

# Joseph Kerr Middle School

8865 Elk Grove Blvd.  
Elk Grove, CA 95624

Administrative: (916) 686-7728  
Attendance: (916) 686-7736  
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Trish Kennedy, Principal  
Christine Peterson, Vice-Principal  
James Lewis, Teacher-in-Charge

MARCH/APRIL

## STUDENT INFORMATION

### OPEN HOUSE

Open House this year is Wednesday, March 28<sup>th</sup> starting at 6:00 p.m. More information to follow.

### TRACK & FIELD PROGRAMS

Track & Field begins April 9<sup>th</sup>. *In order to participate you need a completed and signed physical form and permission slip.* Forms will be available in the front office in March. There are no tryouts, everyone who is academically eligible makes the team.



### OPEN GYM

Open gym starts April 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. It will be Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 3:15 - 4:15 p.m. until the end of school. All 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys and girls are welcome. Students must turn in a signed permission slip in to coach Stevens

### THIRD QUARTER PROGRESS REPORTS

The year is flying by – Progress reports will be mailed home the week of February 26<sup>th</sup>. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher(s) or counselor should you have any questions.



### 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, March 30<sup>th</sup>**, which marks the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. Dismissal is at 12:01 p.m. We will also have 6 minimum days in **April – April 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> and April 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>** for STAR testing. Parents will receive a schedule in the near future.

### SPRING KNOWLEDGE MASTER OPEN

It is time again for the Knowledge Master Open. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade competition will be held March 27, 2007, and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade competition will be held March 28, 2007. Two-hundred challenging questions that require higher-level thinking skills and cover 14 curriculum areas will be asked of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teams. It is a fast paced and exciting morning. For more information, see your social science teacher.

### KERR MUSIC PROGRAM INFORMATION

On Thursday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Kerr music program will be putting on their pre-festival concert. This a concert designed to showcase the Kerr bands before the Concert Band heads off to compete at the Golden Empire Band Festival on March 24<sup>th</sup>. All three bands – the Beginning Band, Concert Band, and Jazz Band will perform. The concert will be held at 7:00 p.m. in the Kerr multi-purpose room and is free to anyone who would like to attend.



On Saturday, March 24<sup>th</sup> the Kerr Concert Band will be competing with other Northern California middle school bands at the Golden Empire Band Festival. The competition will be held at Woodcreek High School in Roseville. Band students will be transported from Kerr by EGUSD busses. We will need a few parents to chaperone and carry equipment. Information will be sent home with the students as soon as we are notified of our competition time. Family and friends are encouraged to come cheer us on. Maps will be sent home with the band students.

## DESIGN & SEW

Come learn to sew every other Tuesday after school in room 52.

Our March meetings will be the 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> and the April meetings will be the 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. We are beginning to learn about the sewing machines and continuing to work on hand sewing skills. All materials are provided free of charge and new members are always welcome. The meetings last from 3:15 to 4:15. Check with Ms. Gomes in the counseling office if you have any questions.



## CARTRIDGES FOR KIDS RECYCLE FOR CASH PROGRAM

The Computer Applications class at Joseph Kerr is recycling and would like your help. We are recycling empty laser, fax, copier, and inkjet cartridges as well as used cell phones, laptops, Palm Pilots, and iPods for two reasons. First, we are trying to preserve our environment by keeping these harmful items out of landfills, and secondly, to raise funds for our school computer program.

The recyclable items that are collected are returned to Cartridges for Kids® (CFK). Kerr Middle School is among more than 12,500 non-profit organizations nationwide that are helping the environment by recycling.

*How can you help?* You can turn your “trash into our treasure” and feel good about helping the environment all at the same time. Most people have used cell phones to dispose of and almost everyone uses cartridges, either at home or at work. They come from fax machines, copiers and printers. By donating these used items you can assist Kerr's computer program with earning much needed funds.

Community and business supporters can participate at no cost. CFK will send postage-paid pre-printed shipping labels to business supporters for the return of the used items. These items can also be dropped off at the following locations: Kerr front office and room 75. You may also contact Susan Pack of CFK (916-275-0947) to pick up large loads of recyclables and credit Kerr directly.

