

# Joseph Kerr Middle School

8865 Elk Grove Blvd.  
Elk Grove, CA 95624

Administrative: 916-686-7728

Attendance: 916-686-7736

Fax: 916-685-2952



Trish Kennedy, Principal  
Christine Peterson, Vice-Principal  
James Lewis, Teacher-in-Charge

JANUARY/FEBRUARY

## STUDENT INFORMATION

### TARDY POLICY

In order to cut down on classroom disruptions, we have a strict tardy policy. Every fifth tardy (cumulative), students will be assigned an after school detention. A student is excused only if they are late due to a medical appointment or illness. When we speak to parents, we often hear, "we were just running late that morning." Please be advised that this is not an excused tardy.

### ATTENDANCE & MAKE-UP WORK

We firmly believe that a strong home and school partnership will help our students achieve in a positive and effective academic environment. To that end, we are asking for your assistance in assuring that your child misses as little school as possible. There is great academic value in a student's being present in class, in hearing the explanations of teachers, and in discussing subjects with other students. While we recognize that there may be instances when extenuating circumstances require you to pull your student out of school, we ask that you make every effort to plan any family vacations during the summer or holiday breaks.



**Because family vacations are defined by California Education Code as unexcused absences, teachers are not required to provide make up work for the student, although they may elect to do so.**

### A MESSAGE FROM THE DISTRICT OFFICE

**NO Excuses  
Go to School**

Did you know? Students ages 6 to 18 are required by law to attend school all

day long. Middle and high schools take attendance each class period. If your student isn't present in one of his or her classes, they will be marked absent. Absence will be counted as unexcused unless the school hears from the parent.

Did you know? Every time your student misses school the district loses \$35 – even for *excused* absences. For every \$35, a school could buy a new library book. For \$70, the school could purchase a new textbook.

Did you know? For each day a student misses school it takes about two days for them to catch up. The teacher ends up spending more time with the absent student and less time with other students.

With the holiday season quickly approaching, we ask parents to be mindful about scheduling vacations during school breaks -- not when your student will be in class.

This year's attendance campaign is called No Excuses – Go to School. The campaign is centered around the theme of "responsibility." Please help your students understand that being in class means being a responsible person.

### COMPETITIVE /INTRAMURAL SPORTS



#### PROGRAM

Students trying out for competitive basketball or track and field must have a physical before the first day of tryouts. If students do not have verification that a physical was performed, they will not be allowed to try out. Physical forms may be picked up at the front office.



Attention all 7<sup>th</sup> grade girls and boys interested in basketball. Tryouts for the competitive team are coming soon. Tryouts start on January 29<sup>th</sup> after school, times to be announced. ***In order to try out you need a completed and signed physical form and permission slip.*** Forms are available in the front office.

### MINIMUM DAY OFFICE HOURS

Joseph Kerr's office hours on minimum days are: 7:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. The next minimum day is **Friday, January 19<sup>th</sup>**. Dismissal is at 12:01 p.m. This is the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> QUARTER REPORT CARDS

The year is flying by; the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter comes to a close on January 19, 2007. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter report cards will be mailed home the week of January 22, 2007. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher(s) or counselor should you have any questions.



## YEARBOOK

The school year is off to a great start. Be sure to preserve your child's memories by purchasing this year's yearbook early! *Yearbooks will no longer be available at the end of the school year for cash purchase. All yearbooks must be purchased by February 2<sup>nd</sup>.* The cost will be \$35.00, or \$40.00, if the student has their name engraved on the front cover. You may pick up the order forms in the Student Activities Center (SAC). See Ms. Foltz with any questions.

ORDER FORM	
Student's Name _____	
1 <sup>st</sup> Period Teacher _____	
Number of Yearbooks _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
_____ Cash _____ Check (made out to JKMS)	

## DESIGN & SEW

A new club is starting at Kerr. The Design & Sew Club will meet after school every other Tuesday in room 52. Members will learn how to design and make some very fun projects using their newly acquired sewing and embellishing skills. Ms. Gomes and Ms. Peterson will be the advisors. All materials are provided free of charge and all projects are geared toward teens.



