

Joseph Kerr Middle School

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Trish Kennedy, Principal
Christine Peterson, Vice-Principal
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MARCH/APRIL, 2006

STUDENT INFORMATION

A MESSAGE FROM DISTRICT

MySpace.com

While many students today use the internet for education and entertainment, parents should be aware of what their children are doing on the internet, including viewing and posting information to MySpace.com at home.

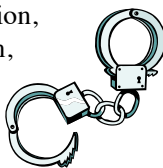


MySpace.com is a webpage that allows anyone to post information about themselves and read information that other people have written about themselves. This website is composed of several areas, including electronic bulletin boards, chat rooms, weblogs (blogs), and personal ads. MySpace.com is the most popular of these "online communities," but there are others, including Friendster.com and Tribe.net. Because of the possibility of inappropriate content, Myspace.com and other online communities are blocked on the EGUSD network. While the site is blocked at school, students may be accessing it at home. We want parents to be aware of the site, how it works, and why they should monitor their child's use of it.

To participate in any MySpace.com area, a person must join the MySpace community. Access to the website is free and signing up is simple. No attempt is made to verify any personal information entered. This allows for total anonymity, but it also allows people to provide false information about who they are, such as their age and gender. Sometimes older people will pretend to be teenagers in an attempt to meet minors.

MySpace.com's electronic bulletin boards and chat rooms are areas where people get together via the Internet and discuss different subject areas. MySpace.com's blogs allow members to create web pages with a diary style narrative that anyone can access and comment on. These pages can be further personalized with pictures and other media.

While many of these are innocent, some topics are inappropriate for young people and often contain offensive material, including nudity and profanity. In addition, sometimes people post rumors, false information, and negative stories about other people. As such, law enforcement is growing increasingly concerned about false and inflammatory information that is posted on MySpace.com.



While online communities can be great tools to help people develop written communication skills, interpersonal skills, find friends of similar interests, and explore creativity, it is important that parents and guardians supervise and provide guidance to their children who use MySpace.com or participate in another online community.

EGUSD begins anonymous hotline for school crime

The Elk Grove Unified School District has joined the WeTip School Safety Program. WeTip is an anonymous, 24-hour hotline for parents, students, staff, and community members to report school-related crimes and suspicious incidents. This would include vandalism, arson, drug use, bullying, and theft. If there is an arrest and conviction, the caller could receive a reward of up to \$1,000.

The WeTip program is a joint effort by law enforcement, students, families, and school district personnel to provide a safe school environment, reduce crime, and save taxpayer expense. If you or your child wants to report a crime or suspicious incident, call the toll-free number, 1-800-78-CRIME, at any time of the day, 365 days a year. The call is handled by a trained operator, who relays the information to the appropriate school officials and/or law enforcement agency to investigate. Your call is completely anonymous. A system is in place to pay rewards without anyone knowing the identity of the caller.

I encourage you to talk to your child about this program and to call the WeTip hotline when you have something to report. If you see something or know something, call someone. Working together, we can keep our students and schools safe. For more information, please go the website, www.wetip.com.

TRACK & FIELD PROGRAMS

Track & Field begins April 3rd. *In order to participate you need a completed and signed physical form and permission slip.* Forms are available in the front office. There are no tryouts, everyone who is academically eligible makes the team. Practice is Monday - Thursday after school and there are a total of 4 meets with other schools in the district and a final district meet.



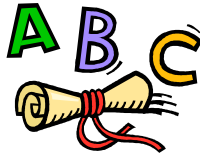
OPEN GYM

Open Gym starts April 4th - permission slips will be in the SAC the last week in March.



SPELLING BEE FINALIST

The winner of Kerr's Annual Spelling Bee was eighth grader Jessica Lack (with runner-up, Aidan Douglas). On January 14, 2006, Jessica took the Sacramento Bee's written test and qualified for the oral competition on March 1st. Congratulations to Jessica! We are proud that she represented Kerr so well.



DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

LIBRARY NEWS

Spring Book Fair

Joseph Kerr Library is hosting a Scholastic Book Fair beginning Thursday, March 30th. 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, April 5th, from 5:30 - 7:30. During the fair you will 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.



SPRING FAIR

Ms. Gesler is looking for parent volunteers to help with the Spring Fair, April 28th. Please call 686-7728 if you are interested.

VICE-PRINCIPAL CORNER

Classroom visitations successful! Administration visited all first period classes at the end of January reminding students of appropriate school behavior. We also reminded students that there is one week no activity for every day of suspension or detention. Once the visits were complete there was a dramatic drop in the number of students violating the Kerr Essential rules. Thank you for your support in helping keep JKMS a safe place to learn.

We are still having a large number of tardies students for 1st period. Please remember that you can drop your child off at 8:40 A.M. This will give your child plenty of time to get to their class. When a student walks in late without a note, our attendance clerks will contact a parent/guardian to verify they are aware of the tardy. Every fifth tardy a student receives an after school detention will be assigned.

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.

Book Care

It is important that library books and textbooks be protected from the weather and from lunch accidents. When the weather turns inclement, books need extra protection and should be placed in plastic bags before being put in a backpack. When drinks are carried in backpacks, they should be in zip lock plastic bags. If a book does become wet, it is important that the pages be dried out as quickly as possible by using paper towels to absorb the moisture. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the library staff.

THIRD QUARTER PROGRESS REPORTS

The year is flying by – The progress report was mailed home on the week of February 27th. Please feel free to contact your child's teacher(s) or counselor should you have any questions.



YEARBOOK

Be sure and get your student a reserved copy of the 2006 Joseph Kerr Yearbook. Books can be purchased for \$40.00. Books not pre-ordered at the end of the year will cost more, so get your copy today!

SCIENCE

The Kerr science teachers continue to work on delivering the *Science Content Standards for California Public Schools* in ways that are understandable to our students. We diligently work to ensure that all students have the opportunity to be exposed to and master the state standards. **Mr. Kucera's** seventh grade classes are in the middle of a unit on genetics. They completed discussing heredity and are preparing to study the structure of DNA. Students will construct a paper model of DNA that will enhance their understanding of the structure of DNA. **Mrs. Williams'** classes are involved in the study of the human body. Students just completed the skeletal system and were given a quiz on the scientific names for the bones. Following this will be a short unit on the muscular system, and then longer, more detailed units on the respiratory and circulatory systems. Then students will be ready for the much-anticipated dissection of the frog. **Ms. Cook's** seventh grade science students are involved in the study of genetics. The simple structure of DNA along with inherited dominant and recessive traits are discussed in this unit. Seventh grade teachers will teach the family life unit in May. We will be sending out parent notification before the unit is begun, and we will also have a parent meeting for interested parents.



ORDER FORM

Student's Name _____

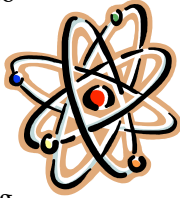
1st Period Teacher _____

Number of Yearbooks _____

_____ Cash _____ Check (made out to JKMS)



Mr. Meredith's eighth grade classes are discussing a unit on astronomy. He plans on completing astronomy in March and then going back to physical science to study the concept of energy and then types of waves in science. **Mr. Meredith's honors classes** are also completing an astronomy unit and will then dig deeply into a geology unit. **Ms. Nierva and Mr. Bettencourt's** eighth graders are in the middle of studying the motion of objects and how forces affect the motion of objects. Newton's three laws of motion are presented and explained. They will then move into a unit on density and buoyancy in which students understand why enormous aircraft carriers float in the ocean. **Mr. Bettencourt's two honors classes** are in the middle of studying chemistry. Students are currently learning about the periodic table of the elements. They then move on to chemical bonding, chemical reactions, and finally the study of acids and bases.



