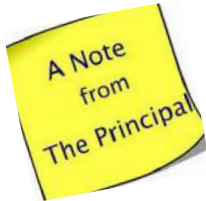


GMS

Newsletter Spring 2016



Dear Griswold Middle School Families,

This is our spring newsletter which means spring must be coming! Our winter has been unusual with 50 degree temperatures one day, and snow the next! Keep in mind what they say about March, "In like a lion and out like a lamb". Hopefully we will be seeing brighter days and consistently warmer temperatures soon! The next few months will be very busy at GMS with Smarter Balance Testing and finishing up the 3rd marking period. Attached you will find a letter regarding testing and a testing schedule. Our testing window extends from March 7th- April 1st. A reminder that the tests are computerized and we are only able to test two grade levels a day which is why our window extends into April. We are asking families to avoid scheduling appointments on the days that your child is testing. In addition, we cannot stress enough the importance of students being well rested, well-nourished and afforded some down time with family and friends during this time.

As we approach April, which is traditionally one of the busiest times of the year, please pay close attention to our calendar and *Wednesday Folders* for information regarding scheduled events. With this busy season, we stress the importance of balance being the key to keeping our students performing at their best. Ultimately, the weather will become warmer and kids can get outside for much needed fresh air and exercise. We encourage our students to put their best foot forward each day as they move closer to finishing this school year.

Enjoy what will be a wonderful and much needed spring for you and your family!

Best,

Mrs. Raynor





Griswold Middle School
Educating for Excellence

211 Slater Avenue
Griswold, CT 06351
Phone 860 376-7630 / Fax 860 376-7631
www.griswoldpublicschools.org

Karen Scholl
Guidance Counselor

John Howe
Psychologist

Elaine M. Mahanke
Social Worker

Michele Raynor
Principal

Glenn LaBossiere
Assistant Principal

March 8, 2016

Dear Parent or Guardian:

In our continuing efforts to ensure that your child – and all children/students – at Griswold Middle School are prepared for success, our teachers have implemented the Connecticut Core Standards that provide consistent guidelines in English language arts/literacy and mathematics at each grade level. These standards provide clear expectations of the knowledge, skills, and abilities students need to be successful beyond high school. The Smarter Balanced Assessment is aligned to the Connecticut Core Standards and is designed to assess student progress toward college and career readiness in mathematics, reading, and writing. Administered online, these assessments will adapt to each student's ability, giving teachers and parents/guardians information to help students succeed.

As required by Connecticut General Statute 10-14n, all students are required to take a mastery examination in Grades 3 – 8 for mathematics, reading, and writing. The Smarter Balanced Assessment will be administered to students in grades 5-8 during the testing window of **March 7-April 1**.

- Not all students take the test on the same day. We have created testing sessions where we accommodate two grade levels per session.
- Students will take these assessments with their Language Arts and Math teacher.
- The tests are not timed; however, it will take approximately 3 to 4 hours to complete each content area test
- Testing may be scheduled over multiple sessions of about 45 minutes each, but may be scheduled in shorter or longer sessions as appropriate for the students in the school.

Key Features of the Smarter Balanced Assessment

- ✓ Measures critical thinking with questions that ask students to demonstrate their research, writing, and problem solving skills
- ✓ All testing is administered using a secure online assessment system that includes a variety of tools and technology enhanced test questions that will improve the assessment experience for our students
- ✓ Accessibility tools for all students and accommodations – such as text-to-speech, key word translation glossaries, American Sign Language translation, and Braille – for those who need them
- ✓ Assessments are untimed and students can take breaks so that they can do their best

To learn more about the assessments, explore the Smarter Balanced Practice Tests

(<http://ct.portal.airast.org/training-tests>) with your child. Visit the Connecticut Smarter Balanced website (www.ct.gov/sde/SmarterBalanced) to find additional information for parents.

