



JGMS Principal's Newsletter

November/December 2009

Principal's Letter

Dear JGMS Families,

While the holiday season is a time for giving, I think we here at JGMS have been extremely fortunate in that we have been on the receiving end of others' thoughtfulness and magnanimity. On behalf of the students, staff and faculty of John Glenn Middle School, I would like to thank the BEF for its generous support of our academic initiatives, past and present. I was in Social Studies class the day Allison Hammer unveiled the early human skulls; the kids thoroughly enjoyed their investigation using them. I also know that Karen Burstein and the math department have big plans for use of the Senteo Interactive Response System. It is clear to everyone involved in education that to learn and develop one needs the knowledge and inspiration of people who are thinking beyond the daily demands and have the potential to influence the lives of our students. The BEF is a remarkable organization working towards this end.

By the way, our students and staff are giving back as well. Last month they held a sock drive as part of a service project, initiated by Kristin B. and Maddy A. under the direction of their Advisor Fern Thompson, to help those who are less fortunate get through these cold winter months more comfortably. Also, our Student Council, under the direction of Lauren Noferi and Libbey Beinert-Hunnewell, is currently sponsoring a "Giving Tree," where advisories and others can select a "leaf", identifying a particular need, from the tree and then collect items by December 15th to fulfill this need. All items will be donated to the New England Home for Little Wanderers. I guess our kids are learning a lot this year about giving back to their community...it's a lesson that will have tremendous impact on the rest of their lives.

Hoping you have a restful and peaceful holiday season, on behalf of the entire JGMS faculty and staff, please enjoy the upcoming vacation!

Our next newsletter will be available on our website beginning February 4, 2009. In that newsletter we will be providing information about course selection and scheduling for the next school year!

Happy Holidays!

P. Jayne Viladenis



Visit the JGMS Principal's Corner blog at <http://jgmsprincipalscorner.blogspot.com/>

December 2009

John Glenn Middle School

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1(2)	2(3) 1/2 day- Parent Conferences 4-7 PM	3(4)	4(5)	5
6	7(6)	8(1)	9(2)	10(3) School Council 2:30-3:30	11(4)	12
13	14(5)	15(6)	16(1)	17(2)	18(3) Principal's Coffee 8:30 -9:30 AM	19
20	21(4)	22(5)	23(6)	24 Vacation	25 Vacation	26
27	28 Vacation	29 Vacation	30 Vacation	31 Vacation	January 1, 2010 Vacation	

October, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Every year, we send this letter out to all parents and guardians of students in Middlesex County. Students and their families face many challenges throughout the school year. One of the most important concerns we share is the need for consistent and timely school attendance for all students.

The consequences for failing to attend school are serious and well-documented. Truancy has been identified as a potential predictor of delinquency, drug use, and is often associated with lowered academic achievement, self-esteem, and even employment potential. In addition, several studies have found that a pattern of poor attendance in early grades is linked to an increased likelihood for dropping out of school in later years.

Parents and guardians, as well as students themselves, have the statutory responsibility to ensure that attendance at school is regular and timely. Schools are required by law to keep track of attendance and tardiness. If a school identifies a student who is exhibiting an attendance problem, which includes tardiness, the school is required by law to address that problem. This could be as simple as notifying the parent or guardian of the issue and working together to improve that student's attendance, or, in extreme instances, it may require the school to solicit assistance by the Court or Department of Children and Families.

Enclosed you will find a summary of the Massachusetts General Laws pertaining to attendance. We would encourage you to review this as well as your school's policy on attendance. Please feel free to contact the principal of your child's school should you wish to discuss this information further.

Working together to assure that all of our students are able to reach their true potential is a goal that we all share, and that begins with a student's regular and timely attendance throughout the school year. Thank you for your continued attention to this important issue.

We look forward to a successful school year.