We will continue our efforts to monitor the progress of our students to prepare them to be successful in future science courses and on the NCLB standardized science test.

MADD "Don't Buy the Lie" Assembly

On March 9, there will be a school-wide assembly presented by MADD. Notices regarding the assembly were sent home with students. All science teachers will present a follow up lesson continuing to explain the consequences of drinking alcohol.

COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

We hope this bulletin finds you well. Although the weather has been cold and stormy, we've been hard at work preparing for all the important events that occur during this time of year, as well as the remainder of this school year.



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

This year the Elk Grove Unified School District will be offering summer school at Edward Harris Middle School and Toby Johnson Middle School. Middle school students who are credit deficient or need remediation will be given first priority for registration for the summer school program.

In addition, enrichment classes will be offered this year which will include the following:

- Art
- Keyboarding and beginning computer skills
- Creative Writing
- Science Elective

The Summer School calendar is as follows:

- Term I: June 19, 2006 through July 12, 2006
- Term II: July 13, 2006 through August 4, 2006

Both terms will start at 8:00 a.m. and end at 1:00 p.m. Students may enroll in one or both terms. Look for registration forms in the front office on or around March 15th. If you are interested in summer school for your child, or if it is mandated by his or her counselor, please read the following steps for registration procedures.

- Obtain registration form from the counseling office
- Select the desired courses and/or those recommended by counselor
- Student and parent/guardian sign form
- Return signed form to the counseling office for counselor's approval

2006-2007 Course Registration

The buzz this month is *registration*. The counselors have visited the four feeder schools to deliver presentations about middle school expectations and course selection to the incoming 7th graders. On Monday, March 13th, counselors will visit PE classes for all current 7th graders to explain the course selection process for them. seventh grade students will be recommended for classes based on their current teachers' recommendation, classroom performance, and standardized test scores. The counselors from Elk Grove High School will visit current 8th grade students on Monday, March 13th and Thursday, March 16th to assist them in course selection for high school.

Credit Review

The end of the 3rd quarter will be here before you know it. The cut-off day for 3rd quarter report card grades is Friday, March 31st. Students who are credit deficient received letters in February encouraging them to achieve a total of 30 combined credits on the third and fourth quarter report cards for promotion to the next grade level. Letters will be sent home to parents in April for those students who may be retained for the 2006-2007 school year with the final notification by May 19, 2006. Please take the time to review your child's TracKerr or the Joseph Kerr

website (www.egusd.net/kerr) for information regarding credits and promotion retention. Further suggestions to support and encourage your child's success include:

- ✓ Your child should make every effort to attend school daily. Attendance can greatly affect a student's grades. 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 Project

Joseph Kerr continues to enforce the Student Attendance Program (SAP), the Elk Grove Unified School District's Student Attendance Campaign. Students in the district miss an average of nearly eight days a year – almost a day a month- at all grade levels.

There are many reasons why students miss school. In fact, educational research shows a strong correlation between student attendance and their performance in school. The SAP at Kerr works by pairing Peer Resource Leaders with students who have attendance concerns.

The Peer Resource Leaders are a useful resource for students struggling with attendance. They do this by checking in with their buddies on a weekly basis, acknowledging them on campus, introducing them to new students, and respecting them. Each Peer Resource Leader organizes his/her buddy's attendance goals in increments of achievements and incentives. Each level is harder than the previous, therefore continuing to challenge them to meet their goals. Students this year have earned candy bars, front of the lunch line passes, doughnuts and milk, McDonalds coupons, and more!

College Information

Over 100 parents and students attended Kerr's Annual College Night on January 25, 2006. The evening began with a presentation of the PSAT and its importance for college-bound



students. Mr. Lewis, teacher-in-charge, greeted the attendees and commended them for their motivation to “jumpstart” their college preparation. He encouraged students to enroll in rigorous coursework, recommending math classes during all four years of high school. Outreach counselors from Cosumnes River College, Sacramento State University, University of California, Davis and the independent private colleges shared 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 have missed the college night and would like a packet of the college handouts, your student may obtain additional copies from the counseling office.