To learn more about Kerr Computer Applications CFK program, please call Contact Mr. Link at [dlink@egusd.net](mailto:dlink@egusd.net). For more information, visit [www.cartridgesforkids.com](http://www.cartridgesforkids.com) or call toll free at 800-420-0235.

## Partial List of Accepted Items

laser printer toner cartridges  
Inkjet cartridges (no Epson)  
cell phones  
PDAs  
laptops  
iPods  
Video Games  
Video Game Consoles  
Digital Cameras

## More Accepted Item Information URL:

<http://www.cartridgesforkids.com/recycle.html>



## DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

## LIBRARY NEWS

### Spring Book Fair

Joseph Kerr Library is hosting a Scholastic Book Fair beginning Friday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>. The book fair will feature some of the newest titles for young adults. The library is open from 8:30 - 3:45 and students and parents are welcome to visit during those hours. We will also be open on Open House, March 28<sup>th</sup>, from 5:30 - 7:30. During the fair you will also have the opportunity to purchase a book for a classroom teacher. The teachers will be submitting book wish lists for titles to have available in their classrooms.



Proceeds from the book fair will be used to support the library. Please come and join us at our annual spring book fair and thank you for your wonderful support.

### California Young Reader Promotion or Royal Reader

Students are on their way to becoming Kerr Royal Readers by participating in this statewide reading promotion. Please encourage your son or daughter to take part in this reading event. Students that read two or more of the following titles are invited to a breakfast party to be held the end of March. As I tell the kids, it only takes 20-30 minutes a night to finish a book in a week and the more you read the better reader you become. Research shows that success in college is directly linked to a student's ability to read and comprehend at a higher level, so encourage your student to read every day. Kerr students are 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 Patty Sherlock, *Emako Blue* by Brenda Woods, *Hanging on to Max* by Margaret Bechard, and *Shattering Glass* by Gail Giles.

## SCIENCE

We can't believe we are in the second half of the year already. It's amazing how fast this year is going. The Kerr science teachers continue to instruct our students in the areas of life science for seventh graders and physical science for eighth graders. **Mrs. Williams'** science 7 classes have been studying cells with an emphasis on the similarities and differences between plant and animal cells. From there, they will learn about the skeletal and muscular systems. Students will be able to identify all the major bones of the human skeleton and explain how muscles are used to make the skeleton move. **Ms. Cook's** seventh grade classes are in a genetics unit, which includes information about heredity and inherited traits. Basic genetics will be explored as well as the role of DNA in passing traits from one generation to another. Students will understand a simple model of DNA and its structure as the molecule containing the genetic code. **Mr. Kucera** is also completing a unit on the structure and function of the cell, and he will then have his classes move into a unit on genetics. Basic Mendelian genetics with dominant and recessive traits will be taught as well as the structure and function of DNA.



**Ms. Nierva's** and **Mr. Bettencourt's** science 8 classes are in the middle of a physics unit on the motion of objects and the forces that make objects move. This information is contained in chapters 5 and 6 of the physical science text. Concepts of speed, velocity, and acceleration of objects and Newton's three laws of motion are presented in these units. **Mr. Meredith's** science 8 classes are completing a unit on forces and motion as well before heading off into studying buoyancy and buoyant force on objects immersed in a fluid. By comprehending buoyant force, students will be able to understand why gigantic aircraft carriers float. In **honors science**, Mr. Bettencourt and Mr. Meredith have been discussing a unit on astronomy where students study the latest theories on the formation of stars, super novas, neutron stars, black holes, white dwarfs, galaxies, and the origin of the universe. Mr. Bettencourt's honors classes just started a unit on earth's atmosphere.

We would like to welcome to the science department **Ms. Freimann**, who is a phase 3 student teacher from CSUS. She is teaching Mr. Kucera's first and second period science 7 students and Mr. Bettencourt's 4<sup>th</sup> period science 8 students for the remainder of this year. **Ms. Freimann** is a UCD grad and is completing her student teaching with us. She is doing a great job with her classes and we are fortunate to have such a competent student teacher with us.

## SOCIAL SCIENCE

The eighth grade classes are "going west". We are studying the "Westward Movement", also known as "Manifest Destiny." We encourage our families to take advantage of some of Sacramento's history/art museums, and to read literature/books relating the time period prior to the Civil War (1800-1860). Topics covered include the Louisiana Purchase, Lewis and Clark, the War of 1812, Mountain Men and the Trail of Tears. Any extra exposure to information about these topics will help your student to learn! Next stop...The Civil War! History Rocks!