Cordially,

Gerard T. Leone, Jr.
Middlesex District Attorney

Superintendent, _____
_____ Public Schools

JGMS Library News

December 7, 2009



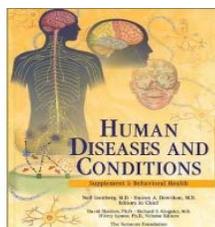
Joan Collins
Teacher Librarian

Book Fair News

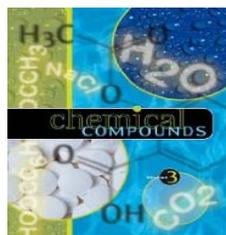
Thanks to all who supported our annual JGMS Book Fair. Students were scheduled to attend the fair with classroom teachers. Book fairs provide students with a wide variety of titles that are of specific interest to them. They are like bookstores designed solely for middle school.

Special thanks to the parents who gave of their time to help out with the fair. Ben Biswas and Patsy Gavelek were lucky winners from the daily drawings.

New Resources



Human Diseases and Conditions



Chemical Compounds

These valuable reference sets are also available as **e-books**. This means an entire class can access these valuable reference works simultaneously.

Library Activity

Eighth grade English teachers, Pat Stephen and Marilyn Bemis, escorted their classes to the library to select books for 2nd quarter book projects. Historical fiction and challenging books were chosen.

Seventh grade English teachers, Nicole D'Entremont and Lynda McGraw, directed their students to choose survival fiction and realistic fiction and recently published titles.

Jim Nagle's eighth graders researched the Renaissance. They utilized social studies databases and the Biography Resource Center. They prepared to create resumes for the giants of the period.

Paula Bakarian's sixth grade social studies students began a unit on African Rivers and their economic impact. Kids met in the library lab and learned how to use *Worldbook On-Line*, *ABC-Clio World Geography Database*, *CultureGrams*, and *Infobits*. Documents from all of these sources can be emailed to a student's First Class accounts.

After using Advanced Search *Google*, students looked at website evaluation.

Ms. Fricke's sixth graders learned to navigate the physical space of the library. Using a library diagram, students identified the location of various materials.

All sixth graders began recording their video booktalks as part of a project with SOS teachers Sarah Healy and Melissa Michaud. Students learned about book talk types, selected books, and planned out short talks.

French

Grade 6 French

The 6th grade French classes are working very hard. We are finishing up Unit 1 and will be having a test on the unit before the break. We are currently working on family trees and how to identify relationships using a limited number of possessive adjectives. I'm also learning how old everyone's parents are!
Bonne vacances!

Grade 7 French

The 7th grade French classes are working hard and making wonderful progress. We just completed lesson 13 and had the quiz. They learned to identify and describe places in their hometown. They also learned how to give and receive directions – not an easy task in English or French. In lesson 14 we'll be learning the verb “aller” which will open the door to being able to talk about what we will do.
Bonne vacances!

Grade 8 French

WOW! We are moving right along and I am very pleased with the students' progress. Currently, the kids are learning how to integrate the past perfect, present, and near future tenses. They are also learning to identify which adverbs are red flags for which tenses. This should help their English as well as their French. The curriculum continues to spiral upward, challenging the students with more and more complex material.
Bonne vacances!





Spanish

Grade 6

Students in Grade 6 are studying Unit 1- Chapter 2 in the cultural context of San Antonio, Texas. They have learned to describe others with the verb *ser* and adjectives of appearance and personality. They can describe colors and clothing and give others' likes and dislikes. They have learned the difference between definite and indefinite articles. They are creating sentences using noun and adjective agreement in gender and number. They are studying about and experiencing *la música tejana* in the connecting cultures section of our program.

Spanish 7

we are wrapping up the final chapter in the unit on Mexico City. We have been studying how to say what people are going to do, talk about after school plans, and discuss places and people we know with a list of regular -er and -ir verbs, as well as a few irregular verbs. After the winter break we will begin our unit on Puerto Rico, learning to extend invitations, talk on the phone, express feelings, and say where you are coming from and what just happened.

