

GKMS Gazette

OCTOBER 2010

ISSUE 2

CALENDAR FOR

OCTOBER

- 4 VB 8th Hampshire/7th home
- 5 VB 8th home/7th Harvard
- 7 VB MNC Cons. Tourney
FB @ Rockford Christian
- 8 NO SCHOOL—
Teacher's Institute
- 9 VB MNC Tourney @ Elgin
- 11 NO SCHOOL—
Columbus Day
- 12 School Board Committee Meeting
- 14 Market Day
FB @ North Boone
- 15 End of 1st Quarter
6th and 7th grade
COGS day
- 18 FAB Concert 7:00 pm
- 21 Report cards sent home
- 26 BB 8th home/7th North Boone
School Board Meeting
- 28 BB 8th home/7th Hampshire
- 29 Picture retakes

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK—Mr. Lekkas

Parents, please contact the office if you need log in information for Powerschool. It is an excellent tool for checking on completed assignments. The Assignment Connection will also keep you informed on each day's happenings in class and is generally updated by 1:00 p.m. each day.

Feel free to check in at Mr. Lekkas' Blog for updates and curriculum information. <http://mrlekkas.blogspot.com/>

Reading Comprehension

As many GKMS parents and students know, reading is a key skill to sustained success in almost any endeavor. The GKMS (and GK 424) Reading curriculum has evolved greatly over the past several years helping students succeed at a high rate. Students and teachers work daily on practicing and improving specific and targeted reading skills.

While reading an article on the Education Gateway site, I came across a few points worth reiterating with GKMS families:

For both adults and children, reading comprehension involves not just understanding what we read but also adjusting to different kinds of reading material. As they progress, students will be able to read increasingly complex stories, understand much of what they read in newspapers, and adjust to different types of textbooks, from language arts to math.

A key to increasing reading comprehension is learning reading strategies. Encourage your child to: Use context clues; Re-tell and summarize; Employ prior knowledge; Make predictions about "what happens next"; Take notes or highlight important information; Ask questions about content and vocabulary; Discuss a book in class or at home; Draw pictures, maps, and charts to illustrate what is read.

I encourage families to review reading strategies with students. Ask them which specific strategy they are currently addressing in class or to name a specific strategy that they find the most helpful.

Effective reading strategies truly have a lifelong, positive effect on our students.

Grannies

Finally, thanks go out yet again to our GKMS Grannies. Their service to our district this week includes running the PTO book fairs at GKMS and other schools in the district.



NEWS FROM THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL—Mr. McPherson

With another tremendous start to the school year, our staff looks forward to a great year with our GKMS students. In order to help our kids excel at the highest possible level, it is important to establish a partnership between the school and parents. Between the hard work of our teachers and the support of our parents, the students of GKMS can accomplish anything. Please help us enforce the importance of school by discussing issues with your students. Some helpful hints for parents about activities taking place at GKMS:

- The daily bulletin is a great way to keep up on what's going on in your child's classes. This is updated daily.
- A few of our next texts have on-line support. Explore this with your kids.
- Mr. Lekkas's blog (<http://mrlekkas.blogspot.com/>) has great information and is updated often.
- Our school rules and expectations are structured through PBIS. The four main expectations are Respect Self, Respect Others, Respect Learning and Respect Property.

Keep up to date through our website. We have a calendar of events, sports schedules, staff directory's and many other useful links.

As always, we hope to continue to develop solid relationships between our staff and parents. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call either myself or Mr. Lekkas at 815-784-5222.

CONFERENCE PROCEDURES

Genoa-Kingston District #424 conference day is Thursday, November 4th. While not all parents will be contacted by the school for a conference, everyone is welcome to call the school office or staff anytime you wish to meet regarding your student. I also would like to remind parents to use PowerSchool for grade information and the Assignment Connection.

FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH APPLICATIONS

The last date for students to receive Free or Reduced lunches, based on their applications from last year, will be September 29th. That is the maximum number of operating days (30) that we are required to provide Free or Reduced lunches. If a family has not submitted an application for 2010-2011 and in turn received a letter indicating Free, Reduced or Denied, they will then be required to pay full price for the lunches as of October 1st. Applications can be accepted anytime during the school year. For any questions, please contact the District Office at 815-784-6222.

GKMS ANNUAL FALL FOOD DRIVE—Mrs. Hencken

GKMS Student council is sponsoring its annual food drive that benefits the Genoa Food Pantry. This service, housed in the Methodist Church in Genoa, serves families in need in the Genoa and Kingston areas only. Donations of canned food items, boxed food items, cash or check will be taken here at GKMS for the entire month of October. Any questions, please call Mrs. Hencken at 815-784-5222. Thank you in advance.

