

Principal's Newsletter

Principal John R. Koch

Holiday Greetings

Before I get to the business of this newsletter I want to take a moment to wish everyone a happy holiday season. As the new-year approaches my hope for each of you is that you have time to relax and reflect. Given our increasingly demanding world, budgeting time for these activities is becoming increasingly more difficult but it is still absolutely necessary and I hope everyone has a chance to take some time for themselves over the next couple of weeks.

With the recent mailing of progress reports the staff and students have officially entered the final stretch of the first semester. This period tends to be a very busy time at GHS, particularly the weeks leading up to Winter Break. The student leadership groups have been organizing the annual toy drive and other school activities while the winter sports season is shifting into gear as well. I know that all of the leadership groups and teams have been working very hard for the last couple of weeks and are excited to start the next phase of the school year. As parents and guardians I hope that all of you are able to attend one of the many events and activities we have scheduled over the next several weeks. You will not regret it and the students love to see the adults here supporting them.

For many students this last stretch is a "make or break" time because of the low grades earned during the first 12 weeks. Most students in this position are still able to pass because their grades are high enough to do so. However, their attendance and effort are critical to making this goal happen. If you have a child in this position do not hesitate to check their grades and attendance through eSIS. If you do not have a password or access to the online account please call the main office and we will be happy to assist you. No matter what, checking in with them to see how they are doing and what they are working on at school is critical. If they know you are staying on top of it with them and supporting their effort these students are more likely to get the work done.

Thank you to everyone for the support and encouragement that you give to our students and overall support you give to the Gopher community. We cannot not do the work we do without it. Happy holidays to everyone.

Warmest Regards,

John Koch

Individual Highlights:

Attendance	2
Graduation	3
Fighting	3
Transfers	4
Forecasting	4
Weather	5

Attendance Initiative

It is no secret that good attendance is one of the most fundamental keys to student success. So far this year our attendance rate as a school is strong. However, there are still many students that do not attend regularly and this low rate of attendance impacts their performance in school. What is even more challenging is that, as a staff, we cannot provide the needed instruction or assistance to a student unless he or she is present. In other words, we are in a Catch 22.

Another aspect of attendance to keep in mind is how students are defined as on track to graduate. The definition is two fold—students that are on track have earned the required number of credits given their year in school and maintain a 90% or higher attendance rate.

Recently, along with every other high school in East County, we began sending attendance letters to parents and guardians of students with low attendance rates. In these letters Oregon's mandatory attendance law is explained and notice is given regarding a potential police issued citation that could result in a fine of \$160. Our sincerest wish is that the letters generate productive conversations with students and parents that engage students more actively in school. If you are a parent or guardian of a student that is struggling with attendance please contact us and we will do everything we can to help.

Below are some basic statistics about our attendance as a school. Keep in mind that students attending at a 90% rate are still far below their peers here at GHS. This data was assembled on November 28, 2012.



Recently, along with every other high school in East County, we began sending attendance letters to parents and guardians of students with low

	Ave. Days Missed	Number of Students Below 90%	Total Enrolled	Attendance Rate
9th Grade	2.5	72	480	95%
10th Grade	3.6	96	430	93%
11th Grade	3.4	87	432	93%
12th Grade	3.9	98	419	93%
All Students	3.3	373	1761	94%

- At the 9th grade 85% of the students enrolled are meeting the 90% attendance rate to be considered on track to graduate.
- At the 10th grade 77% of the students enrolled are meeting the 90% attendance rate to be considered on track to graduate.
- At the 11th grade 79% of the students enrolled are meeting the 90% attendance rate to be considered on track to graduate.
- At the 12th grade 76% of the students enrolled are meeting the 90% attendance rate to be considered on track to graduate.
- As a school 79% of the students enrolled are meeting the 90% attendance rate to be considered on track to graduate.

Seniors Missing Graduation Requirements

Meeting all graduation requirements is no easy task. Not only are students required to complete and pass the required coursework there are also a multitude of other requirements that must be met outside of class.

Career Related Learning Experience (CRLE), portfolio pieces, minimum test score achievement are just a few of those many requirements. As of the beginning of December there are literally hundreds of seniors missing at least one requirement that will keep him or her from graduating—not counting course credits needed.

To provide notice to students the GHS staff has done several things. Letters will be mailed to all parents of seniors who are missing

one or more graduation requirements. Also on December 14, 2012 the administrative team at GHS held a senior class assembly to emphasize the importance of timely completion of graduation requirements. Lastly, earlier this fall, the counselors held small group senior meetings to outline what students need to complete to graduate.

In the end senior teachers are still providing opportunities to students to complete portfolio work and other requirements and we are confident that each senior has been given proper notice about what needs to be accomplished. Now it is up to them to get the work completed.

In the past many students

have risked their ability to graduate by waiting until the last minute to complete and turn in a requirement.

Risking your chance to graduate on time is not a one that students should take. Given that there are literally thousands of requirements amongst hundreds of students that we must track each year, last minute completion gives the GHS staff very little time to find possible mistakes or missing work.

