

The Gray-New Gloucester Middle School Unified Arts instructors are pleased to be able to offer families this monthly publication again this year. This newsletter will provide information about ongoing work in all U.A. disciplines. Please remember that we are always happy to hear from you and we urge you to contact us at any time with questions or concerns.

Band – Ms. Polletto

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I am so excited to be the sixth through eighth grade middle school band teacher this year! Even in just these past two short weeks, I have discovered many talented Gray-New Gloucester Middle School musicians. Students have sight read a couple of pieces, in our first few rehearsals, and have begun the task of learning and practicing them in preparation for the winter concert. I cannot wait to work with students to enhance their musical experiences, through smaller group lessons, in the weeks and months to come. Remember, if you have any questions always feel free email me.

Chorus & Performing Arts – Ms. Whitney

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Music and Performing Arts students have had a great start to the year! Fifth graders are composing their own symphonies with Garageband, while studying the layout of an orchestra and how it works. Sixth Graders are studying the *Star Spangled Banner* in a unit that focuses on singing, arrangements, and history. Upon completion of this unit, students will learn about the basics of music using Finale, a music notation program that is on their laptops. Seventh graders just completed two classes of swing dancing as part of a jazz unit. Next, they will compose their own Latin jazz pieces in Garageband.

Chorus students have already learned some songs and are well on their way to a fabulous Holiday Concert. Signed slips from the chorus letter, that have not yet been turned in, should be returned to Ms. Whitney as soon as possible.

Computer - Mr. Jensen

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Fifth and sixth grade students will be learning the physical parts and usage of the computer, along with basic applications and their best use in technology. We will discuss and apply the ethical and social issues related to technology. Students will understand the use of all intellectual property and compliance with copyright laws. Fifth grade students will evaluate web pages for information, training, or entertainment uses. Sixth graders will create web pages to inform, train and entertain their audience. This class also teaches correct finger placement and typing. The goal is for fifth grade students to type at least 10-15 words per minute and sixth grade students to type at least 15-20 words per minute without looking at their keys.

Seventh grade students work in multi-media. This demands higher level thinking strategies from students as well as self-discipline, time management, and focus. Producing a multi-media presentation develops strong intellectual, organizational, and creative skills. Using multi-media as a goal promotes the development of the student from a passive consumer into an active producer of video presentations.

Eighth grade desktop publishing students will take their word processing skills and apply them to importing images and using drawing tools. Students will work on creating a professional looking document. Image alignment, object drawing, and text manipulation are some of the skills they will master. Students will create newsletters, bi-folds, tri-folds and other brochures as well as spreadsheets, data bases and web pages.

Health – Mrs. Phillips

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This year, health students are participating in a wellness program with physical education and guidance students. Health class has been a time to study all aspects of healthy people and their habits. Students have been engaged in physical activity for the beginning portion of each class and have spent time in classrooms learning about the major components of health.

**Physical Education – Mr. Sanders
Mr. Welch**

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Students in PE classes spent the first few days of school participating in a team building game called shipwreck. The game required students to problem solve and communicate as they worked towards their goal. Students are currently playing ultimate frisbee outside as the weather cooperates. Each day, students condition themselves to run the mile for the presidential fitness test.

Spanish Grades 5 and 6 – Mrs. Bassani

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Estimados señoras y señores (Dear Parents), ¡Bienvenidos! Welcome! In Spanish class this week, we are learning how to say the greetings through basic dialogues. We will learn how to express emotions, in Spanish, over the next weeks. In addition, throughout the year, we will learn about the culture and geography of countries that speak Spanish. Nos vemos (see you later).

Spanish Grades 7 and 8 – Ms. McGonagle

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I am really looking forward to this upcoming school year with the seventh and eighth graders. There is a lot of work to do as well as a lot of fun activities. Both grades will be focusing on building and enhancing English and Spanish at the same time. Did you know that while your child is learning Spanish, they are also comparing and contrasting many grammatical aspects of their first language, English? Learning a Latin based language is an excellent way to boost our skills in both languages. This will be a valuable part of your child's study of Spanish this year. Language skills are transferrable. Building skills in English will be important, as knowledge of your first language is your basis for knowledge in a second language. Students will be enhancing their skills in reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking every day. Students will read cultural information in English, short texts in Spanish, and bilingual literature. They will write in both languages. Lastly, student will concentrate on listening and speaking in Spanish.

Technology Education - Ms. Hamel

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Wanted, some of your junk, such as clean plastic lids from coffee cans, jar lids, empty spools, unwanted or broken ink jet printers, mini-lights such as those from holiday lights that you are throwing away. We can reuse the wire. Thanks.

Fifth grade students have invented models of a device to help them with a chore at home. Now they are inventing a gadget to help a small child do a chore or task at home.

Sixth grade students are learning about the design process and designing a "Humdinger" - a device that hums when a string is pulled and dings when the string is let go. They are using the process to design and test a wind powered vehicle from limited materials.

Seventh grade students are learning about electrical current and voltage. They built battery powered cars with gears and pulleys and are adding electric lights to their cars.

Eighth grade students made low friction vehicles that hover above a magnetic track. They are making wooden "crash cars" and will design crumple zones for their cars that will protect the passenger (a raw egg) in a collision with a concrete block.

Visual Art - Ms. Weed

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The 2009-2010 school year is going to be a busy and exciting one. All of the current art students began the year by creating their own Code of Conduct for the art studio through the use of an affinity diagram. This is one many tools that MSAD 15 has gained through our initial training with the Re-Inventing Schools Coalition. Art students are quickly becoming familiar with many of the tools that are intended to help them track their own work in the studio.

Currently, fifth and sixth grade students are working with the Maine Learning Results Standard A, which is basic art terminology. They will soon be tested on the Elements of Art and Principles of Design. Clay work will begin in a couple of weeks.

Seventh and eighth grade students are working on the 3D portion of Standard B, which is material mastery and expression. Students have been asked to create their own clay project concept to meet the standard. This work will be followed by drawing studies and Standard D, which is art criticism.

Please ask your student to tell you about the artworks that they analyzed in class this week.