STUDY SKILLS—Ms. Chronopoulos

This year in Study Skills/Careers classes we will be in "full swing" with Career Cruising, our new internet site geared to help student with Career Ed. Everyone is doing well with their login and practice sessions.

We encourage GKMS students to visit the site as much as possible so they can become as familiar with it as possible.

Our GKMS students are introduced to the site in 6th grade Study Skills/Careers class and continue to explore the site in both 7th and 8th grades. This will help the students to be prepared for using this site in high school as it will an important part of their GK experience.

If possible, share this experience with your GKMS student. Enjoy finding information about careers, higher education, assessments, etc. At this point students can start writing information about extra curricular activities, outside school activities, and part time jobs they have held. Saving this information in one's personal folder will give the studentsthe basis for a resume which can later be used when seeking employment.

The possibilities are endless, providing students with practical information and experiences.

Follow the simple directions below to learn more about Career Cruising:

1. Type in www.careercruising.com which will lead you to the site.
2. The first step is to get into the program, so everyone uses the same login for this section...
 USERNAME: gkms
 PASSWORD: cogs
3. Now you're in the GK section of the site and you will need to type in your child's personal login information...
 USERNAME: gk followed by student ID#
 (some students need to use gkms instead of just gk)
 PASSWORD: student's secret password...you'll have to ask them.
4. Have fun exploring and
5. If you are having problems, contact Miss Chronopoulos.

REMINDERS

The GKMS office has COGS umbrellas for sale for \$15.00. If interested please contact the office at 815-784-5222.

Please remember that all lunch money must be to the office by 10:00 am to be recorded for that day

The Transportation Department would like to ask that parents not bring animals to any bus stop.



IMPORTANT DATES

Report Cards sent home: October 21, 2010, January 6, 2011, March 11, 2011 and the last day of school

Progress Reports sent home: November 16, 2010, February 8, 2011 and April 19, 2011.

FROM THE 6TH GRADE TEAM

Reading/Language Arts

In reading, students continue to read their AR books both in school and out of school. Please ask your child about his/her independent novel to encourage comprehension. We are also working on the reading strategy of Questioning. Students are reading nonfiction and fiction texts and learning to listen to the voice inside their heads that asks questions. The purpose of this strategy is to encourage interaction with the text.

In language arts, students are writing, writing, and writing! We are working our way through the 6+1 Traits of writing. These include Ideas, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions, and Presentation. In addition, we are working to improve spelling, capitalization, and punctuation within students' writing through editing lessons.

Math

EnVisions—Over the next month the EnVision students are going to get into a wide range of topics. We will start with all the different operations with decimals. They will be asked to add, subtract, multiply, and divide decimals in order to solve problems. In that topic students will also be covering scientific notation to write very large or very small numbers. As soon as we are done with the decimal units we will then start our unit on solving and writing equations.

CPM—We will be completing Chapter 2 and begin Chapter 3 that covers methods for solving word problems, order of operations, and working with fractions, decimals and percents. The problems will become more complex involving multiple steps and different methods for us to solve. When we complete chapter 3 we will then begin chapter 4 that is our introduction to geometry topics.

Social Studies

Students will be learning about the Old and New stone ages and how agriculture led to the development of human civilizations. Students will tell stories using only pictures just like they did during the stone ages. They will also be creating stone age timelines.

Science

Classes have started their unit on water and weather. We will be conducting several inquiry investigations through out this unit. Currently, the students are recording their observations from an experiment on the water cycle. Later, they will be using a sling psychrometer to record relative humidity. Other activities will include how solar radiation affects the heating and cooling of continents and oceans and how radar is used to track various types of weather.

Lorado Taft

All paper work is due October 1, 2010. Any parents who have expressed an interest in chaperoning for this field trip will be notified shortly after that date.

FROM THE 7TH GRADE TEAM

Reading/Language Arts

During October we will be analyzing narrative literature. In the Making Meaning Curriculum, the students will be exploring narrative text structure. Students will continue to use questioning strategies along with analyzing whether question are answered directly or indirectly within the text. Using various stories, we will be evaluating the relationships between character, setting, and plot, and we will be working with the literary element of flashbacks.

In writing, the students will be continuing to polish their narrative writing skills. We will be focusing on incorporating the elements of characters and plot our writing. In grammar, will be continuing to master capitalization and punctuation rules. We will be introducing nouns and verbs through various activities and assessments.