Spanish 8

Students in Spanish 8 have been studying and practicing the art of bargaining for items sold at outdoor markets in Oaxaca, Mexico. Talking about shopping, making purchases and giving gifts are also embedded in this context. They have learned the vocabulary to describe many handicrafts and other items offered for sale at these outdoor markets . Grammar points in Unit 4-Chapter 2 include a group of o>ue stem changing verbs along with the review of the e>ie stem changing verbs studied during grade seven. A review of indirect object pronouns and indirect object placement are also covered in this chapter.





Grade 8

With the holiday season upon us, and the first snow officially on the books; the 8th graders have continued to bring enthusiasm and leadership to JGMS and their individual classrooms,. With the winter vacation a little over a week away, you can imagine that the excitement level has certainly increased in lower A Wing. We encourage parents to remind their children to work hard until the close of school on December 23rd!

UPCOMING Grade 8 Events:

January 4, 5,6: National Geographic Geography Bee in social studies classes.
January 15th: Registration deposit for Dc. Trip due

Social Studies

Students in Mr. Casey's and Mr. Nagle's classes have recently completed library research and technology based projects on the Renaissance. Mr. Nagle's classes produced résumé's on key figures that contributed to the Humanist movement in Europe. Mr. Casey's classes produced similar type projects using the program "Photostory" which allowed the students to produce mini-documentaries on these key historical figures.

English

Students in Mrs. Stephen's and Ms. Bemis' classes are working their way through the novel, *The Giver*. The novel by Newberry award winner, Lois Lowry, asks students to contemplate what makes an ideal or Utopian society as they read about Jonas's community "...world is perfect. Everything is under control. There is no fear or pain. There are no choices, every person is assigned a role in the community."

After the holidays there will be a shift from literature to composition. We will be exploring, analyzing, drafting, revising, and publishing a variety of writing pieces with particular emphasis on constructing responses to classroom prompts and subjective essay questions.

Math:

The current unit of study in Level 2 classes involves factors, fractions and exponents. In this unit, students use factorization of numbers and also factor monomials. Students find the greatest common factor and least common multiple of numbers and monomials and use these quantities to simplify, compare and order fractions and mixed numbers.

Level One classes are working on a unit involving subtraction of Algebra. Students are studying real world situations that lead to linear sentences involving subtraction. They will be learning how to use variations on techniques learned in previous chapters to solve equations and inequalities involving subtraction.

SCIENCE, 8th Grade

On the Green Team, students have just completed lessons on Earth Chemistry and are beginning a unit on minerals. They will learn how scientists categorize minerals into two main groups. Mineral formation and classification will also be studied. Students will identify unknown minerals according to their color, streak, luster, how they break and density. Special properties of minerals are to be highlighted by demonstrating the optical properties of calcite (double vision), chemical reactivity (calcite and weak acid) and fluorescence. Students will be engaged in many hands-on activities throughout this unit.

On the Grey Team, students have studied in depth a unit on earthquakes. Students used the Internet to track current earthquake activity. Students gathered information about location, magnitude, and intensity and made connections to what was learned in their previous unit of Plate Tectonics. Students learned what societies do to help lessen the damage of seismic energy and what seismologists do to help predict future seismic events. Students have just begun a unit on volcanoes.



The Band, Orchestra, Jazz Band and Chorus ensembles did an outstanding job in their concert performances over the last few weeks. The dedication and talent of these groups is obvious, and their pride in a job well done is evident. Having fun making music with friends is a joy in our lives.

The 7th and 8th grade chorus members will have a chance to encore their winter concert music at a fundraiser at Barnes and Noble on Tuesday, December 15th at 5:30. We hope many will come and support the Bedford Education Foundation's effort for our schools.

The cast list for "Fiddler on the Roof, jr." was posted on December 8th. Seventy-five students auditioned for lead roles, and 125 are currently signed up to participate. The first rehearsal for the spring musical will be after school on Tuesday December 15th, from 2:30 to 3:40. Stage crew sign-ups will take place after the winter break.