Sincerely,

Michele Raynor

2016	MARCH		CAT=Computer Adapted Test (NPT) NO Performance Task in LA only in Math	
CALENDAR YEAR / MONTH				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
29	01	02	03	04
Science CMT Practice on Computers Feb. 26	All Computer Labs Closed to classes March and April			
07	08	09	10	11
5/6 LA PRACTICE TEST	7/8 LA PRACTICE TEST	5/6 MATH PRACTICE TEST	SCIENCE CMT GRADES 5 & 8	NO SCHOOL PD DAY
14	15	16	17	18
7/8 MATH PRACTICE TEST	7/8 MATH TEST CAT	7/8 MATH TEST CAT	5/6 MATH TEST CAT	5/6 MATH TEST CAT
21	22	23	24	25
7/8 MATH PERFORMANCE TASK	5/6 MATH PERFORMANCE TASK	MAKE UPS	MAKE UPS	GOOD FRIDAY NO SCHOOL
28	29	30	31	01
7/8 LA CAT	7/8 LA CAT	5/6 LA CAT	5/6 LA CAT	MAKE UPS



School success starts
with attendance



Guidance News

8TH GRADE PARENTS! Griswold High School staff will be visiting Language Arts classes on Wednesday, March 16th. Students will learn about the course selection process. Students will then get their core academic recommendations from their core teachers (LA, Math, Science, Social Studies and Spanish). Teachers will sign off on the forms. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me in the School Counselor office. *Mrs. Scholl* :)

Please read the following article about transitioning to high school by U.S. News and World Report Education. The first day of high school can be equal parts exciting and terrifying. New classmates, new courses, new teachers and new expectations can all be points of anxiety for students moving from middle to high school. Even if the change doesn't seem drastic, parents should anticipate an adjustment period for their student, says Patrick Akos, a professor in the School of Education at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill.

While your teen may assure you they don't need your help, parental involvement is essential for a smooth transition from middle to high school, Akos says, "Even if they don't respond to parents as well as they used to in the past, the boundaries that parents make and the support they provide is as vital," he adds.

Below are a few tips for parents to help ease the way for their teenagers.

1. **Do a walk-through:** The bulk of first-day jitters can often be chalked up to logistics such as adjusting to a new bus route, finding lockers or getting from one class to the next, Akos says, these nerves can be mitigated by visiting the school ahead of time, helping your student find their classrooms and mapping out their school day. If your teen's school has a new student orientation day, go to it, he advises. While they may seem like a waste of time, programs designed for new students can help ease many organizational concerns right off the bat.

2. **Advocate involvement:** High school isn't just full of new people and new classes, it's also full of new opportunities. Encourage your child to join a sport, club or activity. It will help with making friends and ease the transition process.

3. **Avoid warnings:** Your teen is already stressed about getting good grades, so reminding them of how hard high school is going to be will only make things worse, Akos says. Instead of intimidating your student by saying things such as, "You're going to have to do this differently or else you're going to fail," parents should use positive language such as, "I know you're going to be able to handle this," he says.

Parents should also take time to just listen to their teen, especially early on. "Be available for you child when they come home from the first day of school scared, overwhelmed or stressed and just listen," she said. The benefits of parental support are not superficial, Akos says. "When they have beliefs like that and they actually listen to their kids, the kids tend to do better academically."

Be sure to check out
important dates listed
on the last page of the
newsletter.



A “note” or two from the GMS Music Department

Congratulations to the GMS Jazz Band who not only performed well at Exploratory Night, but looked great as they debuted our 15-16 music shirt! Seventh and Eighth graders purchase the shirts to be worn at all spring music events. Our orchestra students, along with 5th grade chorus students, did a nice job presenting at Exploratory Night....thank you to all!

Congratulations also to our 8th grade Select Choir for recently performing at a Hartford Wolf Pack hockey game at the XL Center. The kids did a great job! We are hard at work preparing for our dinner theater “A Night On Broadway” coming up on March 22. This will be an exciting night showcasing music students from grades 6, 7 & 8. This production is being presented by the Exploratory Team teachers, tickets are available through Mrs. Bocciarelli.