Math

Students are off to a great start this year in math! Students continue to excel in their study teams, and are modeling great teamwork, as well as, display independent thinking. During October, we will be studying the Order of Operations (chapter 3) and begin a long unit studying Geometry (Chapter 4). Keep up the great work!

Social Studies

It has been a great start to a great start to the new school year. We are halfway done with the first quarter. And we are just beginning to complete our unit on the basics of world geography. We have reviewed how to read maps and made our own. We have created dictionaries of the earth's varied physical features to remind us what types of landforms the world's people inhabit. We have just finished examining the five themes of geography. We are currently examining the defining characteristics of Geography. We will analyze how we categorize the different fields of Social Studies. And beginning in October we will begin to apply what we have learned to the study of the world's countries starting with the United States and Canada, two countries that they should be the most familiar. It is then that we will begin to evaluate current events that will give students an understanding of the world and its people.

Science

We will continue to study the structures and functions of cells. We will also look at the processes within cells and how they reproduce. What will a look in the microscope reveal about samples from the Wilkinson-Renwick Marsh and the Kishwaukee River reveal? Ask your student what they discovered!

Here is the website for the 7th Grade Life Science Online Resources:

http://glencoe.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0078617022/student_view0/

For the Online Edition of the book the access code: C2AC4656F7

FROM THE 8TH GRADE TEAM

Reading/Language Arts

In Reading class, we just completed several units to lay a foundation of strong elements in reading. We reviewed Literary Genres, Story Elements, and the Extended Response requirements since school began in August. The information and elements reviewed will weave throughout the rest of the year. As we begin October, we will work with the students to create a reading community in which students respect those in their reading environment. Students should feel comfortable and confident to participate and share their ideas. The reading community creates the setting to begin the Making Meaning program. The first strategies we will review are making text connections and analyzing text features using a variety of expository and narrative texts.

In Language Arts class, we enter October with a unit to teach the students the expectations of writing 5-paragraph essays. The students will continue throughout the school year to utilize strong word choices from the lesson we completed in September to add meaning, strong purposeful word choice, and description to their writing. We will also continue to support the students' writing with various grammar lessons to review parts of sentences. Also to support writing, we will continue our weekly Word Study to introduce new word parts. Learning the meaning of different word parts will not only help their vocabulary in terms of writing, but also will enhance their reading vocabulary. It is a busy October, and we are anxious to keep rolling through the year.

Social Studies

As we come to the close of First Quarter, we are getting ready to turn our attention to the era of European colonization. We started off the year by reviewing basic United States Geography and examining how the very first humans were likely to have migrated to the Western Hemisphere. In doing so, we were able to become more familiar with the types of work done by archeologists and how that career field has grown with technological improvements. For example, we looked at how CAT scans and DNA analysis are used to support the field of forensic anthropology. After that, we traveled across the Atlantic Ocean and took a close look at how various factors of the Renaissance contributed to the desire of Europeans to start exploring the world.

Students have been practicing and getting used to a variety of ways in which to collect information, organize information and analyze information. While helping your student to prepare for a test or project, ask to see their social studies binders where you will be able to review their note packets, map packets, vocabulary flip charts, and cause and effect graphic organizers.

Science

We are finishing up our unit on motion and speed. We have learned velocity, time and acceleration are related. We have represented on a line graph both the speed and acceleration of an object. We have identified the difference between positive and negative acceleration. And, we have calculated the speed, velocity and acceleration of objects in real world situations using the appropriate mathematical formula.

In the coming weeks we will be investigating Newton's Laws of Motion. We will learn that these laws explain the movement of all of the objects in our day to day lives. We will understand the natural forces that cause objects to change their motion such as Gravity and friction. And, we will apply mathematical calculations to every day situations to find unknown values of force, mass or acceleration.

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

PLASTIC! Humans think of convenience and durability when we think of the myriad of plastic items on the market and in our daily lives. **BUT** the environment and good old “Mother Nature” think **OUCH!** That’s because plastics are particularly harmful to our planet when not used correctly or processed for recycling properly.

Here’s a lucky 7 things to keep in mind and do to control the plastic from getting loose and clogging our pretty planet:

1. Avoid taking plastic bags for purchased items. Carry canvas reusable bags with you to the stores to re-pack again and again.
2. Purchase a reusable water bottle and refill it at the tap or from a water filter system.
3. Reuse plastic bags for rewrapping frozen foods and leftovers. (Ms Sorensen rarely buys plastic bags. She is fond of using her newspaper delivery bags for all sorts of things.)
4. Remove paper wrappers and labels from plastic containers (metal ones, too) to make recycling easier to sort at the recycle center.
5. Purchase items in glass jars when you can.
6. Buy frozen juice concentrate instead of juice in heavy plastic bottles. Just think of how quickly we guzzle drinks for all of the waste that is created from those thick plastic bottles.
7. **NEVER throw recyclable plastic items away in the garbage!**

Here’s a bonus piece of luck: Relax knowing that you have done your very best to care for this splendid “third rock from the sun.”

