



# Griswold Public Schools

## Monthly Newsletter

January 2017

The community of the Griswold Public Schools educates for excellence by empowering students to become compassionate, confident, creative, and resourceful members of society.

### From the Office of the Superintendent...

Dear Family & Friends,

Happy 2017! I hope that you all had a great holiday season and are eager to begin anew.

Please be sure to check out the many activities we host at our schools, from our high school winter sports events to evening performance events to meetings of interest. You can always get the latest, up-to-date information on our GPS home page.

During this winter season, it is important for students and parents to emphasize cold-weather dress during the first few months of the year. Winter coats, layers, and hats and gloves are necessary. If you need assistance with cold-weather clothes, be sure to contact our schools.

I wish you all good health and much happiness in 2017.

Sincerely,

Sean P. McKenna  
Superintendent



**Griswold Public Schools would not be successful without the continued support of all parents and community members.**

We are appreciative of you and invite your continued participation with all we do. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to communicate with your child's school or with the Superintendent's office directly.

The Superintendent can be reached by calling 860-376-7600 or email: [smckenna@griswoldpublicschools.org](mailto:smckenna@griswoldpublicschools.org)



**Research has shown that parental involvement is the most important factor in a student's success in school.**

### Important District Dates to Know...

January 3rd—Classes resume

January 9th —BOE meeting, 6pm, GMS media center

January 11th—Equity Learning Training, 6pm, GES

January 13th —Early dismissal—Professional Development ½ day for students

January 16th—Martin Luther King, Jr. day—no school

January 17th—BOE meeting, 6pm, GMS media center

January 19th—Coffee & Chat with the superintendent, 9-10 am, Central Office

January 23rd—BOE meeting, 6pm, GMS media

January 28th—Christina McAuliffe Recognition Day



### DISTRICT MISSION

The community of Griswold Public Schools educates for excellence by empowering students to become compassionate, confident, creative, and resourceful members of society

### DISTRICT VISION

The community of Griswold Public Schools excels at education for excellence for all students to be college and/or career ready.



## GES JANUARY NEWS

Dear Families,

We hope you all had a wonderful Holiday Season and Winter Break!

With winter, comes the colder temperatures and snow. A few thoughts come to mind as we approach this season. All children should come to school appropriately dressed for the weather. Recess is normally held outdoors except when it is raining or when the temperature and wind chill drop significantly. For outdoor recess we have access to the hardtop area, the wood chip area, and the grass area inside the playground. The woodchip and grass areas may be covered with snow. Only children with appropriate outerwear – coats, hats, gloves, and boots may play in the snow.

As we have recently experienced, we may have delayed openings, early dismissals, and a school cancellation. It can be quite challenging to make alternative arrangements for your child during these days. We ask that a plan be developed for your child in case there is a delayed opening, early dismissal, or school cancellation. Discuss the plan with your child and if it differs from the regular daily plan, please forward it to your child's teacher and notify the GES office.

All delays/early dismissals/cancellations will be posted on the GPS website, radio, and television. In addition, you will be notified through our automated phone system.

The contents of the GES Wednesday Folder will be emailed to you every Wednesday, and the information can always be found on the GPS website, [www.griswold.k12.ct.us](http://www.griswold.k12.ct.us), go to "Griswold Elementary School" then "Wednesday Folders". We have a 1:10 Dismissal on January 13th and No School on January 16th (Martin Luther King Day).

Wolverine Pride, "At Griswold Elementary School we believe that all children will be thoughtful members of the school community."

## GMS JANUARY News

Happy New Year! We hope that you and yours enjoyed a wonderful holiday season and a terrific winter break. It was great to welcome our students back to school on Tuesday. As we approach the second half of our school year, we ask parents to do their best to limit absences or interruptions in the school day. Attending school regularly and being on time are cornerstones for success for all students!

Congratulations to our Grades 7 & 8 BOC students on their outstanding performances in December. Special thanks to the parents, families and friends who attended the concerts and allowed our students to perform for enthusiastic and courteous audiences.

### **Here are a few important dates for this month:**

- Jan. 11- Grade 6 Concert, 7 pm, GMS auditorium
- Jan. 12- PTO Meeting, 3:45 pm, GMS office
- Jan. 13- Early Dismissal, PD Day
- Jan. 16- No School, MLK Day
- Jan. 20- Gr. 7 & 8 Dance, sponsored by the GMS PTO

*Intelligence plus character--that is the goal of true education.* Martin Luther King, Jr.