## 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE PARENT

### YEARBOOK DEDICATIONS

Just a reminder to all 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents: You should have received a form in the mail asking if you would like to submit a yearbook dedication for your 8<sup>th</sup> grade student. Please return the form and \$20.00 to Ms. Foltz as soon as possible. **January 15<sup>th</sup> will be the last day to turn in the dedication.**

## STUDENT STORE

The student store is selling Kerr sweatpants and sweatshirts for the cool weather that is upon us.



Students may buy items during their lunch period. Sweatpants are \$15, crewneck sweatshirts \$14, hooded sweatshirts \$20, ball caps \$5, and beanies are \$4. Prices include tax. Send cash or checks (payable to Kerr) with your student. A reminder: Our cool weather clothes are not required for P.E. Students may bring sweatpants or sweatshirts from home as long as they are black, grey or red. No logos or printing are allowed.

## BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION

*Clip Box Tops – earn cash for your school!*

Beginning in January we will start collecting General Mills box tops. Earn cash for your school every time you shop for groceries. Clip box tops from hundreds of your favorite products. Each box top is worth 10 cents to our school – and that adds up fast. Look for a flyer sent home with your student with more information in January.



## DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

### ENGLISH

The English department is very excited about Step Up To Writing! English teachers will be participating in training this January and will implement this writing program 2nd semester. All English teachers are committed to Step Up to Writing which will ensure consistency in the teaching of writing in all English classes.



**English 7** - Classes have all now finished *Walk Two Moons* and are gearing up for *The Giver* (our second core novel) and the spring research project. We're also focusing our energies on writing skills, as the March CST 7th grade writing exam is on the horizon. The second and third quarters tend to fly by quickly, so it's important for students to keep focused and not lose track of their school work.

You can support your child's school success by encouraging daily attendance, promoting good study habits, and underscoring the importance of continued academic effort. Your child's English teacher may have additional tips specific to her classroom, so please feel free to contact the teacher directly via email (available at [www.egusd.k12.ca.us/kerr](http://www.egusd.k12.ca.us/kerr)) or telephone (686-7728).

**English 8** - 8th grade teachers are hard at work ensuring that all students have mastered the standards in the first 3 chapters of their Holt literature books. Most classes have also read a core novel and teachers are also addressing persuasive writing. In addition, students are expected to continue with their independent reading. Students are very busy and should be working on homework every night!

The Annual Kerr Spelling Bee is scheduled for Monday, Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>. After the written qualifying exam, the following students were invited to compete:



Syliva Bauer, Kian Bradley, Kim Cabigon, Michelle Dang, Jason Elmore, Kassie Ferguson, Julianna Gardner, Mitchell Harry, Kacie Johnson, Ricky Langarica, Matthew Malone, Brian Miller, Breanna Munoz, Linh Nguyen, Carissa Ordon, Stephanie Orton, Virginia Rodriguez, Bailey Russell, David Tapia, Peter "Trent" Vonich, and Chase Wagoner.

Congratulations to all of our talented spellers!

### **SCIENCE**

The Joseph Kerr science teachers continue to provide instruction to our seventh and eighth grade students according to the *Science Content Standards for California Public Schools*. Mrs. Williams' seventh grade classes are beginning the study of cells, which includes the use of microscopes. Students will be practicing the techniques of microscope use during December and January. After concluding the microscope and cell unit, they will study systems of the human body.



Mr. Meredith's science 8 students are studying carbon chemistry and acids and bases. After carbon chemistry they will focus on some basic biochemistry concepts. After finishing the chemistry unit, his students will be moving into physics and the study of motion and forces.

Mr. Bettencourt and Ms. Nierva's classes are wrapping up a unit on chemical bonding and chemical reactions. From there, they will move on to the chemistry of life and then the chemistry of acids and bases.

Mr. Bettencourt's honors science classes are completing studies of motion and forces, which include Newton's three laws of motion. A short unit on density and buoyancy will follow. His honors students have been doing a fantastic job of focusing and learning the concepts quickly and competently.

We would like to thank the parents who purchased a *ScienceSaurus* resource book for their students. We believe if students utilize the books in preparation for their science tests, they will understand the information better and score well on the tests. The information included in the book will benefit students in 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade science. We have 4 extra books to sell if a student wants one for \$18.00. The first four students who come with the money can purchase a book.

Thank you for your continued support of your child's science education. We work hard to deliver the science standards concepts in an understandable and relevant manner to our students, but without your support, our job would be more difficult.



