



*A Century of Excellence*

# The Gopher Communicator

August 9, 2014

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John Koch, Principal



*An International Baccalaureate  
World School*

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## **Welcome Back!**

The 2014-2015 school year is approaching quickly. One sure sign that the new school year is only a couple of weeks away and the back to school displays in the stores. Sales have started in earnest and I have already seen students and parents shopping for deals.

As a parent I tend to greet the back to school shopping season with excitement. This excitement does not come from the opportunity to spend money. Quite the contrary—those who know me well know that I really don't like to spend money. My excitement comes simply from knowing that the days of the children in my life will soon be filled with important learning that get them out of the house and back to work!

In the end I hope everyone has had a relaxing summer that was filled with quality time with your family. Rest assured that the GHS staff has been working hard to prepare for the new school year and we are excited for the start up and return of the students.

This edition of the Gopher Communicator is primarily focused on providing basic information. More detailed mailings will soon come through the mail. As always, if you have questions call or email and we will get back with you as soon as possible.

## **Registration**

Gresham High School completes all student registration via the mail. A letter detailing the process, critical dates, and other information related to schedules and updated personal information should arrive during the week of August 22<sup>nd</sup>. **Students that have just moved to our school from another district must come to the Main Office and pick up registration packet. Packets are available now.**

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**Once the forms in the packet are completed, an enrollment meeting with a counselor will be calendared.**

## **Athletics and Activities**

Letters with information about athletics and activities offered at GHS will also be mailed soon. These letters contain detailed information about participation in these programs as well as insurance, fees, and fall clearance. Eligibility clearance must be completed prior to athletes participating in any practice or game. All fall sports including cheer and dance begin on August 18<sup>th</sup>.

Detailed information, including contact information **and the new participation fee schedule**, can also be found under the Athletics & Activities tab on the left side of the GHS web page.

## **Parent Organizations**

If you are interested in playing a more active role in our school there are several organization you should know about.

**Community Advisory Committee (CAC):** The CAC is an open meeting hosted by the principal. It is held monthly and is organized so that ideas, happenings, and information can be shared in an open forum.

**School Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) Advisory:** This group is a consulting body of parents organized to help govern our SUN program. Parents interested in this group should contact Linda Kue.

**Latino Parent Night:** This group of heavily involved parents meets monthly to learn about school, offer input to improve our school program, and socialize.

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Gresham-Barlow School District recognizes the diversity and worth of all individuals and groups.

It is the policy of this district and the board of education that there will be no discrimination or harassment of individuals or groups in any educational programs, activities or employment.

Gresham-Barlow provides equal access to individuals with disabilities.

This event is hosted via the SUN program. Please contact them for further information.

**Gopher Spirit Club:** This group is our booster club. They are instrumental in fundraising for athletics and activities. These parents are hardworking and dedicated to our students and our school. Please visit their website if you wish to be a part of this group. Thank you so much to all of them for helping us to replace the stadium PA system. Their support and advocacy have been instrumental toward getting this work underway.

### **ParentVue**

ParentVue offers parents and guardians the ability to check their student's attendance, assignments, grades and demographic information on line. It is a very convenient method for keeping track of your student's academic performance. Those who accessed this service last year should still have an active account. Incoming 8<sup>th</sup> graders that attended school in our district last year should also still have the same account.

If you have not used this service in the past we encourage you to set up an account. To get an account just call the Main Office, tell them you wish to create an account, and they will assist you. If you have an account already, but forgot the password, simply log in to ParentVue and click the *forgot password* link and the program will help you set a new one.

The Parent Vue link can be found under the *Parent Resources* button on the main page of GHS website. The *Parent Resources* button is just under the rotating pictures toward the top of the page. Once you find the link you should also notice a downloadable ParentVue user guide in PDF format.

Although real-time access to grades is a great resource for parents, teachers are expected to update grades every three weeks. The first official progress report is sent home after the six and twelve week mark each semester. Progress reports are not permanently recorded but they are the school's official way to communicate student academic

progress with parents and guardians. Final grades that are entered on student transcripts come at the end of each semester.

