

# Principal's Newsletter

Principal John R. Koch

Being a parent is truly difficult work. The time and effort you spend tracking, hounding, congratulating, and nagging your children to always keep trying and improving is time well spent, but it is also hard and sometimes thankless work. As a parent I understand this challenge quite intimately. However, for both adults and students, with the beginning of each new year comes the inevitable commitment to improvement. This commitment is commonly called a new years resolution.

One of the many challenges a parent raising a teenager faces is teaching children how to set and obtain goals like new years resolutions. It is well researched that those children who plan out and obtain their goals have healthier self-esteem and tend to be more resilient when faced with life's challenges. Here are a few things to keep in mind when helping students set and achieve their goals.

1. Establish goals that are realistic and stand a good chance of success. Success in school tends to breed more success therefore it is very important that students experience early victories.
  - a. Example: After ten days of school I will turn in 90% of my assignments. (Realistic, measurable and attainable)
  - b. Non-Example: This semester I will turn in all of my homework. (Although noble, the person who sets this goal will fail if one assignment is missed. Also, waiting an entire semester to be able to assess a goal is a long way off. Short term-goals are better.)

Break goals into smaller tasks or steps so that students can feel like they are accomplishing their objectives. Recognize and celebrate even the small successes. This step is particularly important for students who are trying to improve persistent underperformance in specific areas. Help students prepare for setbacks. Persistence is the key to achieving a goal. Many young people, after experiencing a setback, have a habit of giving up. One of the best skills a student can learn from setting goals is how to remain focused in the face of challenges. In the end, the most important aspect of setting and achieving goals is persistence. Life is all about achieving goals and setting new ones. Those who learn this skill tend to be the most successful.

Speaking of goals and success, the first 18 weeks of school have flown by and the end of the first semester is upon us. Trust me when I tell you that teachers and students have been working very hard to prepare for exams and I am confident that the vast majority of our students will do well because of the work they have put in throughout the first semester. Parents, keep in mind that rest is one of the primary keys to a high school student's success and this is particularly true during exam week. In fact, rest is as important to a high school student's ability to think and brain development as an elementary student. During exam week rest is critical.

The winter sports season is also in full swing. Along with the planning and studying for final exams our winter athletes are working very hard to bring their best to our opponents. If you want some fun, inexpensive evening entertainment check the website for our home schedules and come to a game. The students will appreciate the support and I know you will enjoy the time.

In closing, I hope everyone has a great month as we look forward to a successful second semester.

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## Attendance Initiative

It is well known that good attendance at school is correlated with classroom success. Recently the State of Oregon determined that one of the criteria indicating that a student is on track to graduate is attendance rate. Students that attend school 90% or more of the time are considered to have met one of the indicators that show he or she is on track to graduate. Those that are not attending at a 90% rate are considered chronic non-attenders.

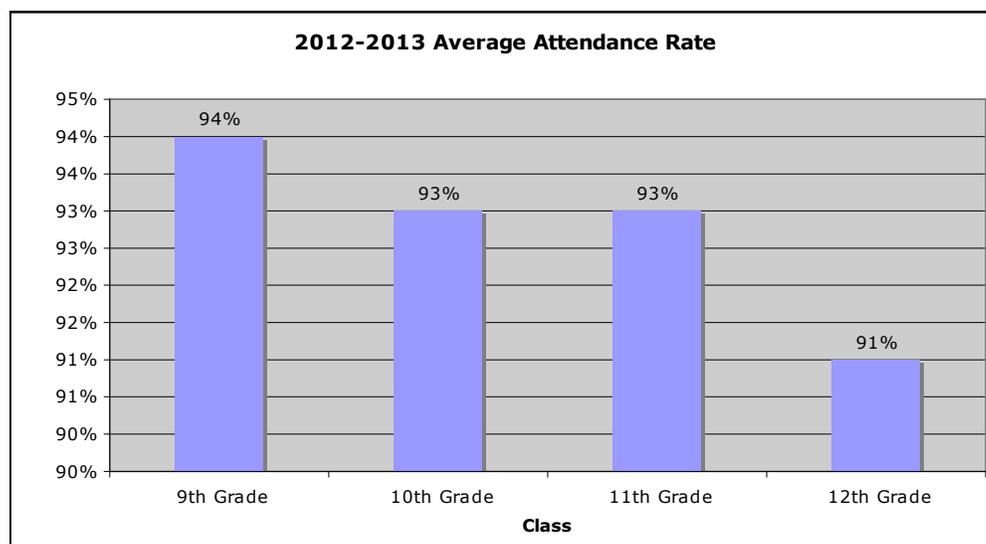
To help increase attendance, recently all of the high schools in East County began sending warning letters to parents of students who are not attending school on a regular basis as defined in **ORS 339.990**. The definition of poor attendance in this statute is four full days absent or eight half days in a thirty-day period. The parents of students who do not heed the warning in the letters will be issued a citation and be required to appear in court. The base fine for this C Violation to Oregon law is \$160.00. The parents of students who receive these citations will be required to appear before a judge in court. In January several families will have received citations.

As of January 7, 2013, there were 1,743 students enrolled at GHS. Of those enrolled on that date 352 were attending at rates below 90%. Many of these students have legitimate excuses for their low attendance. The majority do not. Of these students defined as chronic non-attenders there are approximately 110 students that have received at least one warning letter about exceeding the number of days absent allowable by law within a thirty-day period. Many of these 110 students are in jeopardy of receiving the citation which will result in a court appearance.