### **SOCIAL SCIENCE**

Eighth graders in social science are learning about American government right now. Ask your child about the "3 branches" and "Civic Virtue," this is a very important part of our course, as it introduces our children to citizenship and its importance.

Thousands of students throughout the country and in many foreign countries competed in December in the 47<sup>th</sup> Knowledge Master Open academic competition. They faced their computers to answer 200 tough questions to vie for top scores based on the accuracy and speed of their answers.

Two teams at Joseph Kerr Middle School participated. The seventh grade team scored 1000 points; the eighth grade team scored 1,171 points out of a possible 2000. Students will attempt to improve those scores in the spring competition!

Academic coaches, Toni Clark (7<sup>th</sup>) and Kathi Goldsberry (8<sup>th</sup>) described the event as exciting and stimulating. The students thoroughly enjoyed this tough challenge, answering questions on math, history, government, science, English, psychology, etc. Their favorite category was "Useless Trivia."

### **Students from the 7<sup>th</sup> grade team included:**

Glen Banning, Brandon Bates, Kyle Bettencourt, Mandy Browning, Kendall Cahill, Conor Casteel, Sydnie Coyne, Chris Edmiston, Brandon Feickert, Julianna Hess, Ashley-Kate Hubred, Rebecca Lack, Paloma Lawlor, Leonard Ma, Emily Maubach, Matthew Munoz, Jonathan Paguio, Devin Parker, Jessica Self, Marissa Siu, Stephanie Tompkins, Kaila Van Lindt, Elissa White, and Rebecah Yterdal

### Students on the 8<sup>th</sup> grade team included:

Scott Chandler, Allison Poythress, Mitchell Harry, Jordan Pringle, Brandon Feller, Christian Matar, Tyler Bradstock, Alex Yuen, Melayne Alexander, Prashant Singh, Zach Haynes, Steven Robertson, Jasmine Prasad, Brennan Bowen, Steven Swain, Amy Ferrarotti, Molly Gillette, Olivia Zinsser, Brennan Crough, Breanna Munoz, Jordan Jue, Sara Manlapig, and Eric Kroger

The Knowledge Master Open was designed to stimulate enthusiasm for learning and recognition for academic accomplishment. The contest runs on classroom computers to allow all students the opportunity to compete in a large academic event without the expense of traveling to a central site. Results of the contest are tabulated into overall, state, and enrollment-size rankings by Academic Hallmarks, a Colorado publishing firm that hosts the events. Contest results and sample questions can be found at [www.greatauk.com](http://www.greatauk.com).

### Geography Bee:

On December 13<sup>th</sup>, 27 students participated in an intense, school-wide competition dealing with U.S. and world geography and cultures. These students represented their 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade social science classes after earning high scores on preliminary geography questions.

These students are:

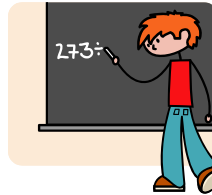
Masooing Thao, Trevor Sparks, Jeremy Giberson, Kristian Grummel, Dillon Strybing, Courtney Whitehead, Beth Benson, Timmy Eiseneisz, Dayan Davidek, Joseph Miller, Alex Yuen, Kellie Christensen, Trent Vonich, Ricardo Ayala, Christina Alai, Yandell Hankey II, Danna Raslan, Zachary Haynes, Ashley Grummel, Kristi Hadler, Andrew Salas, Alex Lumbang, Austin Higgins, Jaime Allen, Eric Cervantes, John Hope, and Steven Khansefid

At the end of two hours of questions, such as "In which landlocked country west of Somalia do the two largest ethnic groups, Amhara and Oromo, make up about two-thirds of the population?", 8 students remained in the competition for 1<sup>st</sup> place. Our top 2006-2007 geographer representing Kerr is Ricardo Ayala followed by Trent Vonich (2<sup>nd</sup> Place) and Zachary Haynes (3<sup>rd</sup> Place). Answer to the example question? Ethiopia.

## COUNSELING DEPARTMENT



Happy New Year! We hope you are all enjoying a happy and healthy 2007. We have been busy with lots of important and exciting activities and events for the new year. As the second quarter comes to a close on January 19<sup>th</sup>, we are looking forward to starting the third quarter with College Night, STAR testing rewards and incentives, and course selection for the 2007 – 2008 school year.



