

Since 1999



# Mare Island Technology ACADEMY

*"Growing great minds and caring hearts"*

August, 2013  
Parent Newsletter



## Director's Message – Practice Your Elevator Speech!

By Matt Smith

Silicon Valley entrepreneurs are trained to work on their "elevator speech" – a speech to pitch their revolutionary idea in just the time it takes to ride an elevator to the floor of an executive's office. The underlying idea is that should they happen to "bump into" someone important, they can make their pitch and hopefully get an invitation to relate their terrific idea before the whole board!

As a school that relies primarily on good will and positive word of mouth, MIT Academy depends on *you*, the parents and community members, to spread the good word about MIT. And in that sense, *everyone's* important! And don't worry, you don't have to rent a billboard, you just have to make sure you've got your 30 second "elevator pitch" all ready to go – and here are six talking points to use during the ride!

1. MIT Academy has the highest Academic Performance Index (API) of any secondary school in Vallejo – currently 764 for the middle school, with another big jump coming in August!
2. MIT is a safe, calm school with a strong academic focus, low suspension rates, and dedicated tolerance and anti-bullying programs.
3. MIT Academy uses an innovative method called "RTI" ("Response to Intervention") consisting of multi-layered instruction to make sure *all* students are learning and succeeding!
4. MIT Academy is expanding, adding two new classrooms (room Z and an independent study center at Everest).
5. MIT Academy offers a free before and after school program that offers academic tutoring as well as a full complement of sports and club activities. In addition, high school student athletes have the option to play any or all high school sports at Bethel or Vallejo high schools.
6. And finally, MIT Academy has a top notch, fully credentialed staff that brings outstanding instruction *every* day. Our highly qualified staff is second to none!

So next time you find yourself with a Vallejo or American Canyon parent, and have 30 seconds to spare, be sure to give them your best MIT "elevator speech" so both the elevator – and our kids – all end up on top!

*Expect success* and have a great school year!

## Griffin Days Parent-Student Orientation August 13 - 15

The 2013-14 school year officially kicks off with the mandatory "Griffin Days" Orientation, whereby parents and students register, receive valuable information (including the student planner), get pictures taken, and receive their class schedule. Allow an hour to complete the process, and note that students are scheduled for a specific date and time according to grade:

**Tuesday, August 13, 11 – 7 pm: Middle School**

**Wednesday, August 14, 11 – 7 pm: High School**

**Thursday, August 15, 9 – 12: Make-ups (all grades)**

(Note: families with students in multiple grade-levels should come through once, with all children, during either assigned time.)

**THERE ARE NO COSTS INVOLVED, BUT SOME STATIONS (MARKED WITH A \$) ARE PAYMENT OPTIONAL. Some of the required stations students and parents will complete include:**

- Update emergency information;
- Photo ID's taken (required to be worn at school)
- Parent Commitment Sign-Ups
- Distribution of Student Planners
- Lunch program signup including Free/Reduced lunch signup (\$)
- Yearbook signup (\$)
- Uniform Central: uniform information & patch distribution (\$)
- Project \$20.14 (donation, \$)
- Before and After School Program information and signups
- Tours for 6<sup>th</sup> graders and new students
- Distribution of student schedules

If you have questions, please contact Debra Flichmann at extension 155 or Martina Munoz at extension 101.

Attention all high school students – college classes begin this month! Solano Community College begins Monday, August 12<sup>th</sup> and Napa Valley College begins Monday, August 19<sup>th</sup>.



## Traffic Alert, and Don't Forget the Rainier Drop-Off!

Parents, please note the following traffic safety alerts:

Remember that during drop-off and pick-up times Positive Place is **one way only**, and cars must access school via Rainer Avenue. There have been several incidents of near accidents, and cars that drive around the cones placed at the end of Positive Place put everyone – particularly students – at risk. Please follow the flow of traffic and keep our kids safe!

Also, don't forget to use the alternate drop-off and pickup location on Rainer Avenue at the back gate (across from Loma Vista farm). Parents dropping off students at this location will then have the option to turn east (left) at the end of the block and avoid the significant congestion on Positive Place!



## Important Upcoming Dates!

- M, 8/5 – Th, 8/8: 6th grade “Jumpstart” program, 8:30 – 2:00\*  
W-Th, 8/7 – 8/8: New Teacher training / orientation, 8- 4  
W, 8/8: “VOORP” Committee Meeting, 5:00, room Z\*  
F, 8/9 – F, 8/16: Teachers return (for in-service and training)  
T, 8/13 – Th, 8/15: *Griffin Days* Student Orientation (see pg. 1)\*  
M, 8/5: VOORP (uniform) Committee, 4-5, room F\*  
Tu, 8/13: Fiscal Committee Meeting, 3:30, room F\*  
Board of Directors Meeting, 5:30, room F\*  
M, 8/19: First Day of School! (regular schedule)  
W, 8/21: Minimum day (1:42 dismissal, optional lunch served)  
AAPA Meeting, 6pm, room Y  
F, 8/23: Parent Ice Cream Social, 4 – 6 pm\*  
MS Back-to-School Dance, 4-6 pm\*  
M, 8/26: English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC), 6:30 – 8\*  
T, 8/27: PTN Meeting, 6pm, MPR  
W, 8/28: Minimum day (1:42 dismissal, optional lunch served)  
Th, 8/29: Back-to-School Night! 5:30 – 8 pm\*  
M, 9/2: Labor Day, no school!  
W, 9/4: Regular schedule (NO minimum day, dismissal at 3:36)  
\* 2 hours of Parent Commitment time will be awarded for participation in this event.

