

JOSEPH KERR MIDDLE SCHOOL

8865 ELK GROVE BLVD.
ELK GROVE, CA 95624

ADMINISTRATIVE: (916) 686-7728

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Cecil Q. Duke, Principal
Christine Peterson, Vice Principal
James Lewis, Teacher-in-Charge

SUMMER, 2007

Dear Parent(s) and/or Guardian(s):

My name is Cecil Q. Duke and I am extremely proud and thrilled to introduce myself to you as the new principal of Joseph Kerr Middle School. I have been an educator for the past twenty years, with twelve years served in the Elk Grove Unified School District as a teacher, administrator, and basketball coach. I strongly believe that all students have the capacity to learn, and I will work diligently in collaboration with the community and staff to ensure that all students are given the opportunities to reach their highest potential.

Kerr has long established itself as a school known for its academic excellence, outstanding parental support, fantastic student body, rich traditions, and dedicated faculty and staff. I am committed to working with the Kerr community and staff to continue to provide students with the very best educational and co-curricular opportunities possible.

Your input is extremely important to the success of your student and the school at large. I look forward to meeting you at one of the many upcoming Kerr events, activities or parent meetings. Enjoy the remainder of your summer!

Sincerely,

Cecil Q. Duke
Principal
Joseph Kerr Middle School

STUDENT INFORMATION

SUMMER OFFICE HOURS

Joseph Kerr's office summer hours are 8:00 – 2:30 p.m. Monday – Thursday – CLOSED on Fridays.



THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL IS MONDAY, AUGUST 27TH.

WEB DAY

WEB Day (Where Everybody Belongs) is scheduled for Monday, August 13th for students with last names that start with A-K and on Tuesday, August 14th for students with last names that start with L-Z. They will meet from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. WEB is for incoming 7th grade students and is a good way for students to become acquainted with Kerr.

JUMP START

The purpose of Jump Start is to assist incoming 7th graders with the transition from an elementary school to a middle school program. Jump Start will run August 15th – August 17th from 9:00 – 12:00 p.m. Students should attend all three days. The three half-day sessions will familiarize students with middle school routines, as well as help them meet other students.



NEW PARENT ORIENTATION

Parent Orientation will be on August 22nd, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m., in the multi-purpose room. We look forward to meeting you.

P.E. CLOTHES

P.E. clothes will be sold on August 16th and August 17th from 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. in the Student Activities Center. The cost for P.E. clothes is \$25.00 for shorts, shirt, and lock. P.E. clothes will also be sold during your student's P.E. class the first week of school.



CELL PHONES

Students may NOT use their phones during the regular school hours. Cell phones should be turned off and put away until after school. Students may use their cell phones after school. Please have your student see an adult for any emergency situations that require the use of a phone during the school day.



GIRL'S COMPETITIVE VOLLEYBALL

Kerr has one 7th/8th grade combined competitive volleyball team at present. Tryouts will be Monday, August 27th. All girls trying out need a physical dated after July 1st and a permission slip turned in to Coach McKinney on either Monday or Tuesday of tryouts. Physical forms and permission slips are available in the main office. Anyone not having the appropriate paperwork will not be able to tryout.



STUDENT SCHEDULES

7th and 8th grade students will receive their schedules on the first day of school in the multi-purpose room.



YEARBOOK/I.D. CARD PICTURES

Student I.D./yearbook pictures will be taken Wednesday, August 29th, during P.E. classes.



ASB STICKERS

Hey, all you 7th and 8th grade students - - make sure you buy your ASB sticker this year. The cost is \$20.00. Go to the Student Activities Center to purchase it. The ASB sticker gives you discounts on many activities and gets you into all five dances free of charge.



FUTURE NEWSLETTERS

For the 2007-2008 school year, you will receive newsletters every other month. The next newsletter will be mailed in September. Future newsletters will follow in: November, January, March, and May. Other newsletters or school related bulletins will be sent home periodically, as needed.