We are coming to the end of our first semester, and students signed up for music electives are switching their next choices, which include world drumming, guitar, theater arts, chorus, band and orchestra. Beginners are always welcome in these groups, and the instrumental directors are committed to helping students find the resources to "catch up" with their peers who have been participating since elementary school. It's never too late!





Grade 7

Winter weather has arrived! We hope you are enjoying the change in scenery as we experience the first signs of winter this year. The 2nd Quarter Interims will be posted after school on Monday, December 14. Please be sure to check how your child is doing now that we are half way through the quarter. We will continue to have meaningful learning experiences through the last day of school prior to the December vacation, so we appreciate the help you give to keep your child focused on homework and studies.

Here is what has been happening in the classes:

English

Building on their knowledge of folklore, students read “The Landlady” which is a modern-day short story that is based on European folktales. Currently students are beginning the study of novels—either *The Pig-man* by Paul Zindel or *The Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth George Speare. In addition, students are writing descriptive essays. Lastly, book projects are due in January.

Social Studies

Students are completing their study of Mesopotamia. They have learned about how this civilization developed and the way that city-states began conquering other city-states to create the empires. All students wrote an essay answering the question “What Makes the City of Ur a Civilization,” using their knowledge of the six characteristics of a civilization and their new knowledge of the Mesopotamian city of Ur. This was the equivalent of a mini research paper, which is preparation for an upcoming and more independent research project on Egypt. Students are beginning their study of Egypt and will continue until after the December break. On Friday, January 8, the entire 7th grade will go to the Museum of Fine Arts as part of their study of Egypt. There is more information about this trip below.

Science

Students have concluded their study of ecology. They are now studying cells. They are making a three-dimensional cell model at home. In this project they will show all of the parts of the cell and include a key that explains the functions of each of the cell parts. This project is due before the December break.

Math

In Level 1 classes, students are currently working on ratios and proportions. They will conclude the unit with a test on December 23rd. Students will also be working on their cartoon enlargement project, which will be due on January 4, 2010. The next unit will focus on polygons and square roots.

In Level 2 classes, students are studying integers. This unit will conclude with a test on December 23rd, and students will also need to turn in their graphing projects on this date. The next unit will be on ratios and proportions.

Next week, all seventh graders will bring home a permission slip and information about the field trip to the Museum of Fine Arts. The trip will cost \$15.00 per student, which includes admission to the museum and bus transportation. Students will need to bring a bag lunch with them and there will be a scheduled time to eat in a student cafeteria area. Students will not be able to purchase any food, beverages, or snacks while at the museum, so they should not bring any additional money on the trip. In the past, this trip has been a wonderful supplement to our social studies curriculum, and this year we will be able to see a special exhibit of the Secrets of Tomb 10A.



Image: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Grade 6

The sixth grade Blue team is posting an electronic calendar to help the students with their long term planning. The calendar is accessible through the kid's First Class accounts (e-mail) and is found in the student news folder. ONLY long term projects and tests will be posted.

The Blue team had a great time at the museum of science on November 24th, and especially enjoyed the 3-D cinema about the microorganisms that live on the human body. A huge Congratulations to Ben B. and Erin P. who were named students of the month for October and November respectively at the blue team month meeting! We hope everyone has a great holiday!

The Red team is proud to congratulate Kelly M. for our October student of the month. Kelly is a hard worker with a positive attitude. She was specifically chosen because of her consistency in these areas and her positive encouragement of someone who was struggling to make a presentation in class. Kelly, we are glad to have you on our team.

We would like to wish everyone a safe, enjoyable, and relaxing holiday. We are looking forward to a wonderful start to 2010.



Notes from Gifted and Talented/ Differentiation

Gifted and Talented E-mail List

All parents and students are invited to sign-up to receive e-mails from Lisa Rainen regarding opportunities for student, both in and out of school. She will send out information on opportunities in the area, school events, and anything else that might be of interest. Please send an e-mail to lisa_rainen@bedford.k12.ma.us to get on the list!