Our 5th grade Band, Orchestra and Chorus will perform their first concert of the year on April 6 @ 7:00 in the GMS auditorium, they are so excited and we can’t wait to show you what they can do! See below for spring dates and please visit www.gmsmusic.us for detailed information. THANK YOU for your continual support of the music program here at GMS!

March 16: GMS Jazz Band Concert; 7:00 Café
(Spring Jazz Band Tour: Schedule TBA)

March 22: GMS Dinner Theater; 6:00 pm, Café

April 6: Grade 5 Spring Concert; GMS Auditorium

May 10: Grade 7 Spring Concert; GMS Auditorium

May 11: Grade 8 Spring Concert; GMS Auditorium

May 27: Grade 8 Band/Chorus Adjudication Festival; Lake Compounce

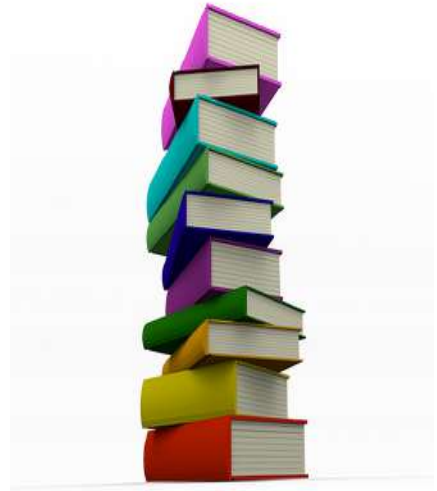
May 30: Grade 7-8 Marching Band; Memorial Day Parade; 9 am

May 31: Grade 5-12 String Festival



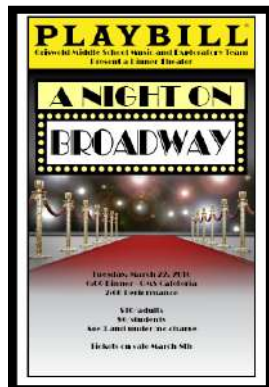
From the Reading Department

An important skill strong readers must have is the ability to identify figurative language. More importantly, students need to be able to explain what form of figurative language an author has chosen to use, the meaning of that language and why the author chose it. Recognizing various forms of figurative language helps readers to have a deeper understanding of the text they are reading. Below is a chart that shows the types of figurative language middle schoolers should recognize in their reading. Can your child find examples in their reading?



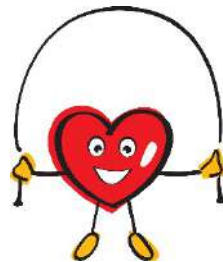
Exploratory Team:

On behalf of the Griswold Middle School Exploratory Team, we would like to thank everyone who attended our 2015-2016 Exploratory Night. We were thrilled to share our classrooms with you! We would also like to thank all parents who volunteered during the closing portion of our evening, we appreciate your time. Lastly, we would like to thank all local businesses who donated prizes for our raffle, we are sincerely grateful for your support and generous contributions.



The E Team will host another exciting event on Tuesday, March 22nd from 6:00-8:00 pm. The event is a dinner theatre, "A Night on Broadway" at which all the Exploratory teachers will serve dinner! All proceeds will go to the E Team for future activities and events.

Save the Date: Friday, April 15
Jump Rope for Heart, 5th Grade
More information to come!



BEFORE YOU
think
t= is it TRUE?
H= is it HELPFUL?
i= is it INSPIRING?
n= is it NECESSARY?
K= is it KIND?

Be sure to check
out our Internet
Safety article!
Important
information
concerning digital
citizenship!



Science:

In Fifth Grade Science we are working on the State of Connecticut Embedded Task, *Catch It*. In this performance task, students will explore factors affecting human reaction time. They will use a technique for measuring the reaction time of different individuals. Students will also learn about the importance of controlling variables to make a fair test so that results are more reliable. In addition, the Science CMT test will be administered on March 10th.