## GHS JANUARY NEWS

Welcome Back and Happy 2017! It is hard to believe it is January already. We hope you enjoyed a fantastic holiday.

This month is significant in that it brings the closing of the first half of the school year. GHS teachers and your children are gearing up for **Mid-Year Exams** scheduled for January 18, 19, 20, and 23rd. These are **shortened days**, with students dismissed at noon. Teachers and staff will continue to communicate to students the academic focus and importance of these assessments, as they will evaluate mastery of skills and content across courses in the first half of the school year. Detailed information regarding exam schedule and expectations was mailed home (via email) and is available on our website. Feel free to contact us at 860-376-7640 with any questions.

Following exams, January 24th brings the end of the quarter and close of grades. It is important your children are checking Plus Portals to monitor success in their classes. They are always encouraged to communicate to teachers if/when questions arise.

Important dates this month:

- Friday, 01/13: Shortened day for students, Professional Development for staff
- Monday, 01/16: MLK Day, No School
- Thursday, 01/19: MADD Presentation in LMC at 6 pm brought to you in conjunction with Griswold PRIDE--parents and students encouraged and welcome to attend!
- Tuesday, 01/24: End of Quarter 2; RISE Pep Rally (for students and staff only)
- Wednesday, 01/25: Start of Quarter 3

Wishing you all a wonderful start to the new year!



### *Special Education Notes...*

In December 2016 the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) issued "The Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504 in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools". This document provides a broad overview of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). The guidance describes school district's' nondiscrimination responsibilities, including obligations to provide educational services to students with disabilities, and outlines the steps parents can take to ensure that their children secure all of the services they are entitled to receive.

Among other things, the Section 504 Parent and Educator Resource Guide:

- Defines and provides examples to illustrate the meaning of key terms used in Section 504.
- Highlights requirements of Section 504 in the area of public elementary and secondary education, including provisions related to the identification, evaluation, and placement of students with disabilities, and procedures for handling disputes and disagreements between parents and school districts.

You may review the guide at the following link:

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/504-resource-guide-201612.pdf>

## UPDATES FROM OUR TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT

### **Technology Etiquette for the New Year!!**

Most kids spend a lot of time online. As a result, it is vital that parents need to teach their kids how to behave and treat others while online because failing to do so can lead to kids abusing technology, harassing others, or even put them at risk for cyberbullying.

No parent wants to discover that her child is cyberbullying others, nor does a parent want to learn that her child is being victimized. But cyberbullying prevention requires more than just teaching kids to be nice online.

Instead, parents need to have regular conversations with their kids about online safety, cyberbullying and digital etiquette. In fact, equipping kids with digital etiquette skills can go a long way in preventing them from becoming cyberbullies.

### **Here are the top five things to teach your kids about digital etiquette.**

#### **Treat others how you want to be treated.**

Almost everyone is familiar with the "golden rule." But sometimes kids need to be reminded about the importance of good manners, even online. Remind them that it is always best to discuss sensitive or potentially volatile issues with the person directly rather than posting something online or sending a hurtful e-mail. Also, discuss what a healthy friendship looks like and be sure they know this applies to online communication as well.

#### **Keep your messages and posts positive and truthful.**

Encourage kids to censor their messages and posts to be sure they are not being sarcastic, negative or rude. They also should avoid posting anything that is not true such as rumors or gossip. Kids also should know what cyberbullying is and that they should never engage in that type of behavior. Meanwhile, if they are being victimized, make sure they know how to respond to cyberbullying.

#### **Double-check your messages before you hit send.**

Teaching kids to slow down and think about their posts, comments, texts and e-mails is crucial. They need to realize that once they press send, there is no way to take back their words. And even if they delete it later, it still can remain available for others to see especially if someone took a screenshot of their post. Encourage them to read their messages, comments and posts again to see if they could be misinterpreted or if they come off sarcastic.

Kids also need to realize that being funny online is a very hard thing to accomplish. The person on the other end cannot see their facial expressions or hear their tone of voice. Sometimes a message that is meant to be funny does not come off that way at all. As a general rule, they should avoid making jokes online.

