

Mount Garfield Middle School



Bill Larsen, Principal | Jared Burek, AP | Lee Carleton, AP | Lori Thompson, Secretary | Kim Chambers Attendance Secretary

Important Dates

NO SCHOOL –

Holiday Break

January 2nd, 2017

NO SCHOOL –

Teacher Workday

January 3rd, 2017

NO SCHOOL – Martin

Luther King Jr. Day

January 16th, 2017

A Message From The Principal

Dear Mount Garfield Families,

We hope this January Newsletter finds you ready to enjoy some extra time with your child over the two-week winter break. Our break begins Saturday, December 17th for all staff and students. Teachers return on Tuesday, January 3rd for a teacher workday, and students return on Wednesday, January 4th to begin the third quarter. Students have just completed their winter STAR assessments in Reading and Math, so we will soon have data to reflect on their growth and learning during the first semester as we begin the second semester on January 4th.

As we wind down the first semester, we would like to celebrate the students honored during our November and December Student of the Months Breakfast. Congratulations to November students: Desare Lopez (6-1), Joshua Contreras-Alejandre (6-2), Jorge Plascencia-Lopez (Lit Plus), Aislinn Murray (7-1), Kensa White (7-2), Calvin Sargent (8-1), Revyn Drushella (8-2), and Isaiah Swank (Band). Congratulations to December students: Jesus Inchauregui (6-1), Angel Mendez (6-2), Alex Perez (Mr. Z's), Ella Steele & Joshua Contreras-Alejandre (Physical Education), Amerriah Apraiz (7-1), Kayden Uli-barri (7-2), Dymilo Miller (8-1) and Jose Mendoza (8-2).

In last month's newsletter, you heard about the first three of sixteen "Habits of Mind" (HOM): *Persisting, Managing Impulsivity, and Listening with Understanding and Empathy*. This month we would like to introduce you to the next two HOM centered on *Thinking*:

- **Thinking Flexibility**
 - Able to change perspective;
 - Consider the input of others;
 - Generate alternatives;
 - Weigh options
- **Thinking About Thinking (Metacognition)**
 - Being aware of own thoughts, feelings, intentions and actions;
 - Knowing what I do and say affects others;
 - Willing to consider the impact of choices on myself and others.

The concept of "Metacognition – *thinking* about how we *think*" might sound foreign and circular in nature, yet it can become a simple habit for our students to follow as

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they mature each day of their middle school years. As teachers and parents in our students' life, we want them to become "owners of their education." We realize this can only happen as we begin to release responsibility from adults to our students. Research clearly shows the person who is doing the "thinking" is doing the "learning," so *thinking* is critical and essential to each student becoming responsible for their own learning.

Our hope is the common vocabulary between home and school might deepen your conversations at home about the best way your student is learning. Thank you for your partnership with our MGMS Staff. We hope you find some quality time during the winter break.

Sincerely,

Bill Larsen

Breakfast After the Bell Nutrition Program

Breakfast After the Bell Nutrition Program 2016/17 School Year News:

The Breakfast After the Bell Nutrition Program was created by House Bill 13-1006. The purpose is to offer a breakfast at no charge to each student enrolled in a public school that has 70 percent or more students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunch under the USDA's National School Lunch Program. CDE assists school districts with the implementation of this law by providing an implementation guide, resources, training and technical assistance.

Program Objectives

- Increase the number of children eating breakfast on school days
- Increase the consumption of nutritious foods, making breakfast programs more effective
- Improve academic performance by preparing children to learn
- Improve the overall health of children in Colorado
- Revenue for school nutrition programs through federal and state reimbursements

From the GRIT Desk:

Can you believe two quarters have flown by and the new year is around the corner? Well, I certainly can't. This quarter we have been reflecting on who we are, where we have been, and where we want to go. How we are doing compared to how we want to do. And what impact are we having on other people (sometimes without even knowing it). The students have told me a lot in all these areas and it has been a pleasure to watch them grow in this reflection. We are wrapping up our reading of our class novel, it has had a big impact on a lot of them. We will be creating a reflective project around it when we return in 2017. Ask them about their growth—everyone has something to brag about—Growth in STARS scores, 8th grade computation tests, achievement in classes, assignments they thought they couldn't do!! Wishing you a Happy Holiday season and a hopeful start to the new year!

Amy Deschamp



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Text Alerts

District 51 has invested in a district-wide communication system (called SchoolConnects) that will allow all schools and the district to contact you regarding important news, events, and emergency or safety-related situations. Schools and the district can only send texts to phones who have subscribed to receive the messages. If you want to receive SMS text messages from the school or district, you must first do the following:

1. Ensure that your child's school has your cell phone listed in the student database under "Mobile".
2. From the SMS-capable telephone where you want to receive the text messages, text the word Join to the number 56360. If our messaging system finds a match for your phone number in its database, you receive a confirmation message thanking you for joining school alerts. If our messaging system does not find a match for your phone number in its database, you will receive a message.
3. Create a contact on your phone with the name of your school or school district, or another meaningful name, and the phone number 56360. Then, when you receive a text from this number, you know who is sending it.

At this point in time, the District will only contact parents in the case of an emergency or safety-related situations. The District will reach out to parents using phone, text and email or a combination. Parents and the community can also check the district website (www.d51schools.org) or social media accounts (facebook.com/schooldistrict51 and twitter.com/district51) for emergency alerts and updates as well as general news.

In order to receive the quickest and most accurate information in an emergency situation, parents need to be sure that all home phone, cell phone and email addresses are up-to-date in the student information system, Synergy. Contact the school office if you have any questions. The texts, calls and emails will only go to those families who have those fields filled in in the database. Should you have any questions about this new service or other emergency communications, don't hesitate to call Dan Dougherty in Communications or Tim Leon in Safety at 254-5100.

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T H E R E ' S O N L Y O N E

Navigating the Holidays as a Blended Family:

With divorce or remarriage, many things change, including seasonal celebrations. Holidays, like Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, or Christmas may be challenging for blended families. Unresolved feelings, animosity, and mixed loyalties can sidetrack what should be a happy time.



Minimizing holiday stress is one of the greatest gifts parents can give their kids. With some creativity and forethought, your blended family can enjoy happy and fulfilling holiday celebrations. Below are four tips to help you make any holiday less stressful and more fun for your blended family.

Plan Ahead. Blended families are not only made up of children, biological parents and step-parents. You may have a close-knit extended family that includes four sets of grandparents and several aunts and uncles who all want to spend time during holidays with the children.

Deciding how to celebrate the holidays may not be easy, but planning in advance can help you bypass problems. Kids may be uptight because they're not sure where their base of security is. Knowing the specific plans helps alleviate this. **Be Flexible.** The holidays are not about being together as a family on a certain date, they are about being together as a family. Holidays can be celebrated at any time convenient for the family. Don't be locked into only Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

Create New Blended Family Traditions. Traditions help us bond as a family and create memories we cherish over our lifetime. Starting new traditions with your blended family can give every family member something to look forward to each year.

Encourage Expression of Feelings. Let youngsters, grandparents, and others share their feelings. Listen sensitively without interrupting or trying to fix problems they share with you.

You may not agree with everything a person says (and you certainly will not be able to accommodate everyone's preferences), but family members will be grateful for your listening to them and taking their needs into account. Although your stepfamily will be very different from a first-marriage family, a blended family is no better or worse than any other family. It is unique. You can learn to appreciate the advantages of your family and the strengths of each person in it.

For more information, go to <http://www.operationparent.org>.

Maribeth Flanagan
Behavior Counselor

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