STAR Testing

It's that time of year for standardized testing. Our students will be taking the STAR test on Tuesday, April 25th through Thursday, April 27th. During these testing days, we will be on a minimum day schedule. In addition, 8th grade students will be taking the Science CST on May 2nd. This will **not** be a minimum day. **There will not be any zero period classes on the testing days.**

Testing can be very stressful for students, as well as a source of much anxiety. Below you will find some helpful test taking strategies and preparation tips to help encourage your child to do their very best on these important state exams.

Getting Ready for Tests

1. Get a good night's sleep.
2. Eat breakfast.
3. Come to school on time.
4. Listen carefully to the directions.
5. Read directions and questions carefully.
6. Remember, no one knows every answer.
7. Tests do not tell how smart you are.

How to Take Tests

1. Have two sharp pencils and an eraser.
2. Read directions and follow them. Focus on key words in the directions.
3. Read the question and all the answers before you pick one. Focus on the key words in the questions.
4. If you feel nervous, take a slow, deep breath.
5. Don't get stuck----keep going! If you don't know an answer, skip it.
6. Do as many questions as you can. Then, go back and try to do the questions you skipped. Pick answers that make the most sense. If you have extra time, check over your answers.

ACTIVITY DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Asset Building Support for Parents

Families of all shapes and sizes play vital roles in ensuring that children and teenagers grow up strong, healthy, and asset rich. An asset building approach has countless benefits that many parents find give them a focus, inspiration, and encouragement to help support their child to be successful teens and adults. A wide variety of tools and resources are available through the Search Institute that provide ideas and tools to parents to help support your child in building more of their assets. Visit the Search Institute at <http://www.search-institute.org/catalog> to find great articles, read stories from other parents, print free downloaded material, find practical resources for parent support, and so much more.

Counseling Department

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

Counselor	Student Last Name
Ms. Hoyer	A – C
Ms. Wolff	D – M
Ms. Tsuda	N - 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 years 8th 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.



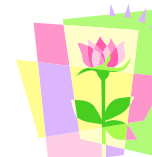
DISNEYLAND UPDATES

March 15th is the final day for full refunds. Call Ms. Mendoza at 686-7729. **March 21st** Disneyland bus sign-ups. No changes will be allowed.



SPRING BREAK

Spring Break will be April 10th – April 14th. Enjoy!



E-MAIL

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



MAY/JUNE IMPORTANT DATES

Important Dates to Remember	
5-1	Beginning Band Uncle Jer's Cookie Fundraiser
5-2	STAR Testing- 8 th Grade Science, Regular Scheduling
5-3	Renaissance BBQ
5-4	Track Meet @ Toby Johnson
5-5	4 th Quarter Progress Reports
5-6	Western Festival
5-10	Spring Band Concert, 7:00 p.m.
5-11	Track Meet @ Harriet Eddy
5-12	New Student Council Orientation
5-17	Silver K Assembly, 3:45 p.m.
5-18	English Department Breakfast, 8:15 a.m.
5-18	Track Meet @ Kerr
5-19	8 th Grade Promotion Dance, 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.
5-20	Relay for Life
5-24to26	County Fair
5-25	Track Meet @ Sheldon High School
5-26	Band Trip to Jazz Jubilee
5-29	NO SCHOOL – Memorial Day
5-31	Awards Night, 6:00pm, 8 th Grade Invitation ONLY
6-1	Yearbook Distribution, 3:15 p.m.
6-7	8 th Grade Sunsplash Trip
6-8	Promotion Practice
6-8	Minimum Day, dismissal at 12:02 p.m.
6-9	Last Day of School, Minimum Day, 12:02
6-9	8 th Grade Promotion, 7:30 a.m.