Please keep in mind that our objective is not to issue citations, hence the reason for sending two warning letters. Rather, we want students and families with attendance challenges to come and talk to us so we can help. Ultimately students who attend school tend to achieve at higher rates. In the end, that is all we want for any of our students.



*Those that are not attending at a 90% rate are considered chronic non-attenders*



## Gresham Robotics Kicks off the 2013 Season

The GHS FIRST Robotics Team, the Go4Bots, officially started the 2013 season on January 5th with a trip to Evergreen HS to attend the kickoff for the 2013 FIRST Robotics Competition. The kickoff event is the national rollout of the game rules and robot specifications from which students from around the world begin a 6-week build season to design and build a robots to compete in regional events. This year, students are designing and building a robot that will be part of a 3-robot team; scoring points by loading and shooting frisbees at a variety of targets and ending the match by climbing as high as possible on a 10-foot tower. Students program the robot to be run both automatically and via wireless control with joysticks. The game pits teams to work with each other, as well as in competition in a format similar to a 3 on 3 basketball tournament.

A goal of the FIRST Robotics program is to “to inspire young people to be science and technology leaders.” The 20 members of the Go4Bots are bringing this to reality by engaging with mentors from the community, including employees of Boeing, Microchip, and ON Semiconductor. Students are learning and putting into practice skills in design, fabrication, computer programming, teamwork and leadership. This program provides an excellent experience and scholarship opportunities for those students interested in pursuing science and technology careers. The Go4Bots are supported through generous grants from Boeing, Microchip, and the Oregon Department of Education.

The Go4Bots will be competing with ~100 other teams at the Autodesk Oregon Regional at the Memorial Coliseum on March 7-9. Please check it out.

For more information about the Go4Bots, please contact Stephen Scannell, [scannell@gresham.k12.or.us](mailto:scannell@gresham.k12.or.us)

For more information about FIRST Robotics and the GHS Go4Bots go to: <http://go4bots.gopherweb.org/>

## Session II Credit Recovery Classes

The second session credit recovery (CR) classes offered in the GHS SUN program start February 4, 2013 and end on April 4, 2013. A CR class is a standards-based, condensed version of a regular education course. CR classes offer students an opportunity to re-take core classes that they did not pass and recover their credits. Students are encouraged to meet with their Counselor to help identify what course they need to recover before enrolling in a SUN CR class. Students can only sign up for one class each session. Students can miss no more than three sessions before being dropped from the class. There is no refund for a student dropped due to attendance.

Registration: Begins January 22, 2013

Cost: \$50 per student (\$25 for students enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program)

Times: Classes run Monday through Thursday, from 3:30pm – 4:30pm. Students must check-in to their SUN CR class no later than 3:30pm each day.

Transportation: The SUN activity bus leaves campus at 4:55 PM Monday-Thursday. Students riding the bus must live within the GHS attendance boundary.

Classes Offered This Session:

English 9-10 A, English 11-12 A, Algebra 1 A, Algebra 1.5 A, Geometry A, Economics, Integrated Science/Biology A

## School Bond Measure Planning Community Forums

The Gresham-Barlow School Board is considering placing a school bond proposal before the voters. The district's schools are well-maintained, but beginning to show their age.

Updates are needed to:

- Maintain the community's investment
- Provide up-to-date learning spaces that help raise student achievement

A series of community forums will provide information about school bond projects under consideration.

Attendees will also have an opportunity to share their thoughts and opinions.

Spanish and Russian interpreters and childcare (ages 4-12) are available at certain meetings.

To see a list of meeting dates, register, or learn more, visit [www.gresham.k12.or.us](http://www.gresham.k12.or.us) or call 503-618-2646.

## 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

## ACE Academy (Architecture, Construction & Engineering)

ACE Academy is a shared time program with Gresham High School which teaches math, science and English within the disciplines of architecture, construction, and engineering for juniors and seniors. ACE is now accepting applications for the junior class for the 2013-14 school year. Applications are available in the Counseling Office. Visit the ACE website at [www.acecharterschool.org](http://www.acecharterschool.org) for more information.

To see a list of meeting dates, register, or learn more, visit [www.gresham.k12.or.us](http://www.gresham.k12.or.us) or call 503-618-2646.

## 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.

## Senior Meetings

In December the administration met with the senior class to emphasize the need to fulfill graduation requirements as early as possible. Counselors have also met with seniors in small groups to discuss graduation requirements needed. We also mailed individual letters to the parents of students missing a requirement. In those letters the specific requirement(s) missing for each student was listed. Parents, please encourage your students to get their requirements in as soon as possible. It is critical that we be able to check off needed boxes so that all who are eligible can participate in the graduation

## School & District State Report Cards

The Oregon Department of Education produces yearly report cards for schools and districts in this state. These report cards provide parents an opportunity to see how their local schools and districts are performing. These report cards are available on the Gresham-Barlow School District Website at [www.gresham.k12.or.us](http://www.gresham.k12.or.us). If you do not have access to the internet, please stop by your school office to pick up a copy. The report cards are available in English and Spanish.

## 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>