



# The Gopher Communicator

January 10, 2013

1200 North Main Avenue

Gresham, Oregon 97030-3899

Phone 503-674-5500 ❖ Fax 503-674-5549

<http://ghs.gresham.k12.or.us>

John Koch, Principal



An International Baccalaureate  
World School

*A Century of Excellence*

## **Bad Weather Make Up Days Identified:**

If stormy weather closes school this year, the school district has set aside five days in June that could be used to make up those days. The days are June 16 through June 20. Because of this, the district is asking that families and staff plan for the potential of using these days as school days. If school is canceled this winter, watch for an announcement in April regarding whether make up days will be used in June and how many.

## **Parents: You can reduce the cost of student fees!When**

When is a fundraiser not a fundraiser? When it doesn't involve selling anything, and still makes money for your student to use. In a nutshell, Scrip is purchasing face value gift cards, for items and shopping that you already do. Then in partnership with the Gresham-Barlow Education Foundation, merchants return a portion of the sale back to the schools to use. For middle and high school students that reserve can be used for any fees at school.

If you've never purchased scrip gift cards before, you should give it a try. It is the simplest way to raise money for activities at school; see the FAQ sheet for information about how scrip can benefit your student, your classroom, and your school. Information is on the GHS web page under "Parent Resource" and the CCMS page under "Scrip." After checking out the FAQ, contact Kris Howatt me for any questions about the program at [Kris.Howatt@gmail.com](mailto:Kris.Howatt@gmail.com) or 503-669-9255. This is her tenth year as scrip coordinator, currently supporting Gresham High School, Clear Creek Middle School, and Highland Elementary.

ALL FORMS AND INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND AT THE SCHOOL WEBSITE UNDER PARENT RESOURCES: <http://ghs-scrip.ghs.gresham.k12.or.us/>

**NEXT ORDER DATES:** January 13 & 27, February 10 & 24

## **SUN School Information for Adults**

Looking for exciting ways to keep warm and learn new skills? Check out the SUN Program's Winter Adult Education classes! This winter we are now offering Zumba on Mondays from 6-7:30pm starting January 27<sup>th</sup>. We are bringing back our cooking and baking class "Sweet and

Savory Treats" on Thursdays from 6-7:30pm starting January 30<sup>th</sup>. Both classes are open to all community members over the age of 12 (youth ages 12-17 must be accompanied by a legal guardian). We are also continuing to offer ESL on both Mondays and Thursdays from 6-7:30pm restarting from the winter break on January 7<sup>th</sup>.

## **School Attendance: More Essential Than Ever Before**

Student attendance is one of the least considered but one of the most impactful aspects of classroom performance. Obviously, when students are not in school they cannot learn, but there is much more to this problem than just individual student performance. Other than access to learning on a personal level here is a list of additional reasons for regular attendance.

1. With the advent of the Common Core National Standards, all students are required to learn more at a higher level than ever before. Therefore, missing class is much more detrimental than it ever has been.
2. Teachers cannot duplicate the instruction given during an absence. They can review, but the class discussions that make the lesson that much more understood can never be redone.
3. Teachers have to spend extra time discussing missed work with absent students. Therefore, there is less time available to plan instruction for the class. Given class sizes this additional time simply is not available like it used to be.
4. Students build and reinforce effective work habits when they are in school. Those who take the day off because they are tired or simply need a break reinforce the impression that these reasons are acceptable in the adult world or work. They are not and have an impact on the students around them.
5. Missing work tends to build and compound when absences occur. Many students miss school to avoid work. Missing school to avoid work makes the problem more intense and can delay the development of the ever-important skill of perseverance.

Please help us help your student receive seamless, consistent instruction by monitoring their attendance closely! In today's schools even missing 1 period or day out of ten is too much. Thanks for your help.

## **Cell Phone Interruptions**

Students in particular tend to be attached to their phones. This reality is unlike any other time in human history. On top of this reality, instant return communication of text messages and phone calls is becoming more and more the norm. The pressure to respond to messages from friends, family and co-workers is quite strong. However, classroom interruptions resulting from our modern methods of communication continue to distract from teaching and learning.