Parents and guardians you can help us by making sure that students turn in their required work in a timely manner so that the staff has the opportunity to make sure all the "Is" are dotted and "Ts" crossed before crunch time in April and May. If you have further questions, please contact Barb Cooke.



Fight Promotion

Anyone who completes a quick search on the Internet can find thousands of posts of people fighting. You could even find video from shoppers behaving poorly on Black Friday. What is even more disturbing is that if you view these videos closely it is easy to hear or see people promoting the altercation as entertainment. Over the past several couple of years GHS has experienced several instances of fight promotion between students coupled with filming of the event. Let me be clear, not only is any kind of violence at school forbidden the promotion of that violence

is also treated in a similar manner.

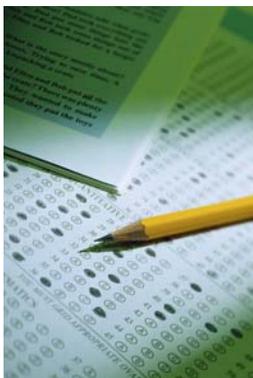
Recently there was an incident of violence in a classroom that caused the staff a great deal of concern. During that incident several students actively filmed and/or encouraged the violence without taking steps to stop it or even get assistance from a staff member. At school we have taken very concrete steps to prevent this behavior from happening again that include a classroom lesson in all English classes using an article that addresses this type of behavior. We have also given the student body notice that

promotion of violence will earn participants a suspension from school. Promotion includes challenging another student to a fight, video taping a fight, going to a location to watch a fight, not reporting a fight to GHS staff, urging other to start or continue fighting, and sharing a video of a fight (in person, on the Internet, or through social media) with other students. All students should also be aware that any fights could result in our school resource office issuing a citation for disorderly conduct or, in some cases, assault charges could be filed with the district attorney.

Parents and guardians, thank you in advance for your assistance in making this absolutely deplorable behavior stop.

Senior State Test Score Makeup Opportunitites

Seniors who did not score a meets or exceeds on the Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills in either reading or writing during their junior year will need to demonstrate the essential skill of reading and/or writing by completing work samples in senior Social Studies and English classes. Teachers will provide opportunities to complete these work samples during January, February and March. It is critical that students take these opportunities seriously because a student who does not demonstrate both reading and writing essential skills will not graduate in June.



Parent Requests for In-District Transfers

The Gresham-Barlow School District will accept requests for in-district transfers to an elementary, middle, or high school other than the one located in the attendance area where the student resides, beginning February 1, 2013. Transfer request forms are available from the main office at any elementary, middle or high school, at the district office, or on the district website: <http://gresham.k12.or.us>, see Parent Resources. This is a fillable form you will need to print and submit.

All requests for such transfers must reach the district office at 1331 NW Eastman Parkway (between Division and Burnside) in Gresham, by **5:00 PM on Thursday, February 28, 2013**. Completed forms may be dropped off at any GBSD school, but allow time for it to reach the District office by the deadline.

For further information, contact the Gresham-Barlow School District Office at 503-618-2450.

Forecasting for 2013-14 School Year

Forecasting for classes for the 2013-2014 school year will begin February 24, 2013, and will conclude the week of March 17. During these weeks, parents should expect sign a forecasting sheet listing the student's requested classes for next year. Please take time to review this forecasting sheet well. Students will not be able to change classes in the fall, so it is very important that they make appropriate choices in the spring. We will provide more information about forecasting in future newsletters



Bad Weather Make Up Days established

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 17 through June 21. 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.

Emergency School Closure Information

In the event of a school closure, the district will share the information with families and the community through a variety of methods:

- The district will contact TV and radio stations and newspapers (websites) and ask them to share the information with their audiences
- FlashAlert subscribers (see below) can receive the news via email or text message
- Emergency closure information is also posted on district and school websites

How to receive emergency school closures information via email or text message (Flash Alert)

Would you like to receive the school district's announcements of emergency school closures (due to bad weather) by email or text message (through your cell phone), at the same time the media receives the announcement?

You can! Sign up for emergency email or text messages from the school district to be sent directly to your email or via text message today, before the weather turns!

How to sign up for Flash Alert:

Through an online website called FlashAlert, you can self-register and manage up to five home or office email and/or cell phone text message addresses and receive emergency information just minutes after we post it, at no cost to you.

To register, go to <http://www.flashalert.net/regions.html> and in the left frame, select the "Portland/Vanc/Salem" region. On the next screen, select **Multnomah County Schools**, then **Gresham-Barlow School District**. The program will ask you to enter your email address. Next, click on "**Subscribe.**" The system will take you through the steps to get signed up and receive email and/or cell text message alerts.

School start times if bad weather delays the start of school on a Wednesday

With schools across the district starting one hour late on Wednesdays, you may wonder what will happen if the opening of school needs to be delayed because of bad weather. If a late opening is needed on a Wednesday, the kindergarten session for that day will be held. School will start for grades K-12 at the times below.

Late Opening Times for Schools On Wednesdays in the event of bad weather

Elementary Schools	10:35 am
Middle Schools	11:05 am
High Schools	9:45 am



1200 N Main Ave
Gresham, OR
97030

PHONE:
(503) 674-5500

FAX:
(503) 674-5549

We're on the Web!

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