The MIT Food Drive goes from Monday, August 19<sup>th</sup> until the last day of school in June. There are three bins, one in the main office, and one in each Student Services office. MIT is very active in our community and we hope you will please send your student with a nonperishable food item whenever you can. Questions? Please contact Debora Castaneda, [dcastaneda@mitacademy.org](mailto:dcastaneda@mitacademy.org), ext. 105.

## MIT's Key to Success – Parent Commitment!

Parent Commitment hours are a key reason behind MIT's success, and last year there were over 15,000 hours of parent commitment time contributed to MIT! Luckily, there are LOTS of ways to complete parent commitment hours: check the website, read the newsletters, check the weekly MITA Communications emails, and listen to school calls. And if you have any questions, contact Miriam Ascencio at 707-552-6282 Ext. 115.

### HERE ARE 3 UPCOMING WAYS TO EARN HOURS:

**1. DONATIONS** – The student store and office need donations for staff and student support. The store takes office supplies, snack items, and water. The office is always in need of coffee, coffee cups, filters, Coffee Mate Creamer (non-refrigerated), paper goods (plates, cups, napkins, utensils) and water.

**2. TEACHER “CARE” PACKS** – welcome our returning teachers back and salute our new teachers with a “Teacher Pack.” Each “Teacher Pack” will be awarded 5 hours of commitment time (up to a maximum of 10 hours). A Teacher CARE Package consists of: (1) Pack of dry erase markers with eraser and liquid cleaner (variety of colors), (1) Pack of #2 pencils, (1) pack of pens (blue/black), (1) pack of binder paper, and (2) reams of computer paper. Feel free to include anything else you think a teacher might appreciate to start the year! Teacher packs received during August 1<sup>st</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> receive a bonus hour!

### 3. AUGUST VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

- Mr. Roboto needs you! Help out in Ms. Guest's robotics lab on August 9<sup>th</sup> from 7:30 – 4:00 as volunteers “reassemble” the new robotics lab. Duties to include inventory of robot kits and parts, storing kits properly, typing spreadsheets, and making and labeling items.
- Griffin Days August 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> (11:00am – 7:00pm)
- Griffin Day August 15<sup>th</sup> (9:00am – 12:00pm)
- Saturday Work Days (8am – 1:00pm)
- *Jumpstart* summer school office help – call Toni Feller (ext. 100) for information.
- Morning and afternoon monitors to help with traffic for all our Drop Off and Pick Up spots. The days and times are:
  - (7:30am-8:15am) daily.
  - After school from 1:20pm-2:00pm on Wednesdays
  - 3:15pm-4:15pm other (non-minimum) days.
- 8/23 Shake a leg as a Middle School dance volunteer!

## MIT Uniform Reminders!



The MIT patch is available from Victory Stores at no charge if you buy a shirt, or for \$1 from the MIT Business Office or during Griffin Days.

The Dickies white polo shirt must have the MIT patch over the left breast (where you would place your hand for the Pledge of Allegiance).

Pants must be Dickies brand, flat front (no pleated, skinny, etc.).

Tennis shoes recommended, but no solid red or blue tennis shoes or shoelaces.

As directed by the MIT Strategic Plan, MIT is adopting an official uniform for the 2013-14 school year. A uniform provides a sense of common identity, as well as a collective discipline that benefits both the school (as perceived from the outside) and students (as they perceive themselves as MIT students). The uniform consists of khaki Dickies pants, shorts, or skorts, and white Dickies polos (with patch).

And though the uniform is required beginning this year, current students will have one year to phase in the new uniform and can continue to wear their old dress-code appropriate clothes throughout this school year.

Additional information can be found on the website, or at our authorized vendor Victory Stores, located at 435 Virginia Street in Vallejo, which has an area dedicated to the MIT uniform. Questions can be directed to Debra Fliebmann at [dfliebmann@mitacademy.org](mailto:dfliebmann@mitacademy.org) or Ext 155.

## Common Core Standards – What Exactly Are They? (Part 2 of 3)

Last month's newsletter began a three-part series on the new national “Common Core” standards that MIT Academy will begin implementing this year. The article explained how a coalition of state governors convened a panel with employers and colleges to determine what “real-world” skills students need in order to be successful in today's international job and college market. The result was the Common Core standards, voluntarily adopted by 45 states, which will be officially implemented in the 2014-15 school year, but which many schools and districts are beginning implementation this year – MIT Academy included.

California has had instructional standards since 1995, and in fact there are many similarities, but the common core emphasize deeper thinking skills, more non-fiction reading, and a lot more writing. For example:

In history/social studies:

- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources (6-8);
- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information (9-10)

In science:

- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of scientific and technical texts (6-8);
- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of scientific and technical texts, including analysis of important distinctions the author makes between ideas or pieces of information (11-12)

In math:

- (Statistics 6.5) – Summarize numerical data sets in relation to their context by describing the nature of the attribute under investigation, including how it was measured and its units of measurement (6).

**Coming up next!** In September's newsletter, we'll explore some more common core standards and how MIT Academy is transitioning to them. So stay tuned and don't touch that common core dial!