Hundreds of times per day students receive messages and are tempted by the overwhelming feeling to read and respond. This response happens by sneaking the phone out in class or by students asking to be excused to go to the restroom. Either way there is a distraction to the individual students, students in close proximity, or the entire class. Most importantly, when addressing a student leaving class or using a cell phone teacher instruction and train of thought is interrupted. In classes of 35 or more the challenge to minimize distractions and maintain focus on teaching and learning is extremely challenging. Add in the potential interruptions related to electronics and the task becomes even more burdensome.

Please help us maintain our focus by not texting your student while classes are in session. If there is an emergency please call the Main Office. If information needs to be relayed please time your messages for lunch or after school. Anything you can do to help reduce distractions is appreciated.

### **Make a difference**

#### **Help a child grow their reading skills**

Do you or someone you know want to become more involved with your neighborhood school? The Gresham-Barlow School District's Oasis Volunteer Program is looking for parents, grandparents, neighbors and friends of our schools to work with young children who are struggling to learn to read.

As an Oasis volunteer you will spend one hour a week, during the school day, working one-on-one with a child in grades 1-5 to build reading and language skills, self-esteem, and positive attitudes toward learning. Oasis provides training, materials, and on-going support from our staff at no cost to you.

The training will take place in two three-hour sessions, for a total of six hours. The winter training dates are Wednesday, January 22 from 9 am-12 pm and Friday, January 24 from 9 am-12 pm. Tutors are encouraged to attend a monthly support meeting to share experiences with other tutors, receive additional training and materials.

No teaching experience is required. The role of an Oasis Tutor is that of a friend, offering experience, patience, encouragement, caring, and time.

If you, or someone you know would be interested in learning more about becoming an Oasis Tutor, please call Marilyn Shephard [503-665-3544](tel:503-665-3544) or email [msshephard@frontier.com](mailto:msshephard@frontier.com).

### **Final Exams Are Approaching**

Final exams for the first semester are scheduled for the week of January 27, 2014. Students will take exams for period 1 & 2 on Monday of that week. Periods three and four will be administered on Tuesday. Wednesday is a late arrival day so only one exam will be given—period 5. Thursday will see the last two periods administered. Students will finish their exams each day prior to lunch. Buses will transport students home at that time. Please call or email us if you have questions.

### **Incident Weather/Emergency School Closure Info.**

The incident weather season is upon us. Please be prepared by familiarizing yourself with applicable information such as where to locate real-time information about closures, delays, and snow routes. To learn more use the link below to go the Gresham-Barlow School District home page. On the left side of the page is a second link entitled "school closures". Click that link and you will find the needed information.

<http://www.gresham.k12.or.us/>

On the Gresham High School website there is also a link on the left side of the page entitled "school closures". In addition to the District link this link also lists radio and TV stations that broadcast emergency closure information as well. Each of these stations maintains pages on their websites that provide real-time updates about closures as well. Also on the "closures" page is a link to the Flash Alert system. Although this system sometimes provides delayed notification, registration in this system will enable you to have real-time automated emergency alerts related to school sent via text message to your phone. The link is [www.flashalert.net](http://www.flashalert.net).

### **Things to Keep in Mind During School Closures**

\* If a delayed opening to school is called on a Wednesday the high schools will start at 9:35 am, middle schools at 11:05 am, and elementary schools at 10:35 am.

\*If snow routes are called in the morning buses will remain on snow routes in the afternoon.

### **EARLY CLOSURE OF SCHOOL**

Decisions to close school early require very quick action on the part of the school. Bringing buses back, communication with parents and other partner schools usually have to be completed in a very compressed amount of time—typically thirty minutes to an hour. Given this short window of time it is impossible to communicate with parents directly so it is critical that each person set themselves up with email and text message alerts. This is the quickest and most efficient way for parents to remain in the know.