Gifted and Talented Programming through Differentiation

Students with particular gifts and talents have many opportunities to learn and excel at JGMS. Many of these opportunities are provided in the regular classroom, through differentiation. Teachers provide students with challenging options in the context of the regular curriculum, based on student needs and interests. The Gifted and Talented and Differentiated Instruction Teacher, Lisa Rainen, provides support to teachers on differentiation.

Advanced Mathematics

Mathematics can be particularly challenging to differentiate. We acknowledge that some students need a qualitatively different mathematics curriculum on a daily basis. These needs change throughout the year, based largely on readiness. One way we work to meet these needs is to pre-test students in mathematics for every unit, and provide alternate curriculum to some students who show the need for more advanced work. The advanced math pull-out classes work on units that parallel the regular curriculum, taking it deeper and to a more challenging level. For the first unit of 6th grade, the students are remaining in the regular classroom to get used to the routines and organization of middle school. The first 7th grade unit focuses on the concepts of patterns and includes writing patterns algebraically, using integers in patterns, and solving equations that represent patterns. The 8th grade class extends the regular algebra text by expanding the set concepts in the text, hoping to understand why Set Theory can be thought to be the foundation of all mathematics.

MathCounts

The JGMS math competition program, MathCounts, meets after school on Mondays from 2:30 to 3:30 in room B218. Students participating in MathCounts will compete in many competitions, including the American Mathematics Competition for grade 8 and below (AMC 8), the Collaborative Problem Solving Competition, Math Olympiad, and MathCounts. Each of these competitions will engage students' mathematical talents in different ways, including individual speed competitions, extended problem solving, team competitions, and head-to-head problem solving. All students are invited to train and compete. Any student who cannot attend some meetings due to conflicts with sports or other activities should contact Lisa Rainen for information on how to stay competitive and join when they are able.

Dear Parents,

It is with great pleasure that we announce the planned opening of a new Assessment Portal in Aspen, our online student database. The portal, designed as a storage system for housing district-wide student assessment data over the course of a child's years in Bedford, will be open to parents on Tuesday, December 15. At that time, parents will be able to revisit student scores on several assessments used in our schools. Explanations of each assessment and a glossary of terms are provided through an attached link to the data page of the portal. Parents at JGMS can anticipate seeing DIBELS reading scores for Grade 6 only and MCAS scores for Grades 6-8.

The opening of this portal marks a milestone for the Data Task Force, a team of teachers and administrators who, for the past several years, have been working on making a longitudinal assessment database available to parents. And, while we are hopeful that this effort will prove useful to parents, we also want to caution that the assessments included in this first opening are only a small sampling of the many ways teachers in Bedford measure student performance.

To help parents, Mr. Ken Lord, our Network Administrator, will provide a brief description of the access procedures on our district website when starting December 15th. Additionally, we have reserved the evening of January 14th starting at 7:00 at Lane School as a time when parents can receive support in the technology and further explanations of the significance of the assessments currently included in the portal.

We look forward to hearing of your experiences as you explore this new tool, and we welcome your presence on January 14th. In the meantime, if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at cindy_crimmin@bedford.k12.ma.us.

Sincerely,

Dr. Cindy Crimmin
Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Please note that on the January calendar, students have been asked to write in the rotation days that were not previously printed in their agendas. The rotation days appear in parentheses next to the dates in the calendars in the newsletters. If students have not put these rotation days into their agendas, they should do so now. Thank you.

January 2010

John Glenn Middle School

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Vacation	2
3	4(1)	5(2)	6(3)	7(4)	8(5)	9
10	11(6)	12(1)	13(2)	14(3) 1/2 Day Teacher Workshop; Dance 6:30 -9PM	15 No School Teacher Workshop	16
17	18 No School Martin Lu- ther King Day	19(6)	20(1)	21(2) School Council 2:30-3:30	22(3)	23
24/31	25(4)	26(5)	27(6)	28(1)	29(2)	30