### Classroom visits

In November, all counselors visited 8<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms and gave presentations on the topics of bullying and harassment. Students received written information as well as review of behavior expectations outlined in the TracKerr. At the conclusion of the presentations, students took a quiz on the material reviewed.



### Higher Education

#### Kerr's Annual College Night

Please mark your calendar to attend Kerr's Annual College Night on Wednesday, January 25, 2007 at 6:30. Meet college representatives from the University of Davis, California State University, and Cosumnes River College. It is not too early to develop a six-year plan. Students will learn about the different college systems and their admissions process. Join us and start planning for college now!

PSAT results are in!! For those students who took the PSAT in October, please join us at 6:00 on January 25<sup>th</sup> for a review and interpretation of the PSAT scores. We look forward to seeing you.



### Academic Talent Search

Testing for Academic Talent Search is February 22, 2007. Students will receive information and applications about the program in their 7<sup>th</sup> grade honors Social Science class. Any interested students may also apply with their counselors. Students who take the test will be eligible to take college classes at California State University, Sacramento in the summer. The program offers fun but rigorous courses in various subjects of interests. Some of the classes offered include Organic Chemistry, Cartooning, Kinetic Sculpture, Bridge Design and Power Vocabulary. For additional information, please contact Mrs. Tsuda.



### Incoming 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Information

It's already that time to start planning for the following school year. We have planned lots of great activities and events to help make the transition to Kerr as smooth as possible for both students and parents. We will be visiting the elementary schools sometime in February and March to share information regarding classes, schedules and middle school expectations.

In addition, we will be hosting two Parent Information Meetings in March and April (date/time TBA). Administration, counselors, and several teachers will be there to answer any and all questions regarding your child attending Joseph Kerr for the 2007 – 2008 school year. We hope these informational events can help ease the anxiety of starting a new school. We look forward to meeting you!



### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Course Selection

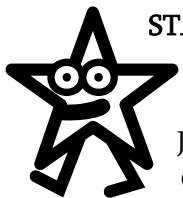
Before you know it, it will be time to register for classes for the 2007-2008 school year. Counselors will be visiting 7<sup>th</sup> grade PE classes to explain the registration process in March. During these meetings, students will receive registration forms for next year's classes including Honors, Peer Resource, and office aide applications.



### High School Course Selection

Counselors from Elk Grove High School will be visiting our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in March to provide information about high school requirements and to select 9<sup>th</sup> grade courses. A parent information night will be held for Elk Grove High School students on March 7, 2007 at 6:00 P.M at EGHS.

### STAR REWARDS!!!



Students will be taking their standardized tests April 23<sup>rd</sup> through April 26<sup>th</sup>. In January students will receive their STAR CARDS rewarding them for their hard work last year during testing. The STAR AWARD PROGRAM rewards students based on their performance and improvement on the standardized tests from one year to the next. All students will receive a STAR CARD that displays the number of "STARS" they earned on the 2006 CST. A menu of reward items will be displayed in teachers' classrooms for students to choose from. Each item is worth a certain amount of "punches" on their card. Students who earned 12 or more STARS will be invited to a celebratory lunch. We are so proud of the hard work and dedication our students put into testing last year. We look forward to more STARS this spring.



### STOP THE DRAMA!!

As promised, the Stop the Drama campaign is underway. Recently, students have shared with counselors that they are finding the "drama" that is taking place on campus both annoying and tiresome. The new campaign addresses this issue and empowers students to put a stop to it.....by not being a part of it!

In January, the counselors, along with the Peer Resource Leaders and students who have signed up to sit on the advisory committee, will be providing students the opportunity to sign a "No Drama" commitment card, as well as receive a wristband showing their dedication to the cause. A Drama Solutions Center and Peer Resources Leaders will be available during both lunches to help solve issues related to stopping drama. We hope that this program will be an avenue for us to remind and encourage students to focus on academics.

### Counseling Department

Counselors are available to meet with students and parents regarding academic, personal and/or social concerns. Counselors are assigned as follows:

<u>Counselor</u>	<u>Student Last Name</u>
Ms. Hoyer	A – F
Ms. Wolff	G – N
Ms. Tsuda	O – Z

Jeannie Gomes is the counseling secretary and can assist you with any questions or concerns. The phone number where you can reach us is 686 – 7728.