HALLOWEEN DANCE—Wednesday, October 27th

Student Council, Community Impact Club and Garden Clubs are sponsoring a Halloween Dance for all 6th– 8th GKMS students on Wednesday, October 27th from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm. COSTUMES and FACE PAINT are **NOT** allowed during school but may be worn after. Admission to the dance will be three (3) non-perishable food items that will be contributed to the Genoa Food Pantry. Please pick your student up promptly at 5:00 pm. Parents are welcome to attend. Any questions, please call Mrs. Hencken at 815-784-5222.

GK PTO NEWSLETTER

FUNDRAISING \$\$ AT WORK—In the September newsletter you were introduced to the fundraisers that the PTO does to earn money for our schools. This month’s newsletter will focus on where those monies were spent last year. September of 2009 we distributed \$3,000 to each school (Davenport, Kingston, Genoa Elementary, and the Middle School).

DAVENPORT ELEMENTARY—Mr. Steinbach reported that the PTO funds were able to help them with a number of their projects. They replaced playground balls and beanbags for circle toss and hopscotch, 3 DVD/VHS units and digital cameras. They were able to purchase new books for their school library. And, for students that were unable to afford the cost for field trips, PTO monies were used.

MIDDLE SCHOOL—Mr. Lekkas reported that PTO funds contributed to the purchase of 3 lap top/LCD carts (along funds from the Education Foundation Grant). They were able to purchase a digital camera. And, in support of their Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports program, PTO funds contributed to trips to the Sycamore Fun Center, Husky Den, Beloit Snappers Baseball, Coco Key, Bowling, and Lorado Taft.

KINGSTON ELEMENTARY—Mrs. Dudley reported that with the PTO fund disbursement, they were able to purchase an ELMO (LCD projector and cart) for classroom use. They bought prizes for their year-long reading incentive program. And, they were able to hold a Character Education Assembly for all students.

GENOA ELEMENTARY—Mr. Francis reported that PTO monies allowed them to purchase books and other materials for the book room, fieldtrip subsidies, PBIS store materials, and their Character Counts Program.

MARKET DAY—Every month your child will bring home a flyer for Market Day. We encourage prepaid orders. And, we can accept Link Cards on the day of pickup only. You may also place online orders at: www.marketday.com. All orders that are not pre-paid and are not picked up on the delivery date will be up for sale by the PTO on the delivery date the following month.

Genoa Middle School Cafeteria 4-6 P.M.

10/14, 11/11, 12/9, 1/20

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND—We will begin selling Affy Tapple, taffy apples again this year. Prices will remain the same as last year: \$1 per taffy apple (with nuts, without nuts, and sprinkle) and \$2 per bag of caramel popcorn. Look for information coming home early October!

2010 PTO DOLLARS—At the August 26th meeting, we voted and approved the distribution of \$6,200 to each of the four schools. That comes to almost \$25,000 having been raised last year alone to benefit our schools!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- October 4 Affy Tapple Fundraiser begins
- October 21 Affy Tapple pick up
- October 28 PTO meeting at 6:30 pm at GKMS library
- November 16 Great American Catalog Fundraiser begins
- December 9 Great American Catalog Fundraiser ends

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

A workshop is being offered to the parents of the 6th grade class at Genoa-Kingston Middle School called **STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS**. The purpose of the workshop is to help parents become more active in their child's academic success at the middle school. It is our belief that a successful student should get support from home and school. Topics such as using the agenda book, organizational skills, time management, setting goals, the proper home environment for studying and test taking strategies will be discussed at this workshop.

The workshop will be held in the GKMS Media Center on Monday, October 4, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. Mrs. Hanssen and Miss Chronopoulos will be presenting the workshop to all parents who are interested in helping their child become successful in their academic subjects. It is our hope that we can all work together to help our students excel and contribute to their community by becoming successful learners.

Please feel free to call Mrs. Hanssen or Miss Chronopoulos at 815-784-5222 with any questions.

Please return to Mrs. Hanssen or Miss Chronopoulos at Genoa-Kingston Middle School

PARENT'S NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

E-MAIL _____

NAME OF STUDENT _____

___ Yes, I would like to participate in **STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS** on Monday, October 4, 2010 at 6:00 P.M.