COUNSELORS

The Counseling staff at Joseph Kerr Middle School is excitedly looking forward to the start of the 2007-2008 school year. We know that this can be a stressful time for you and your child and we are dedicated to making this a smooth and enjoyable transition. Pre-school events such as Jump Start and WEB day will certainly help your child feel more comfortable on our campus.



Many of you may not be familiar with the role of a school counselor. We believe that all students have dignity and worth. We are the “go to” people on campus if you or your child have questions or need support. The mission statement for Joseph Kerr Counselors may also help you understand our role:

The mission of Joseph Kerr Middle School's Guidance and Counseling program is to ensure that all students will acquire the skills, attitudes, and competencies related to academic, career, and social/personal development. This will result in the student's ability to achieve their highest academic potential while becoming lifelong learners and productive citizens in our diverse society.

When school begins, if you believe your child has been placed into a wrong course or notice a problem with their schedule, please contact us immediately. We want to make any corrections that are necessary as quickly as possible. **We will not be changing schedules to accommodate a request for a specific teacher or class period.**

Remember to keep encouraging your child because with encouragement and support all things are possible. We, the “go to” counseling staff, are here for you and your child and look forward to meeting you.

- Julie Hoyer, Lily Tsuda, and Karen Wolff

INFORMATION FOR DISTRICT'S FOOD SERVICES

Wellness Policy

EGUSD recognizes the strong link between student health and learning and maintains a district-wide Wellness Policy promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The Wellness Policy is monitored by the Coordinated School Health Program which is comprised of a group of parent/guardians, students, teachers, nurses, school food service



professionals, school administrators, and community partners. The Wellness Policy focuses on improving health and preventing childhood obesity by creating a school environment where healthful food choices predominate and physical activity is part of every day.

Food and Nutrition Services

EGUSD participates in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs through Food and Nutrition Services. This department is committed to improving the health and academic success of students and offers lunch daily at each school site. Lunches and breakfast are analyzed to ensure that the meals meet the nutritional needs of students and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The lunch price is \$2.25 at elementary schools and \$2.75 at middle and high schools. Middle and high schools offer breakfast for \$1.50 and many elementary schools provide breakfast for \$1.25. Please refer to (www.egusd.net) for additional information about Food and Nutrition Services, and a list of sites that serve breakfast.

These prices will also be in effect for Intersession, Summer School and Jumpstart Programs.

The selection of a la carte lunch items offered has been revised to meet the Wellness Policy Guidelines. Families are encouraged to purchase meals in advance using the prepayment system. A la carte items can also be deducted from your child's account balance. Please indicate “no a la carte” on your check if you prefer that your child not be allowed to purchase a la carte items from their account.

Families may qualify for free or reduced price breakfast/lunch. To be eligible for free or reduced price meals, you must complete an application each school year. Once the application is processed, the family will receive notification by mail regarding their eligibility for that school year.

During the 2007-08 school year, the charge for reduced price meals will be waived and there will be no cost to free and reduced eligible students.

Your family must complete the new Salmon colored meal application to qualify for free and reduced meals for the new school year 2007-08. Applications are available now, please complete the application and return it to the school or Food and Nutrition Services for approval as soon as possible.

For additional information about meal applications, eligibility, breakfast/lunch menus and Nutrition Education, please contact Food and Nutrition Services at 686-7735 or refer to the district website.

BACKPACKS – Questions, Answers, and Tips

Q: What are schools doing to help students lighten their backpacks?

A: While the weight of textbooks and backpacks is a national issue, the Elk Grove Unified School District is taking steps to help students lighten their backpacks.

The following are some examples of what schools are doing to address this issue:

- Coordinating schedules so that students alternate which textbooks they need to bring each day.
- Informing students which days they need to bring textbooks to school.
- Allowing students to store backpacks in their classrooms during lunch.
- Allowing students to leave their textbooks in the class if they are not needed for homework.

Q: What is the district doing to help students with backpacks?

A: The district is taking an active role to work with publishers and the Legislature to address this issue. These efforts include writing legislation that, if approved, would require publishers to provide additional CD-ROM's for students; meeting with publishers to request that they provide on-line access to some secondary textbooks as early as this year; and speaking at legislative and other hearings to require publishers to provide textbooks on CD-ROM and to set weight limits on textbooks.

