

# GRISWOLD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Superintendent's Update – Week of December February 4, 2013

It's not the load that breaks you down; it's the way you carry it.

~ Lena Horne

### National School Counselors Week - February 4-8, 2013

Our goal in celebrating National School Counselors Week is to focus attention on the unique contribution of the professional school counselors within our school system and how our students benefit as a result of what the Griswold School counselors do. National School Counselors Week highlights the tremendous impact our school counselors have in helping Griswold students achieve school success. During this week all of us in the Griswold Public School are excited to recognize and honor our school counselors who implement our comprehensive school counseling programs that serve as a vital part of the educational process for all students as they meet the challenges of the 21st century.



**Be part of the budget process!**

### Calendar



- **Monday, February 4 – PUBLIC HEARING on the 2013-2014 Budget in the GMS AUDITORIUM, 6:00 PM.** All teachers and staff are invited and urged to attend. The Board of Education is interested in your opinions!



- **Wednesday, February 6 – “Coffee and Chat” / Superintendent’s Advisory Council in the Superintendent’s Office at GMS, 7:30 AM or 8:45 AM.** Parents are urged to attend and receive information about the 2013-14 Budget. These two meetings will be a great chance to ask questions and discuss budget priorities.

- **Wednesday, February 6 – Building Committee Meeting in the GES Library Media Center, 7:00 PM.**
- **Wednesday, February 6 – GHS Parents Advisory Committee in the GHS Library, 7:00 PM.**
- **Thursday, February 7 – Policy Subcommittee Meeting in the Superintendent’s Office, 8:00 AM.**
- **Thursday, February 7 – Town and School Capital Committee meeting at the Town Hall, 5:30 PM.**
- **Thursday, February 7 – GMS PTO Meeting in the GMS Library, 7:00 PM.**
- **Friday, February 8 – Children First Griswold Meeting at GHS (Room 3103), 9:30 AM.**



- **Monday, February 11 – Board of Education Meeting in the GMS Library, 6:00 PM.**

- **Tuesday, February 12 – GES PTO Meeting in the GES Library Media Center, 6:30PM.**
- **Thursday, February 14 – Valentine’s Day.**
- **Friday, February 15 – Edline grade posting by all teachers in Grades 5-12.**



- **Monday, February 18 – President’s Day, No School.**

- **Tuesday, February 19 – Winter Vacation Day, No School.** (School resumes on Wednesday.)

- **Wednesday, February 20 – Building Committee Meeting in the GES Library Media Center, 7:00 PM.**
- **Thursday, February 21 – Policy Subcommittee Meeting in the Superintendent’s Office, 8:00 AM**
- **Saturday, February 23 – “Karing for Koen” Pasta Dinner and Musical Cabaret in the GES Cafetorium at 4:00 PM and 7:00 PM (Two seatings).** Tickets available at Jewett City Savings Band, GES, or from Ray Churchill (\$10.00).

## Reminders:



### Help us recognize the "Volunteers of the Year."

Please return nominations to Robin Drobiak by Friday, March 1, 2013.



### Get Healthy, Griswold

Join the activities or walk the campus during a break. Grab one of the gym bags and load up your sneakers and mittens and take a good walk!

## Notes

### ❖ **FEBRUARY is... National African American History Month**

To commemorate and celebrate the contributions to our nation made by people of African descent, American historian Carter G. Woodson established Black History Week. The first celebration occurred on Feb. 12, 1926. For many years, the second week of February was set aside for this celebration to coincide with the birthdays of abolitionist/editor Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. In 1976, as part of the nation's bicentennial, the week was expanded into Black History Month. Each year, U.S. presidents proclaim February as National African-American History Month. (from [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov))

Please make sure to celebrate and honor our country's rich diversity by incorporating activities into your classes this month.

### ❖ **Griswold Board of Education Meeting Highlights (1/29/13)**

- The January Employee of the Month, Jane Rider – Guest Art Teacher at GES, was recognized by the Board.
- Sue Rourke presented information concerning items in the 2013-14 Budget that pertain to GES. She reviewed items that are currently in the budget and items that she would like the Board to consider adding.
- Madeline Illinger presented information concerning the Special Education impact on the 2013-14 Budget. She also gave the Board an overview of various line items in the Special Education budget.
- Jill Curioso presented information concerning items in the 2013-14 Budget that pertain to Technology. She also discussed specific technology line items and their funding for next year.
- The Board tabled a discussion on performance contracting energy cost savings. This item will be discussed at the 2/11/13 BOE meeting.
- Two text books and accompanying materials were approved (2<sup>nd</sup> read) by the Board: Elementary Statistics (Pearson, 2014) and Geometry Common Core Edition (Pearson 2012).
- After a financial update for the 2012-13 school year, the Board discussed and acknowledged the Superintendent's plan to freeze budget expenditures as of 2/1/13.