Math:

Grade 5 Math students continue to flex their math-muscles! Students are currently working on multiplying and dividing fractions and mixed numbers. Check out some of your child's work on this topic, and see how much they have learned! In our next topic, we will be exploring the volume of solids. Please continue to work with your children on reviewing their multiplication and division facts. Also, pointing out real life objects and identifying what type of solid they are, and finding the volume of them will help them connect the real world to what they're learning at school.

Language Arts/Social Studies:

In 5th grade LA/SS classes, students have started our new novel for the 3rd quarter, *Bud Not Buddy*. This historical fiction book takes place during the Great Depression, so students have also been learning about what life was like during this time period in the United States. We completed a narrative writing prompt on "Life as a Migrant Farm Worker during the Great Depression". We will now move onto opinion writing for a few weeks and transition into informational writing before Smarter Balanced testing. When students are assigned reading homework please encourage children to read at home and annotate as they read. In addition, if chapters are not assigned for homework, students should be completing their 20 minutes of reading each night. The Smarter Balanced Practice test for Language Arts will take place on Mon., March 7th.



In Language Arts, we are delving into creative and nonfiction narrative writing. Our goal is to use narrative writing for a purpose such as telling an entertaining story about ourselves or providing information about a topic in a new and unique way. As we finish up studying various genres through Reading Street, our excitement builds to begin reading *Hatchet* in the 4th quarter. During our reading of *Hatchet*, we'll begin to understand the process of research writing.

In the Science Chemical Building Blocks Unit the key concept that students are learning is that materials can be classified as pure substances or mixtures, depending on their chemical and physical properties. Students have conducted two investigations. In lab one students used physical means to separate substances in a mixture. The second lab involved students measuring the mass and volume of various objects in order to explain the concept of density. Finally, students were introduced to using the patterns in the Periodic Table to predict the general characteristics of an element.

Lately in 6th grade math we have been increasing our understanding of fractions. We are learning that dividing by a number is the same as multiplying by its reciprocal, so dividing by 5 is equal to multiplying by 1/5. For example if we wanted to divide our class by 5 and we have 15 people in our class, we could

do $15 \div 5 = 3$, or $15 \times \frac{1}{5} = 3$. This year in math we have had lots of fun! Written by: Ryan Pelillo, Hailey Eliasson, Evan Gilgenbach, & Finn Dombkowski

Students in social studies are learning about the events leading up to the War for Independence.

Character traits such as courage, endurance, and leadership are emphasized throughout our lessons.



Great stuff is happening in Grade 7! Students and staff alike are looking forward to sunny days and sunshine. Here's what's been up in our grade and what's coming ahead:

Math: We are beginning our unit on geometry! Students will be exploring types of triangles, angle relationships, as well as area, surface area, and volume of geometric figures. At the end of the month, students will be working on a few hands-on projects tying these concepts together with other topics we have covered throughout the year. Also, a study guide for Smarter Balanced will be handed out in the next week- we recommend students look this over before testing.

Language Arts:

In LA we have been reading the novel Lyddie, and have been learning about factory life during the Industrial Revolution. Students have also been deepening their understanding of the wide world of figurative language using Lyddie and various works of poetry. Students have been able to make important connections to the novel and various news articles we have read regarding working conditions around the world.

Science:

Students are working on the systems of the Human body, with the highlight being our Chicken Leg dissection lab. In this lab, students are able to see how the skeletal and muscular systems work together in the chicken leg and transfer that knowledge to our very own bodies. Better Value in Lisbon was kind enough to get us chicken leg quarters to examine and learn about! Students are also going to gain insight into how our circulatory and respiratory systems work together when we are active. They will come up with their own lab question to answer about how activity affects our pulse rate and then design a procedure as to how to solve that question. In the coming months, we will move into Physical Science where students will learn about motion, friction, gravity, and simple machines! Stay tuned! 😊

Social Studies:

Students have expanded their studies in America's Westward Expansion in Social Studies. That is, students are examining in greater detail the various groups that ventured westward in search of opportunities and ways to prosper. From early Explorers like Lewis and Clark, Pioneer Women, Missionaries, Mountain Men and others, students will focus on the motives, hardships, and their legacies to gain a better understanding of America's early foundation. Also, students will follow the Presidential Election / Primaries by gaining an understanding of the basic process in the parties' nominating process.



