networking:

**Yik Yak**. This "**location aware**" **social networking app** lets users post "anything and everything" anonymously. The brief, Twitter-like comments and photos are distributed to any 500 people using *Yik Yak* closest to you geographically. Anonymous threats against schools and individual students [have prompted many schools to ban the app](#), using the company's "[geo fencing](#)" [guidelines](#) to restrict communications in a certain area

**Ask.FM**. This **question-and-answer app** lets kids pose queries and answer questions from other users. With questions like "am I pretty or ugly?," the confessional nature makes kids vulnerable to negative feedback. Bullying is a major concern, and *Ask.FM* has been [cited as a factor in stories of teen suicide](#). In response to these problems, the company changed management and launched a robust safety center. Still, you have to wonder about an app that has a whole section just for law enforcement investigating criminal activity. Also watch out for: [Whisper](#).

**Snapchat**. For seemingly consequence-free communication, you can't do better than the **self-destructing messaging app** *Snapchat*. The app has gained a reputation as a "sexting" app because outgoing (and incoming) pictures, videos, and texts aren't permanently stored on devices. Still, many third-party developers have created apps that let recipients save snaps from unsuspecting senders. One of the biggest problems with *Snapchat* is its popularity: One [teacher complained of massive class disruption](#) when the app released an upgrade during the school day.

Also watch out for: [BurnNote](#), [Slingshot](#). Source-Common Sense Media

## Best Websites: Recommendations for Families

(from Common Sense Media)

Looking for great websites for kids? Our editors have made it easy with these hand-picked lists of fun, age-appropriate kids' sites and online games. It's a big world on the web, but with lists like ours, it can be a worthwhile one for your kids.

### **PBS KIDS PLAY!**

Age 4+

Educational site entertains and teaches.

URL: <http://www.pbskidsplay.org>

### **FunBrain**

age 7+

URL: <http://www.funbrain.com>

### **BrainPOP Jr.**

age 5+

Animated educational content for kids to explore.

### **DragonBox Algebra**

age 12+

Fantastic approach to learning algebra through gameplay.

### **Brilliant**

age 15+

Advanced math and physics buffs will dig difficult problems.

URL: <https://brilliant.org/>



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