### AVID CORNER

Thanks to all parents who helped with the field trip to UC Davis. The students were excited and impressed after seeing the Davis campus. Please be sure and have your students clean out their binders over the Winter Break. The end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter will be January 19<sup>th</sup>. We will do one more grade check the week before. Happy Holidays! – Ms. Foltz



## **LIBRARY NEWS**

During lunch on November 20th, the Joseph Kerr Library hosted a luncheon for 44 students that participated in the Pizza Express Reading Promotion. The promotion involved reading 4 different literature genres over a four week time period. Students kept a log of their reading on a pizza wheel form, chose their favorite title and wrote a short summary. At the party they were treated to pizza, drinks, treats and were eligible for many prizes.

Congratulations to the following students:

Jaime Allen, Beth Benson, Julianne Anderson, Brandon Feller, Courtney Adam, Amy Ferrarotti, Ryan Avery, Ashley Grummel, Bailey Balshor, Kimberlyn Koford, Alexis Dalton, Colin Mierczynski, Kassie Ferguson, Breana Miller, Larissa Goodwin, Alex Motor, Julianna Hess, Karen Nelson, Karen Hill, Alex Nunes, Ray'eshia Johnson Ward, Luke Paterson, Sabrina Khal, Prashant Singh, Ashlee Killbride, Shawntaja Stafford, Ahsay Kobelt, Kearsten Boyer, Crystal Kumar, Helaine Chio, Rebecca Lack, Elena Duenas, Sami Lauer, Samone Myers, Emily Maubach, Jasmine Prasad, Jonathan Paguio, Danielle Raslan, Jayc Poage, Danna Raslan, Molly Swanberg, David Tapia, and Maomai Yang,

### **Upcoming News**

Beginning the end of January students will be able to participate in a statewide reading event with students reading the same titles and voting on their favorite. Over 500,000 students participated last year. Please encourage your son/daughter to participate in this promotion. Students that have read two or more of the titles will be invited to a breakfast party to be held in the library in March. This year Kerr will be reading the following seven titles: *Ida B...and Her Plans to Maximize Fun*, *Avoid Disaster*, and *Possibly Save the World* by Katherine Hannigan, *A Week in the Woods* by Andrew Clements, *Al Capone Does My Shirts* by Gennifer Choldenko, *Becoming Naomi Leon* by Pam Munoz Ryan, *Letters from Wolfie* by Patti Sherlock, *Emako Blue* by Brenda Woods, *Hanging on to Max* by Margaret Bechard, and *Shattering Glass* by Gail Giles.

## **ACTIVITY DIRECTOR'S CORNER**

### **MARTIN LUTHER KING'S BIRTHDAY**

There is **NO SCHOOL** on Monday, January 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **PRESIDENT'S DAY & LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY**

There is **NO SCHOOL** on Monday, February 12<sup>th</sup> and Monday, February 19<sup>th</sup>.



### **E-MAIL**

Do you have questions for Kerr? Please e-mail them to [askkerr@egusd.net](mailto:askkerr@egusd.net) and the school secretary will answer your questions or forward them to the appropriate person.



### **MARCH IMPORTANT DATES**

<b>Important Dates to Remember</b>	
3-1	Basketball @ Kerr
3-6	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade STAR Writing Test
3-6	Basketball @ Johnson
3-7	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade STAR Writing Test Make-up
3-7	EGHS Parent Information Meeting 6:00 p.m. @ EGHS
3-8	Basketball @ Smedburg
3-9	WEB Dance – 3:15 – 5:30 p.m.
3-13	Basketball @ Kerr
3-15	Basketball @ Eddy
3-20	Basketball @ Kerr
3-22	Pre-Festival Band Concert – (PM)
3-22	Basketball @ Kerr
3-23	Countywide Lip Sync Contest
3-24	Golden Empire Band Concert
3-27	National Knowledge Master – 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade
3-27	Basketball @ Jackman
3-28	National Knowledge Master – 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
3-28	Open House – 6:00 p.m.
3-29	Basketball @ Kerr
3-30	End of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter, Minimum Day, dismissal 12:02 p.m.