The 8th graders have been busy throughout the winter working both on their academics and their citizenship goals. With the proceeds from the “Half-day/Hat-day” fund raiser, the students were able to purchase enough fleece fabric to make ten tied quilts for kids spending Christmas at the hospital. The blankets were delivered to the kids before Christmas by Carol Verissimo. Thanks Carol for

partnering with us in our community service work. We will continue to sponsor the Half-day/Hat-days throughout the year in our efforts to give back.

Another big fundraiser for us is the Bowl-a-thon at Norwich Ten Pin. For over ten years, the GMS 8th grade class has been contributing hundreds of dollars to the CT Children’s Medical Center. The students gather pledges and donations per pin scored, then bowl their hearts out for a good cause!

Thanks to all of you who sponsored a bowler with a financial donation. Not all pledge money has come in yet. Parents please help us by reminding your children to get the money in as soon as possible.

Students have been busy with their academics as well. In Math, the students just completed a unit on geometry. They learned about volume of cylinders, cones and spheres and are now working on slope and y-intercept. Science classes are focused on astronomy and students are working on research projects to be completed at home. In Social Studies students are working their way through the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression, leading up to research projects on WWII. Language Arts classes have been supporting history with a unit on World War II as well as half the class is finishing up *Unbroken*, while the rest of the 8th graders are embroiled in Shakespeare’s *A Mid-Summer Night’s Dream*. They have acquitted themselves well as we brought the challenge of Shakespeare to the Middle School proving that high-expectations will lead to great success.

We encourage parents to remind their children to stay focused on the prize as we enter the spring months. We have lots of great activities to look forward to and we want the students to work hard to earn the end of the year rewards.

















Internet Safety



The Internet plays a vital role in our children's lives. Kids these days are incredibly computer savvy and know more about technology than most adults. The Internet can be a valuable educational tool as it provides endless resources on various topics. However, if not used appropriately, the Internet can also be a dangerous place for our children. In order to keep our children safe and protected, it is important for parents to be aware of the Internet's hazards and know what to do in a situation where a child might be at risk. Please read the tips below and remember to always communicate with your child about Internet safety.

Tips for Parents:

-  Limit your child's time on the Internet.
-  Supervise the websites your child is visiting and block the ones that you think are inappropriate.
-  Place the computer in a common area so that you can easily monitor your child's activity on the computer.
-  Do not allow you child to visit private chat rooms.
-  Teach your child not to respond to unfamiliar, offensive, or threatening emails or instant messaging.
-  Share an email account with your child so that you can monitor all incoming and outgoing messages.
-  Share a password with your child and do not allow your child to give out this password to anyone.
-  Explain to your child that people on the Internet may or may not be who you think they are.
-  Be informed: visit www.cybertipline.com to learn chat room lingo such as POS = Parent Over Shoulder.
-  Have a contract with your child that outlines clear rules and guidelines for using the Internet appropriately in the house. Please visit www.safekids.org for a printable version of a child/parent contract.
-  Contact your Internet provider if you need to report and block suspicious or unwanted web addresses.
-  In addition to Internet safety on the computer, please be aware of your child's phone usage such as text messaging and if a child has access to the Internet through a phone.





Library News

The spring Book Fair will be held the week of May 16.

This is the always-popular Buy-One-Get-One Book Fair, and sales will contribute to our overall rewards from Scholastic for the year. Please consider stopping by and making a purchase! There will be evening hours to coincide with the GMS Art Show on Wednesday, May 18.

Congratulations to the following students, who have the top library reading records in each grade!