The curriculum department is developing a lesson on how to teach middle school students how to properly wear backpacks. The lesson, which will include an instructional video, will be given as appropriate in either health, science, or physical education classes. The lessons will also be provided to sixth grade students next spring to prepare them for middle school.

The district is also embarking on a backpack awareness campaign to inform parents and students on how to pack and wear backpacks in a way that provides the best support.

Q: What can I do to help my child with his/her backpack?

A: The district has prepared a flier on how students should load and wear a backpack. The flier is available on the district's website and at schools. Following are some helpful tips, as recommended by the American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.:

- Students are encouraged to use rolling backpacks.
- The heaviest items should be loaded closest to the back of the backpack (toward the student's back.)
- Backpacks should always be worn using both shoulder straps.
- Select a backpack with well-padded shoulder straps.
- Adjust the shoulder straps so that the backpack fits snugly on the student's back. The bottom of the backpack should rest on the curve of the lower back no more than 4-inches below the student's waistline.
- Wear the waist belt if the backpack has one. Select a backpack that is the right size for the student.

Q: What else can be done to help lighten the backpacks?

A: Many times students will bring all of their textbooks and notebooks to school every day because they want to be well prepared for class. Students are encouraged to ask their teachers at the beginning of the school year or semester what they should bring to class every day so that they can eliminate some of the textbooks and other items they need every day.

Parents are also encouraged to talk to their children to see if they can limit the personal belongings in their backpacks.

Q: What are the options if my child has a medical condition?

A: The district will provide a second set of textbooks to students who have a written note from a medical doctor or a chiropractor stating that the student should not be carrying textbooks in a backpack.

Loading a Backpack

- Load heaviest items closest to the student's back (the back of the pack).
- Arrange books and materials so they won't slide around in the backpack.
- Check what the student carries to school and brings home. Make sure your child only brings items that are necessary for that day's instruction and activities.
- Your student may hand carry a book or other item.
- Consider using a rolling backpack



- Wear the waist belt if the backpack has one. This helps distribute the pack's weight more evenly.
- The bottom of the pack should rest in the curve of the lower back. It should never rest more than 4 inches below the student's waistline.
- School backpacks come in different sizes for different ages. Choose the right size pack for your student's back as well as one with enough room for necessary school items.



Wearing a Backpack

- Both shoulder straps should always be worn. Wearing a pack slung over one shoulder can cause a person to lean to one side, curving the spine and causing pain or discomfort.
- Select a pack with well-padded shoulder straps. Shoulders and necks have many blood vessels and nerves that can cause pain and tingling in the neck, arms, and hands when too much pressure is applied.
- Adjust the shoulder straps so that the pack fits snugly to the back. A pack that hangs loosely from the back can pull the student backwards and strain muscles.



TRANSPORTATION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION



Please take a few moments to review these Frequently Asked Questions. If you need further assistance, please call us at 916-686-7733. Updated information is also available on our district web site: www.egusd.net.

- Q. Why do we have to pay for transportation?**
A. In California, transportation is not a required service so the state does not fully fund school districts that choose to offer bus service to their regular education students. Fees collected help to return the classroom funds that are used to transport our students.
- Q. How much does it cost for a pass?**
A. Transportation fees are reviewed annually and are revised as needed based on costs to provide services. The costs for bus passes for the 2007/2008 school year are:
Annual Service, Round Trip
\$225 for single child (\$200 with early bird discount)
\$410 for two children (\$360 with early bird discount)
\$520 for three or more children (\$460 with early bird discount)
- Annual Service, One Way (AM or PM)
\$125 for single child (\$115 with early bird discount)
\$250 for two children (\$230 with early bird discount)
\$310 for three or more children (\$285 with early bird discount)

Q. Is there a deadline for the *early bird discount*?
A. Yes, If your student is on track B,C or D, July 6th is your postmark deadline. If your student is on A track or on a Traditional calendar, July 30th is your postmark deadline.