#### **Keep your friends' secrets.**

Today's world is saturated with photos, texts and videos that can be posted, copied, forwarded, downloaded and altered in a matter of minutes. Encourage your kids to ask themselves how they would feel if one of their most embarrassing moments was put on display for the world to see. Remind your kids to think about what they are about to post. They should ask themselves the following questions: Did my friends tell me this in confidence? Will it embarrass them? Will sharing this information compromise their privacy or stir up drama? If they answer yes to any of those questions, they should keep the information to themselves. After all, that is what a good friend would do. Another good rule of thumb is to always ask permission before posting a picture of someone.

#### **Avoid digital drama.**

Instant messaging, texting and posting comments online are all "in-the-moment" communication. This is part of the attraction for kids because it keeps them connected to friends when they cannot be there in person. But learning to exit a conversation when things are getting rude or mean is essential.

To do that, kids may have to sign off of instant messaging, not respond to a rude text or refrain from posting a comment on Facebook or Instagram. Kids need to realize that no good will come from sending a nasty response or making a negative comment. It is better just to exit the conversation and if need be, discuss the situation in person.

<https://www.verywell.com/things-to-teach-your-kids-about-digital-etiquette-460548>



**FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY FIRST  
GRISWOLD**  
Equity and Social Justice Subcommittee

**Families and Community First Griswold (FCFG)** will participate in a series of trainings called **SANKOFA**, which incorporates the historical context of race and poverty in order to build a better future for those adversely impacted by these inequalities.

This timely program features **EIGHT (8) INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS FROM JANUARY TO APRIL** (see schedule below), each lasting 2 1/2 hours. Participants will engage in dialogue, self-discovery, and activities in order to develop anti-racism leadership and advocacy skills that will benefit the entire community.

**THE SUCCESS OF THIS PROGRAM** begins with the support of the entire collaborative and so it is vital to secure your participation and commitment. This is challenging, yet rewarding, work. Simply put, racial reconciliation is the "unfinished agenda" of this nation.

**We also are seeking members of the community to lend their voices to this dialogue.** To participate in the sessions, an individual must first become part of the social justice and equity subcommittee. For more information, contact Adam Bowles at [860-861-4246](tel:860-861-4246) or [adambowles@sbcglobal.net](mailto:adambowles@sbcglobal.net).

**Wednesday, January 11, 2017 – 6:00-8:30pm**  
**Wednesday, January 25, 2017 - 6:00-8:30pm**  
**Wednesday, February 8, 2017- 6:00-8:30pm**  
**Wednesday, February 22, 2017 - 6:00-8:30pm**  
**Wednesday, March 8, 2017 - 6:00-8:30pm**  
**Wednesday, March 22, 2017 - 6:00-8:30pm**  
**Wednesday, April 5, 2017 - 6:00-8:30pm**  
**Wednesday, April 19, 2017 - 6:00-8:30pm**  
**Wednesday, May 10, 2017 - 6:00-8:30pm\*\*\***

\*Most meetings are scheduled on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month.

\*\*Meeting will occur on 1st and 3rd of the month.

\*\*\*Snow date

*Location to be determined*

**Child care will be available.**

**Food and refreshments will be available between 5:30-6:00pm.**

*This Equity Learning Partnership training is available to FCFG due to a generous grant from the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund*



“Griswold Reads” is a newly established book discussion partnership between the Griswold Public Schools and The Slater Library. During the school year, we will host a book discussion series on select, mass-market titles that explore relevant topics pertaining to public education while casting a wide net on reader interest. The book discussions will be held at the Slater Library, and the library will have a few copies of each title for circulation. Griswold Public Schools educators will partake and lead the discussions, which will be an hour long and are open to the public. The book discussions begin promptly at 5:30pm. We hope you can join us!

<b>BOOK DISCUSSION DATE</b>	<b>BOOK TITLE</b>
Thursday, February 23 <sup>rd</sup>	<p><i>Mindset: The New Psychology of Success</i></p> <p>By Carol Dweck</p> <p>GPS Facilitators: Michele Raynor &amp; Glenn LaBossiere</p>
Thursday, March 30th	<p><i>The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business</i></p> <p>By Charles Duhigg</p> <p>GPS Facilitators: Joseph Bordeau &amp; Rita Quiles-Glover</p>
Thursday, April 27th	<p><i>The Collapse of Parenting: How We Hurt Our Kids When We Treat Them Like Grown-Ups</i></p> <p>By Leonard Sax</p> <p>GPS Facilitators: Erin Palonen &amp; Michele Demicco</p>



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