## ENGLISH

**English 7** - Seventh grade English classes will be working on the Research Project in the spring. Each student will conduct library and Internet research, prepare an outline of their information and a list of bibliographic references, and give a formal presentation of their research to the class. Look for more information from your child's English teacher in the weeks to come.



The 7<sup>th</sup> grade California Standards Test Writing Exam is scheduled for March 7, 2007. Please send your student to school ready to write!

STAR testing is coming up April 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> and April 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>. It's very important that your student attend school on STAR testing days. Please make every effort to avoid doctor's appointments, etc. during this week.

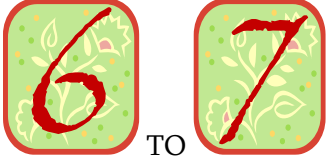
**8<sup>th</sup> grade English** classes continue to work their way through the Holt literature text. Most classes are studying poetry and poetic devices. Students are required to read independently; we are encouraging them to read Royal Reader books this month. Students are also learning how to write a persuasive essay in preparation for the upcoming CSRE writing exam on March 6<sup>th</sup>.

## COUNSELING DEPARTMENT



Happy third quarter! Can you believe how fast the year has gone by already? June will be here before you know it, so make sure to read all of the important information along with the upcoming special events and activities.

### 2007-2008 Course Registration



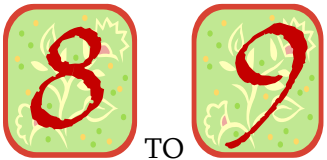
The counselors will be visiting the four feeder schools to deliver presentations about middle school expectations and course selection to the incoming 7<sup>th</sup> graders. At this meeting, students will receive the following information:

- Completed registration form with course selection
- Jump Start information packet and registration form
- 2007 – 2008 Middle School Course Catalogue



Counselors will be visiting PE classes for all current 7<sup>th</sup> graders to explain the course selection process for them. 7<sup>th</sup> grade students will be recommended for classes based on the following criteria:

- current teachers' recommendation
- classroom performance
- standardized test scores



### High School Course Selection

Counselors from Elk Grove High School will be visiting our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students on Monday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, to provide information about high school requirements and to assist students in the selection of 9<sup>th</sup> grade courses. A parent information night will be held for Elk Grove High School students on March 7<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 P.M., at EGHS.



### Parent Information Night

To help ease the transition to middle school, for students and parents, we will be hosting two Parent Information Nights to offer information and answer questions about your child's upcoming move to middle school. The dates are as follows:

Wednesday, February 28<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 – 6:45 P.M.

Wednesday, March 21<sup>st</sup> from 6:00 – 6:45 P.M.

We look forward to seeing you there.



### Classroom Visits

During the month of January, the principal, vice principal, and counselors visited **ALL** classrooms to discuss some topics of concern with our students. Among the topics were:

- Respect
- Class disruptions
- Respecting local businesses
- Keeping our campus clean
- Tardies
- STAR Testing
- Credits
- Promotion/ Retention

If you have any questions regarding the above topics, please feel free to call us.



### Summer School

Summer School will be held at all middle and high school campuses this year. Joseph Kerr will be offering a 20 day program in which students will have the opportunity to take 2 classes. The goal of the program is to provide an intervention program that will allow students to improve academic skills and earn credits to promote to the next grade level.

The Summer School calendar is as follows:

- Monday, June 18<sup>th</sup> – Thursday, July 19<sup>th</sup> (8:00 A.M. – 12:20 P.M.)

Students will receive pre-completed enrollment forms from counselors between March 30<sup>th</sup> and April 15<sup>th</sup>. Please sign and return the forms as soon as possible to ensure enrollment.



### College Information

Over 100 parents and students attended Kerr's Annual College Night on January 25, 2007. The evening began with a presentation of the PSAT and its importance for college-bound students. Outreach counselors from Cosumnes River College, Sacramento State University, and the University of California, Davis spoke to the differences between the college systems, admission processes, and course of studies. Students learned they have many choices and how to navigate through the maze of choosing their college, meeting admissions requirements and accessing financial aid. Supplemental materials were provided to help students and their families continue developing their postsecondary goals and college plan. If you missed the college night and would like a packet of the college handouts, your student may obtain additional copies from the counseling office.