### ❖ **The Griswold 2022 Project – A vision for the future of our students**

**Thank you to the following:** Matt Peel (Admin), Sue Rourke (Admin), Doug Scholl (GHS), Kathy Bocciarelli (GMS), Donna Rossi (GES), Mary Strout (GES), Jill Curioso (Technology), Yvonne Palasky (BOE), Terrlyn Curry Avery (Parent), and Danielle Longacre (Student). This group spent Tuesday, January 29<sup>th</sup> developing a draft document of Griswold 2022, our vision for the future of the Griswold Public Schools. All teachers and staff will get a copy soon on which to comment and offer further suggestions.

## ❖ **Physical activity...every day.**

It doesn't take much of a stretch to see how a physical activity break would help students prior to beginning the math block of the day. How do you add the time without adding on to the length of the day? Or perhaps the day should be lengthened. There are barriers to keeping physical activity time in the forefront...but, are they overwhelming?

### **Study calls for daily PE classes** *Written by [Ann Schimke](#)*

A recent [study](#) published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* found that instituting daily physical education classes for children would boost moderate to vigorous physical activity by 23 minutes a day, more than one-third of the 60 minutes recommended by [federal guidelines](#).

The study, which was funded by the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#), assessed a variety of policy changes, quantifying each based on the amount of physical activity it would add to a child's day.

In addition to adding daily P.E. classes, the study found that incorporating classroom physical activity breaks and increasing walking or biking to school would also make a significant dent in the recommended minimum. Physical activity breaks would add 19 minutes a day and walking or biking to school would add 16 minutes a day.

Despite the federal recommendation that children 6-17 get 60 minutes of physical activity a day, only 49 percent of Colorado children 5-14 reached that threshold, according to 2011 [data](#) from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

[Red Hawk Elementary School](#) in Erie is one school that bucks the trend. With the help of its "All-School Movement Program," students routinely get nearly an hour of physical activity and sometimes more during the school day.

The school, which opened in 2011, mandates a 20-minute physical activity break in the morning and a similar 10-20 minute activity break in the afternoon. That's in addition to a 20-minute daily recess and a 45-minute physical education class once or twice a week.

Red Hawk Principal Cyrus Weinberger said the school's leadership team made sure physical activity breaks were built into the schedule from the very beginning.

"We were very careful to develop things so it was easy for teachers to implement," he said.

Classes can choose from a menu of options for their physical activity breaks, which precede math and science, the most challenging academic subjects. Activities include things like dancing, jumping rope, outdoor relay races or a power walking circuit dubbed the Red Hawk Walk. On Friday mornings, the 20-minute morning break is a school-wide affair with students, teachers, and even some support staff and parents participating in a fast-paced dance or exercise routine together.

Last June, the school was recognized for its movement program with a \$100,000 award in the Active Schools Acceleration Project Innovation Competition. The project is coordinated by ChildObesity180, an organization at Tufts University that aims to reverse the trend of childhood obesity within one generation's time.

Weinberger said Red Hawk was named a national winner largely because the effort was easy to scale and inexpensive.

"Our next level of work is integrating more movement into the academic part of the day," he said.

Under a 2011 Colorado law, elementary schools must give their students opportunities to be physically active for at least 600 minutes a month, or about 30 minutes a day. The requirement can be satisfied through p.e. classes, recess, physical activity breaks, or field trips and classroom activities that include physical activity.

Kyle Legleiter, a public policy officer for the [Colorado Health Foundation](#), said while there is currently no hard data on whether and how districts are complying with the law, anecdotal evidence indicates that many schools are making changes. Some have brought in coaches to make recess a more structured, physically active part of the day. Others have updated their physical education curriculums or redesigned their playgrounds to encourage more active play.

"The law has really helped them to raise the profile of this issue," he said.

*For complete article, [click here](#).*

## Thoughts

### **Don't ever sell any student short. I repeat...don't ever sell any student short.**

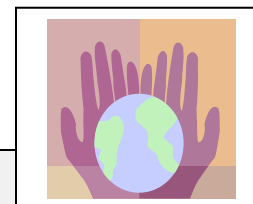
There is a great quote in the Op-Ed piece below:

***"It's about investing in kids in ways that transform their trajectories forever."***

Every teacher deserves to – and should – paste that quote over their bathroom mirror as they are getting ready in the morning. What a powerful, proud, and honorable career that teachers have chosen!