### **Schedules**

Students will receive their class schedule in late August. Parents and students should keep in mind that each year several hundred new students enroll at GHS. This influx can cause us to rebalance classes due to over enrollment. This rebalancing can cause us to change a student's class schedule even up to three weeks into the year. This process is always an unpleasant necessity and, if it happens to you, we appreciate your patience.

**Schedule Holes:** Students that have "holes" (no class scheduled in a specific period) should go to the Counseling Office during that period. During that time counselors will work to find a class at that time.

**Change of Course Requests:** Class change requests must be made in writing to the Counseling Office. During the first week of school students should complete the form. Counselors will call students to the office as time allows. Students and parents should be aware that priority is given to students with schedule "holes" or new enrollments to GHS. Schedule changes requests will be made as time becomes available. Again, we appreciate your patience during these very busy times.

**Add/Drop Deadline:** The add/drop deadline is the third Friday in September. Any class dropped after this deadline will be entered as a "F" on the official transcript. Classes are added on a space available basis and no class will be added once the three week deadline has passed.

### **Appropriate Dress at School**

At GHS we teach students that when they come to school they are at work and that proper work attire for this professional environment is different than when they are with their friends or families on their own time. We will address concerning attire here at school but reminders to parents and guardians are also helpful.

Below are some of the standards we have:

1. No clothing or accessories that promote alcohol, tobacco, illicit drug use or which display weapons or violence.
2. No clothing or accessories that contain vulgar, lewd, indecent, derogatory, or suggestive diagrams, pictures, slogans or words that may be interpreted as racially, religiously, ethnically, or sexually offensive.
3. Sunglasses or permanently tinted glasses.
4. Clothing that directly interferes with the education process by distracting students or staff from constructive classroom activities. Immodest attire that allows excessive exposure of the chest, midriff, back, thighs, cleavage, and/or buttocks may be considered disruptive.
5. Pajamas and loungewear.

More detailed information can be found in the student handbook. All students will receive a copy at the beginning of the year. Any support parents and guardians can provide is appreciated.

### **Parent Communication and Student Electronics**

With teacher permission appropriate use of personal electronic devices is encouraged. Real time access to information that enhances learning in class is a great resource for students today. However, personal communication such as social media, texting friends and family, or otherwise using the device for non-academic pursuits are prohibited and can result in confiscation of the device. Repeated violations could result in additional consequence up to and including suspension.

Parents and guardians are sometimes our biggest challenge. Many students are frequently texted by their parents during class. These texts cause a distraction that often ends up as a class distraction. We need your assistance to help minimize the interruptions to classrooms. If your student must check out of school to go to an appointment, attend to a family matter, or you need to share information it is not appropriate to text the student in class and ask that the student to leave. Not only does texting interrupt instruction excusing students from class in this manner forces our staff into a difficult position of

verifying the information which also interrupts instruction. Many times students simply leave school without checking out at the Main Office which also impacts our ability to account for students.

Instead of texting there are other methods parents can employ.

1. Call well ahead of time and ask that a pass be sent to the student's class.
2. Call in the morning before school so that a pass for the time a student needs to can be given to the student in the morning.

No matter what, parents must come into the office to sign students out. That way we can verify that the student is leaving with a person who has permission to check your child out of school.

### **Emergency Alerts and Communication**

Last year the Gresham Barlow School District experienced several weather related school changes. At GHS we also experienced a power outage that caused an early release from school. Each year there are circumstances that require us to notify parents quickly about changes and adjustments to the school day. During these instances we try very hard to notify parents about the changes but it is impossible to notify individuals quickly. Therefore we also subscribe to several different electronic notification resources.

One method is Synervoice. Synervoice enables us to make mass phone calls to all parents or select groups of parents. This system is effective and rapid, but it requires parents to continuously keep us aware of address and phone number changes.

Another method used for quick notification is the Flash Alert system. This system enables parents and guardians to have alerts sent to their phones or other personal electronic devices. Our school district subscribes to this state run notification system. To access this service go to the GHS website. There you will find a *School Closure* button on the left hand side of the page. Go to that site and you will find a

great deal of information about school closures and a link to the Flash Alert system. Once this link is clicked, you can create a new account by entering your email address and following the directions.