### Academic Talent Search

It's that time again for the Sacramento State University's Academic Talent Search Test. Students who participate in taking this exam may qualify to take classes at CSUS in the summer. Courses include core academic classes, as well as a variety of other enrichment courses, including bridge design, digital movie production, flash animation, zoology and much more! The test will be given during first period on Thursday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>. If you are interested, please go to the counseling office to pick up an application.

### Credit Review

The end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter is quickly approaching. The cut-off day for 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter report card grades is Friday, March 30<sup>th</sup>. Selected students who are credit deficient received letters in January encouraging them to achieve the appropriate amount of credits on the third and fourth quarter report cards for promotion to the next grade level.

Letters will be sent home to parents for those students who may be retained for the 2007-2008 school year by

May 2007. Please take the time to review your child's TracKerr or the Joseph Kerr website ([www.egusd.net/kerr](http://www.egusd.net/kerr)) for information regarding credits and promotion/retention. Further suggestions to support and encourage your child's success include:

- ✓ Attendance can greatly affect a student's grades. Your child should make every effort to attend school daily. Students are required to make-up all work missed due to absence.
- ✓ Check your child's TracKerr for homework assignments on a daily basis and ask to see the completed assignments. Homework will take, on average, two hours per night. As you're checking the TracKerr, ask questions about school and the assignments – this can reinforce the learning and review process.
- ✓ Provide a quiet space and time for your child to complete homework.
- ✓ Check your child's backpack periodically and provide assistance organizing materials and the binder.
- ✓ Many of the teachers are available before and/or after school to assist students. Your child simply needs to ask their teacher for time availability and then come for the extra help.
- ✓ Call or e-mail your child's teacher(s) if you have concerns and feel free to visit your child's classrooms.
- ✓ Continue to encourage and believe in your child's ability to succeed.

### Student Attendance and Tardies

#### **No Excuses – Go to School And.... be on time!**

The amount of student absences, as well as tardies, has become a recent concern to administration and counselors. There are many reasons why students miss school and the educational research shows a strong correlation between student attendance and their performance. Even missing one day of school puts a student behind in his/her classes and it is difficult, as well as overwhelming to catch up.

To address the recent increase in student tardies, we have been conducting "Tardy Sweeps" on random days at various periods. Student who are not in their classrooms when the bell rings are escorted to the front office, parents are notified, and the student will receive a detention.

Please help us in assisting our students to be responsible for their education and understand that being in class on time is part of their responsibility.



### STAR Rewards

On February 6<sup>th</sup>, all students received 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. Each STAR CARD 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 in to testing last year. We look forward to more STARS this spring!

### 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

We will be accepting applications for next year’s 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade AVID program in March. Students must have academic potential, average to high test scores, 2.0 minimum GPA, college potential with support, appropriate classroom behavior, good attendance and most importantly, a desire and determination to attend college.



## ACTIVITY DIRECTOR’S CORNER

### DISNEYLAND

The Disneyland trip will be April 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>. Applications will be available in March. Listen to the morning bulletin for updates.



### SPRING BREAK

Spring Break will be April 2<sup>nd</sup> – April 6<sup>th</sup>. Enjoy!



### SPRING PICTURES

Spring Pictures will be March 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> before school and during lunch. Packets will be available the week of March 12<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.



### MAY/JUNE IMPORTANT DATES

<b>Important Dates to Remember</b>	
5-1 – 5-2	STAR Make-up Testing
5-3	Track @ Johnson
5-4	4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter Progress Reports
5-5	Western Festival
5-8	Day of the Teacher
5-10	Track @ Eddy
5-11	New Student Council Orientation
5-15	Spring Band Concert – 7:00 p.m.
5-16	English Recognition Breakfast
5-16	Renaissance Assembly
5-17	Track @ Kerr
5-19	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Promotion Dance, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
5-23	Award’s Night, 6:00 p.m., 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade INVITATION ONLY
5-23 – 5-28	County Fair
5-24	Honor’s Breakfast
5-25	Band Trip to Jazz Jubilee
5-28	NO SCHOOL – Memorial Day
5-31	Yearbook Distribution, 3:15 p.m.
6-1	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Sunsplash Trip
6-6	Promotion Practice
6-6	Minimum Day, dismissal at 12:01 p.m.
6-7	Last Day of School, Minimum Day, 12:01
6-7	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Promotion, 7:30 a.m.