Q. Who needs a School Bus Pass?
A. Everyone. Bus passes identify students and their appropriate bus stops, and must be carried at all times!

Q. What types of passes are available?
A. Annual Service passes for both Round Trip (to school and back home) and One Way (either to school or from school), as well as ticket booklets for “occasional riders” on a space available basis.

Q. Does the Bus Pass need to be carried everyday?
A. Yes...Bus passes identify students and their appropriate bus stop. To insure the safety of your student, they must be carried at all times!

Q. If my student is offloaded to another school due to overcrowding, do I pay for transportation?

A.

- If your student is riding the bus only between schools (from their home school to their offload school), there is no charge. An application is required and your student must obtain a bus pass before being eligible to ride.
- If your student is riding from a bus stop from your home area to the offload school, regular fees apply.

Q. If I qualify for the free or reduced lunch program due to limited income, do I get free transportation?

A. Yes, provided you meet the eligibility requirements. You must submit an application & income verification for your entire household to qualify. Income verification items must be dated within 6 weeks of the application date and must be submitted with the completed application.

Q. Do I need to fill out a new application for transportation every year?

A. Yes, a new application must be submitted each school year before your student may ride the bus.

Q. Can all of my children be recorded on one application?

A. Yes, all children who reside in the same household can be recorded on one application. Foster homes may use one application for all students residing in the home.

Q. Can I fax my application into transportation?

A. Yes. Be sure to include your credit card payment information or complete income verification (if applying for free service due to income status). Incomplete applications will be returned unprocessed. Please call us at (916) 686-7733 to verify receipt of faxed applications. Faxes will not be accepted from school sites, please use the inter-office mail to reduce duplication of applications.

Q. How long does it take to get a bus pass?

A. It generally takes up to 10 days. We strive to get them out as quickly as possible. At the busy start of the school year, it may take longer due to the large volume of applications received. Passes are created in the order that applications are received. Submit your application early!

Q. What do I do if my student loses his / her bus pass?

A. Contact our office to request a replacement pass. There is a \$15 charge for replacement passes.

Q. If I move and my student(s) still require bus transportation, do I have to pay \$15 for a replacement?

A. If your students will be utilizing a different stop, you will need to purchase a replacement pass. but either way your application will need to be updated with your new address information.

Q. If my child loses their pass can he/she still ride the bus?

A. Yes...a temporary 5-day pass may be obtained from the bus driver or your child’s school to give you time to obtain a replacement pass from the Transportation Department.

Q. What forms of payment are accepted?

A. We accept Visa, MasterCard, Check, or Money Order for passes.

Q. How will my student(s) get their pass?

A. Generally the passes are given to your student's driver to disburse on the bus. Passes can be mailed to your home address or held at the transportation office for pick up (upon request),

Q. Can I come into transportation to get a pass?

A. You can come into transportation to purchase a bus pass. But why wait in line when you can save money, time, and gas by purchasing your pass by mail. To qualify for the Early Bird Discount the application must be post marked by the deadline. If submitting an application in person, the deadline still applies and it may be dropped off at our office. Counter hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

2007-2008 BELL SCHEDULE

Regular Day Bell Schedule:



* Period 0:	8:00 – 8:52
Period 1:	9:00 – 9:56
Period 2:	10:00 – 10:52
Period 3:	10:56 – 11:48
Period 4:	
7 th Grade Lunch:	11:48 – 12:23
Late Class:	12:27 – 1:19
Early Class:	11:52 – 12:44
8 th Grade Lunch:	12:44 – 1:19
Period 5:	1:23 – 2:15
Period 6:	2:19 – 3:11

Minimum Day Schedule:

* Period 0:	8:00 – 8:52
Period 1:	9:00 – 9:31
Period 2:	9:35 – 10:01
Period 3:	10:05 – 10:31
Period 4:	10:35 – 11:01
Period 5:	11:05 – 11:31
Period 6:	11:35 – 12:01

Lunch is served after school

*** 7th Grade Band and AVID students, 8th Grade Jazz Band ONLY**

QUESTIONS?

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

