



FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK—Mr. McPherson

Attendance is often a hot topic of discussion among parents. While having our kids in school is extremely important, we also understand that kids will occasionally have to be absent from school. Below is some information that may help parents understand our policies towards attendance:

- Research shows that students perform at a higher academic level when they are in attendance on a regular basis.
- The law states that our students must be in school, or have a valid reason for being absent.
- According to the Illinois School Code, schools can mark students excused for the following reasons: illness, funeral, observance of a religious holiday, family emergency, reasonable safety/health concerns, or situations beyond the control of the student approved by the superintendent, principal or designee.
- Schools are required to mark students excused or unexcused based on these guidelines, which is why secretaries must ask why your child is missing school.
- Schools receive funding from the state based partially on our average daily attendance rate. In essence, the more days our students attend school, the more money we get from the state.

GK CUSD #424 Board Policy states schools must send home letters upon excused absences of 5, 9 and 17 days. The DeKalb County Truancy Intervention Program will be notified at 9 days and 18 days of unexcused absences.

As educators, we only want what is best for our students. We hope the schools and families can work together in this endeavor. If you have any questions about attendance or any other issue, please do not hesitate to call me at 815-784-5222, ext.13.

Giving Tree

Starting December 1st student council will be collecting new or barely used hats, scarfs, mittens and gloves. These items will be donated to the Genoa Food Pantry to give out to local families when they stop in for food items. Any donated items can be hung on the tree in the front lobby throughout the month of December. All donations are appreciated. GKMS would like to “Thank” everyone in advance for all the wonderful contributions, and would like to give a special “Thank you” to the GKMS Grannies for all the handmade scarfs.

HEALTH CORNER

It's that time of year for flu season. It's important to stay healthy through the holiday season. Here are some helpful tips to get you through....

1. If you don't feel well, stay home and get your rest
2. Make sure you allow 24 hours to pass by from when you started to feel better.
3. Drink plenty of fluids
4. Visit your doctor if you have symptoms that last longer than 3-4 days.

Happy Holidays to everyone!!!



District Nurse

ALERT!

Effective for the 2012-2013 school year, the Department of Public Health will require all 6th through 12th graders to receive the Tdap immunization. Tdap protects against Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis. Please contact your local health care provider to learn more.

Efectivo para el año escolar 2012-2013, el Departamento de Salud Pública exigirá que todos los alumnos de sexto a 12 para recibir la vacuna Tdap. Tdap protege contra el tétanos, Diphtheria y tos ferina. Por favor, póngase en contacto con su proveedor de atención de salud local para más información

Jane E. Olson RN, BSN Tracey Busby, RN, MS ED

Illinois Certified School Nurse

Genoa-Kingston CUSD # 424

(815) 757-2219 mobile

Toys for Tots

Community Impact Club wants you to have the chance to help children this holiday season!

- Community Impact Club is asking students to donate a new \$5-10 toy or \$5 this holiday season.
- When the student brings in a new \$5-10 toy or a \$5 donation this will get them a pass into a drive-in style movie in the gym. (movie to be announced)
- Students are allowed to bring in your own water bottle, snack and chair the day of the movie.
- The movie will take place Thursday, December 22nd from 8:15-10:15 (the day before winter break).
- We will be collecting the donations in the morning gym until Thursday, December 21.

GKMS Athletics

Girls Basketball Tryouts, Dec. 19, 20, and 21st from 3-5pm.

Parent meeting for Girls Basketball and Wrestling is on Dec. 15th, 7pm.

Wrestling information to come out in December.

FROM THE 6TH GRADE TEAM

Reading

Reading classes are finishing Tuck Everlasting by Natalie Babbitt and House of Dies Drear by Virginia Hamilton. The students will be introduced to more character studies, many plot lines, as well as varied settings in other pieces of literature. Also, extended reading responses will be a focus in the months ahead. These reflections are in preparation for the ISAT tests in March of 2012.