8th Grade:

Cheyenne Zvingilas
Jacob Haugland
Julia Leslie
Noah Dameron
Gabrielle Smey
Nissa Holmquist
Katerina Bromkamp
Dylan Chapel
Pharaoh Curtis
Davontae Fontaine

6th Grade:

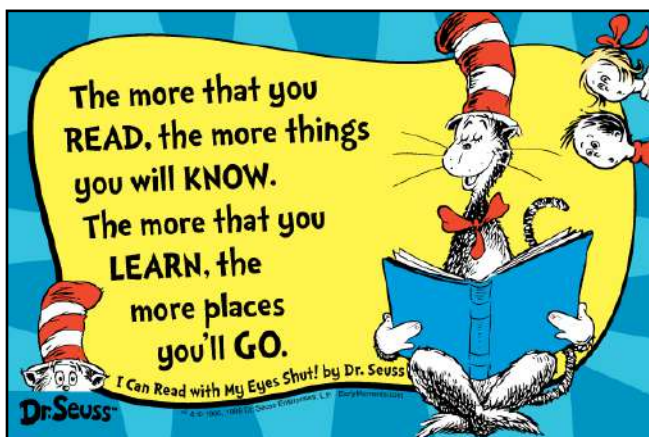
Colby Zvingilas
Kenneth Willey
Mackenzie Pinkham
Reese Gagne
Laci Lemay
Jacob Harraka
Rebekah Cruz
Caidence Moon
Sydney Hanley
Sydney Lickwola

7th Grade:

Cameron Nason
John Scavoni
Mataeo Duarte
Laura Garcia
Shane Harper
Edward Smith
Ariana Colon
Paige Swartzel
Valeria Atencia
Christobar Hatfield-Mendez

5th Grade:

Kaitlin Pearson
Kuranda Ruggerio
Nicholas Scavoni
Joshua Conn
Timothy Jordan
Mason Williams
Myra Dean
Steven Lanphear
Adriana Morabito
Warren Babin





Health Room News & Information



Is your child entering 7th grade in the fall? If so, a current 6th grade physical is required. This state mandated physical along with **up to date immunizations (2nd Varicella, Menactra and Tdap)** must be completed prior to entering 7th grade. The completed form **must be dated no earlier than June 1, 2015 and received by the school health office prior to the first day of school.**

If you would like a blank physical form to bring with you to your provider's office, they are available in the main office at GMS, the Health Office or on our website, under health services, where it may be printed. Most local pediatricians will have a supply of these state forms.

Please be sure the doctor's office completes ALL of the asterisk boxes on the form as they are mandatory. If they are not completely filled out your child will be unable to start school. Blood work will also be required and the physical will not be complete without the results.

Vision and hearing screenings **are not** provided by the school in 6th grade as these screenings are assessed by the provider at this physical exam and the results **must** be recorded on the blue physical form. Students will be sent home **the first few days** of school and will not be able to return to school until the completed physical is in the health office. Please make sure your child starts the new school year off right and on time.

Our contact numbers are (860) 376-7624, Fax (860) 376-7623 and (860)-376-7631. It is best to fax or mail the completed physical to GMS, attention: School Nurse.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	1	2 ½ day Parent Teacher Conferences	3 ½ day Parent Teacher Conferences	4 Advisory Jazz Band
7 Testing begins See testing schedule	8	9 PTO Fundraiser Due	10 Parent Night for incoming 5 th grade, 6 pm, Café PTO Meeting, 3:45	11 No Students PD DAY
14 BOE Meeting, 6pm, GMS LMC	15	16 GMS Jazz Band Concert, 7 pm	17 	18 Activity Jazz Band
21 GMS Musical rehearsal, 6-8	22  GMS Dinner Theater, Café, 6 pm	23 National Junior Honor Society, NJHS, 6:30 pm, GMS Auditorium	24 Yearbook orders due	25 No School Good Friday
28 3rd Quarter Ends BOE Meeting, 6pm, GMS LMC	29 4 th quarter begins SFCP meeting, Café, 2:45 pm	30	31 Student/Faculty Volleyball Game, 2:30 – 3:30 pm 