I urge you to read the article below. As you read the article, substitute the word “chess” where it appears (especially paragraph 8) for the subject you teach, the sports you coach, or the activities you mentor - and realize that every minute of the day you are transforming the youth of Griswold.

How I admire the influence of a great teacher!



#### **Meet the Champs** By NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF, *New York Times*

You see America and its education system in all their glorious, exhilarating, crushing, infuriating contradictions in our national high school chess champion team.

Chess tends to be the domain of privileged schools whose star players have had their own personal chess coaches since elementary school. Yet the national champion team comes from a high-poverty, inner-city school, and four-fifths of its members are black or Hispanic.

More astounding, these aren't even high school kids yet. In April, New York's Intermediate School 318 in Brooklyn, where 70 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, became the first middle school team ever to defeat kids about four years older and win the national high school championship.

The champs are kids like Carlos Tapia, a Mexican-American in the eighth grade, whose dad is a house painter and mom a maid. The parents can't play chess and can't afford to give Carlos his own room, but they proudly make space for his 18 chess trophies.

"Chess teaches me self-control" that spills over into other schoolwork, Carlos said in the I.S. 318 chess room, as a rainbow of students hunched over their boards, brows furrowed.

This will be my last column for a number of months, as I'm taking a leave to work on a new book with my wife. So I asked my Twitter followers what they'd like me to write about in this column, and one suggested I address: *How do you do your job without getting incredibly depressed?*

I promise, I'm not the Eeyore of journalists. The truth is that covering inequality, injustice and poverty can actually be inspiring and uplifting because of kids like Carlos. Just sprinkle opportunity around, and dazzling talents turn up.

**This isn't about chess. It's about investing in kids in ways that transform their trajectories forever.** The returns on capital would make Wall Street jealous.

Take Rochelle Ballantyne, who was raised by a single mom from Trinidad and soared on the I.S. 318 chess team. Rochelle, now 17 and aiming to become the first African-American woman to become a chess master, has won a full scholarship to Stanford University. She's planning to attend even though she has never visited the campus.

"We were meant to break stereotypes," Rochelle told me. "Chess isn't something people are good at because of the color of their skin. We just really work very hard at it."

That seems to be the secret. A part-time chess tutor named Elizabeth Spiegel arrived at I.S. 318 in 1999 and parlayed a tiny budget into a team that drills tirelessly. A dynamic, passionate teacher who volunteered much of her time, she nurtured a team that since 2000 has won more middle school championships than any other in the country.

One way of assessing what she has accomplished: Based on estimated chess ratings, Albert Einstein would rank third on the I.S. 318 team.

I wish the column could end on this triumphant note. But if these extraordinary kids are a reminder of what can happen when we invest in creating opportunity, they are also a reminder that budget cuts fall disproportionately on the needy.

“Funding for extracurricular activities has dried up,” said John Galvin, an assistant principal who oversees the 95-member chess team. The kids run bake sales, candy sales and walkathons to raise the \$50,000 needed to attend tournaments each year, but on trips they sometimes survive on peanut butter.

Galvin has tried approaching corporations and hedge funds for donations but has had little luck. Budget cuts have already trimmed the after-school chess club to three days a week from five.

A moving documentary about the team, “[Brooklyn Castle](#),” is scheduled to air on PBS later this year, and that may help with fund-raising.

But similar cutbacks are playing out all across America. In 35 states, inflation-adjusted school financing is below 2008 levels, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. As of July, school districts have slashed 328,000 jobs since 2008, and budget cuts have devastated early childhood education that lays the foundation for children’s lives.

Affluent kids continue to enjoy nursery school and chess tutors, even as programs for poor kids are eliminated. Education is the best escalator out of poverty, but for too many kids it’s creaking to a standstill.

As we make historic fiscal decisions in the coming months, let’s not balance budgets by slashing investments in our future. That would be like economizing on heating bills by feeding the front door into the fire.

While on leave, I’ll be rooting for kids like Carlos to soar to another national championship — and far beyond. Given the returns, the question isn’t whether we can afford to invest in opportunities for kids but how we can possibly afford not to.

**Source:**

**The Opinion Pages**

The New York Times

Make an effort to change a student’s trajectory this month.

Have a great week!

Paul K. Smith



Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other.

~ Abraham Lincoln