Language Arts

Language arts classes have been actively writing; including these opportunities: writers' workshop, personal narratives, expository essays, and personal poetry. In addition, we will continue our study of 6+ 1 Traits of Writing, placing an emphasis on WORD CHOICE, while revisiting IDEAS, ORGANIZATION, and VOICE. Some of the grammar skills covered, or will be covered, include possessive nouns and pronouns and prepositions.

FROM THE 7TH GRADE TEAM

Science

7th grade Science will continue in its study of the cell, focusing on the cellular cycle. Do you remember meiosis and mitosis, how cells replace themselves? Ask your seventh grader to explain the different phases to you. After that we will move into heredity and genetics. Are your earlobes attached or unattached? Do you have a widow's peak? These are some questions you can expect your seventh grader to be asking you.

Also, just a reminder that the textbook is available online if your student's book is not available when he or she needs it.

<https://sites.google.com/site/gkms7science/home/science-text>

Reading/Language Art

In December, Ms. Bakanas and Mrs. White's Reading students will be applying reading strategies to novel studies. Some skills we will be focusing on include asking questions, characterization, inferencing, cause effect, and the elements of plot. Mrs. Perry and Mrs. Laben's Reading students will be analyzing the elements of poetry. In January, Reading students will be analyzing non-fiction articles using a variety of reading strategies. Some of the skills we will cover include determining author's purpose, cause and effect, compare and contrast, identifying pros and cons, and chronological order.

In December, Language Arts will be finishing up our descriptive writing unit. We will be focusing on all of the 6 +1 traits of writing. In grammar, we will focus on pronouns. In January, the Language Arts curriculum will be focusing on incorporating the 6 +1 traits of writing using persuasive writing. In grammar, we will focus on adverbs, prepositions, and interjections.

FROM THE 8TH GRADE TEAM

Reading /Language arts

Eighth grade reading students are reading *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. This novel unit will take us up to Winter Break. Students are analyzing the connections among setting, characters, and plot as they practice comprehension strategies using Turn to Your Partner and whole-class discussions. This is a great novel for teaching students to recognize flashback and foreshadowing.

In language arts, we are introducing the different skills from 6+1 Writing. We have practiced using good word choice, varying sentences for better fluency, and are now working on writing using strong voice. Students continue to practice writing using specific words and phrases as well as remembering to “show, not tell” as well.

As the school year continues, students will also be writing persuasive, expository, and narrative essays in addition to the descriptive essays they are practicing currently.

Word study is a weekly assignment, so encourage your students to work on or study the packet for a few minutes each day.

If you have any questions, please contact us at school at 815-784-5222 or at our school email: kdeverel@gkschools.org, kroberson@gkschools.org, and svolden@gkschools.org.

Science

Currently in 8th grade science we are finishing up our unit on Newton’s Laws of Motion. We have learned that these laws explain the movement of all of the objects in our day to day lives. We have identified the natural forces that cause objects to change their motion such as Gravity and friction. And, we have applied mathematical calculations to every day situations to find unknown values of force, mass or acceleration.

In the coming weeks we will be investigating simple machines. We will learn the types of simple machines and how they make our work easier. We will understand how the mechanical advantage of a machine allows us to change the force and speed with which we are able to accomplish our work. And, we will create a machine that will allow us to test the effects of changing the mechanical advantage.

I would also like to encourage all parents to ask their students about the things we are doing in school, to keep checking assignment books and grades on Powerschool. As you know middle school students are not fully independent and need support from home studying for tests, completing projects and finding purpose in the lessons they are taught.

Thank you for your support and your fantastic kids!

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS—Mrs. Sorensen

GIVE A “THANK YOU” GIFT TO PLANET EARTH!

Make this the season that you commit to some basic and eco-friendly behaviors:

Purchase and put to use a reusable water bottle. Ten to fifteen dollars can get you a nice one in either plastic, or stainless steel (your best choice) or aluminum. KleanKanteen.com is a good website store for purchasing these, but most “big box” stores carry something you can use to put an end to all of the water bottle waste we create in this country and around the world. Using a reusable/refillable bottle saves a lot of petroleum based material and that is great for our environmental future.