## MESSAGES FROM THE DISTRICT OFFICE

### *“A Community Symposium: Gangs and Youth, Becoming Aware”*

Elk Grove Unified School District would like to invite you to attend community symposiums focused on gang awareness. The first symposium, held in December at Harriet Eddy Middle School, was a success. In the coming months, the district will offer three more at several school sites. Though the symposiums are focused on school attendance areas, parents, teachers, students and community members are invited to attend any of the three meetings. The symposiums will be held from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on the following dates:

- Wednesday, March 21, 2007  
At T.R. Smedberg Middle School (for Florin/Sheldon High School areas)  
8239 Kingsbridge Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95829

Attendees will learn about youth gang street names, colors and signs, how to recognize youth gang signs, how to recognize gang related graffiti, the effects of gang involvement on youth, and legal updates of gang related laws.

Keynote speakers will include representatives from the Sacramento Sheriff's Department, EGUSD Police Services, the Elk Grove Police Department, and the District Attorney's office.

For more information, please contact EGUSD Police Services at 686-7786.

#### **Ask Anne**

Welcome to the **Ask Anne** column featuring District Nutritionist Anne Gaffney, R.D. The column appears monthly in school newsletters and is designed to help families build healthy eating habits.

*Dear Anne,*

**Q:** I realize that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, but would like some ideas for healthy breakfast foods when you are in a hurry. Thanks!

Signed, Breakfast Challenged

**A:** Dear Breakfast Challenged,

You are so right! Eating breakfast really is important, especially for students. Many studies have shown that when students eat breakfast they perform better in school. They will have better attendance and test scores. Breakfast can be quick and healthy – here are a couple of tips:

- Read labels for sugar, fiber and fat content.
- Avoid cereals that have more than 7 grams of sugar per serving.
- Aim for foods that give you at least 2 grams of fiber per serving.
- Eat a combination of foods so that you get protein and carbohydrate.
- Select nonfat or low-fat dairy products.



Below are some simple, healthy ideas for breakfast:

- Ready-to-eat whole grain cold or hot cereal topped with fruit and yogurt
- Whole-grain waffles topped with peanut butter, fruit or ricotta cheese
- A whole-wheat pita stuffed with sliced hard-cooked eggs
- Peanut butter on a bagel with fresh fruit and 1% milk
- Breakfast smoothie (blend milk or yogurt, fruit and teaspoon of bran)

Another healthy option is to have your student eat breakfast at school. Twenty-three of our elementary schools and all of the secondary schools serve breakfast every morning. There are hot entrees as well as fresh fruit, yogurt, and cereal offered every day. If you have a question for Anne, please call Communications at (916) 686-7732 or email [Communications@egusd.net](mailto:Communications@egusd.net)

#### **EGUSD offers incentives galore for perfect attendance**

**NO Excuses**  
**Go to School**

Starting in February, Elk Grove Unified School District *middle school/high school* students will have the

opportunity to participate in monthly raffles as part of the **No Excuses – Go to School** attendance campaign.

Each month, students with perfect attendance are eligible to participate in a raffle for incentives. Donations include items from Round Table Pizza, Scandia Family Fun Centers, Jamba Juice, and Golfland SunSplash. The incentives will change every month so be sure to attend classes to make sure you're eligible!

The district would like to thank the following businesses for their contributions: The Elk Grove Auto Mall, Lathrop Construction Associates, Inc., Dos Coyotes Border Café, Biundo Landscape Construction, Crusader Fence Co., Inc., Pacific Excavation, Inc., River City Bank, Rainforth-Grau Architects, Anderson & Doig Structural Engineers, Scandia Family Fun Center, MTW Group, Mascon, Inc., Murray & Downs Architects, Inc., Stockman's Bank, Law Offices of Remy, Thomas, Moose and Manley, LLP, S.W. Allen Construction, Inc., Sacramento River Cats, Round Table Pizza, Elk Grove Optimist Club, Voss Civil Engineers, Golfland SunSplash, Sacramento Natural Foods Co-op, Maloof Sports & Entertainment, Jamba Juice, Island's Restaurant and World of Good Tastes.