Get in the habit of carrying and using reusable tote bags. Many stores sell these or have special offers including discounts for using them. It pays to get sturdy ones that you can have for many years. Reusablebags.com is an excellent source for these. Ms. Sorensen keeps 6 bags that can hold 20to 30 pounds with ease in her car. They are washable, flexible and versatile as well.

Make it your goal to have more in your recycle bin than in your garbage can each week. Ms. Sorensen and family take pride in throwing very little away on balance to what they recycle.

REMEMBER:

If it ends up in the landfill and is an item from a finite resource, we may have to be mining the landfills in the future to retrieve the material

If your community doesn't have a varied recycling program, drive things to one that does once a month.

VISUAL ART – Mrs. Sorensen

In GKMS Visual Art, we are in the throes of the third session of the Encore rotation and we are still just as involved as ever in our varied and busy curriculum. When the students arrive back in Art after the winter break, they will begin their second semester rotation and pick-up increasingly complex lessons including:

SIXTH:

- Texture Weaving
- Perspective drawing
- Symmetry/Asymmetry Oil Pastels
- Circle Stencil Patterning and Sub-patterning

SEVENTH:

- Portraiture
- Mask Designing
- Stamp Printing
- Repousee Metalworking and Print Rubbing
- Word and Pattern Combination Design

EIGHTH:

- Tessellation
- Pipe and Ribbon Drawing
- Platform Sculpture
- Maze Design

It's been a high product quality first half. I am excited to get into the second half to see what the GKMS art students will do with these fun projects. The result possibilities are as broad as their imaginations!



Middle School Cogs' Cafe

Over the past six years Middle School Life Skills students have participated in a Cogs' Cafe at the high school. At the high school cafe, students would plan, shop for, prepare and serve lunch to the high school staff in a sit down restaurant setting. Beginning this November Middle School students opened their own Middle School Cogs' Cafe.

At the Middle School Cafe, Life Skills students offered dessert type food items to Middle School staff. Orders were taken ahead of time. Students then processed orders and generated shopping lists. Students shopped for needed ingredients, prepared and delivered items to staff.

Students enjoyed this first cafe and look forward to participating again in February.



CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER/JANUARY

DECEMBER

- 1 MS/HS Chorus Concert at 7:00 pm @ HS
Boys BB 7th home/8th @ Hampshire
- 5 Boys BB MNC Tourney @ North Boone
- 6 Boys BB MNC Tourney @ North Boone
Chorus to Cherry Vale Mall
- 7 Early Release at 1:45 pm
- 8 Market Day pick up
Boys BB MNC Tourney @ North Boone
Jazz Band to Cherry Vale Mall
- 13 School Board Meeting 7:00 p.m. @ GKHS
- 15 PTO Meeting 6:30 p. m.
Parents Meeting Re: Girls Basketball & Wrestling @ 7:00 p. m.
- 19 Girls BB Tryouts
- 20 Girls BB Tryouts
- 21 Girls BB Tryouts
8th Grade COGS Day
- 22 Early Release at 1:45 pm
End of 2nd Quarter/End of Encore 3
6th/7th Grade COGS Day
- 23 No School, Start of Winter Break

JANUARY

- 4 Classes Resume
- 10 Report cards sent home
- 13 No School—Teacher Institute
- 16 No School—Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 19 Market Day
Girls BB 7th home/8th @ Stillman
- 23 Girls BB 7th home/8th @ Dundee
- 24 School Board Meeting 7:00 p.m. @ GKHS
Girls BB 7th home/8th @ N. Boone
- 25 Early Release at 1:45 pm
- 26 Girls BB 7th @ Harvard/8th home
- 31 Girls BB 7th/8th @ Indian Creek

IMPORTANT DATES

Report Cards sent home: January 10, 2012, March 15, 2012 and the last day of school

Progress Reports sent home: February 8, 2012 and April 20, 2012.

School Board Meetings: December 13, 2011, January 24, 2012, February 28, 2012, March 20, 2012, April 24, 2012,

May 22, 2012 and June 26, 2012