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Mare Island Technology ACADEMY

"Growing great minds and caring hearts"

September, 2014
Parent Newsletter

Este boletín está
disponible en español
en la Oficina



Director's Message – What's Up for 2014-15? By Matt Smith

Dear Parents,

Every year for the past 15 years, the state of California has issued a fall report on the relative performance of its public schools. Called the Academic Performance Index, or "API" for short, it totals up and averages the collective scores of each school's students and uses a formula to arrive at a number between 200 and 1000. Last year MIT Academy scored its highest numbers ever – 780 for the middle school and 775 at the high school, which put both schools among the top performing school in Solano County. Moreover, based on our trend line, it appeared that 2014 would be the year we would crack the vaulted "800" threshold which is California's definition of a high-performing school.

However, the rollout of Common Core standard and the new Smarter Balanced testing regime (since renamed the "CASSP" test) fundamentally changed the way California (and the nation) measures student progress and, by extension, school effectiveness. With that the California API was put on hold, initially for one year and now probably for two years as legislators and educators labor to come up with new measures of school effectiveness. The new metrics will still include student standardized test performance, but will also likely include graduation rates, UC eligibility completion rates, special populations, and more. Whatever the measures, MIT welcomes the changes and is confident in its students, staff, and programs to ensure we will continue to be a regional top performer regardless of whatever metric the state arrives at. After all, our core program is solid, our staff great, our parents supportive, and our students awesome. With "scores" like that, MIT can't go wrong no matter what the measure!

ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
Tuesday, September 30, 6:30-7:30pm, MPR. All seniors and AVID 11th grade families are highly encouraged to participate to learn about the upcoming college application process.

YEARBOOKS!

Get your yearbooks today! Right now they are only \$55! Purchase one before 11/1 to get this special offer.

Parent Workshops Coming soon!

MIT Academy's new psychologist, Dr. Robert Mackenzie, will be offering a three-session workshop in October on parenting teenagers. The authors of several books, including "Setting Limits for Your Strong-Willed Teen," "Coach Rob" has presented this workshop all over the country, as well as internationally, and will be offering his effective strategies on parenting strong-willed teenagers who challenge parental authority and/or limits.

Workshops are the first three Tuesdays in October:

October 7 6:30 – 8:30 pm
October 14 6:30 – 8:30 pm
October 21 6:30 – 8:30 pm

The meetings will be in the MPR.

Keep alert for flyers that will be sent home in September.

Parents will receive a total of ten hours of Parent Commitment service for attending all three sessions and participating in follow-up activities (partial participants will receive 2 hours per session). Take advantage of this great opportunity to learn about your strong-willed teenager and how to become the calm, effective parent your child will respect and obey.

For more information check our website or contact Dr. Robert Mackenzie at rmackenzie@mitacademy.org.

Important Upcoming Dates!

- Mon. Sept. 1: Labor Day (no school)
Mon. Sept 8: "VOORP" Committee Meeting, 4:30, Room Z*
Fri. Sept 5: College Wear Day
Late Start Day at 9:29am and Ice Cream Social 4-6)*
Tues. Sept 9: Fiscal Committee Meeting, 3:45, Room Z*
Board of Directors Meeting, 5:30, Room Z*
Wed. Sept 10: Minimum day (2:14pm dismissal)
SPSV College Night 7:00-8:30
at St. Patrick-St. Vincent School
Fri. Sept 12: MIT Wear Day
Mon. Sept. 15: Día del Grito (lunchtime activity for Students)
Tues. Sept 16: Curriculum Committee Meeting 4pm-6pm*
Wed. Sept 17: Minimum day (2:14pm dismissal)
Thur. Sept 18: AAPA Meeting, Room Y 6pm-8pm*
Fri. Sept 19: Senior Pictures in Omega
Mon. Sept 22: Kaiser "Secrets" Assembly (9-10graders)
Tues Sept 23: PTN Meeting, Room Z 6pm-7:30*
Wed. Sept 24: Make-Up Pictures (Seniors & ID Makeups) Omega
Minimum day (2:14pm dismissal)
Fri. Sept 26: Free Dress w/Pass Day
Mon. Sept 29: ELAC Meeting, Room Z 6pm-7pm*
Tues. Sept 30: AVID/Senior College Night 6:30pm-7:30pm*
Fri. Oct. 3: Late Start Day at 9:29am.

* 2 hours of Parent Commitment time will be awarded for participation in this event.

Tweaking the Schedule – 2 Minutes, *First Fridays*, and *Early Lunch* Wednesdays!

A key reason for MIT's success has been the rich and ongoing collaboration between the teachers. In order to strengthen and expand this program, MIT has developed a "First Friday" late-start program, which will allow additional teacher collaboration from 8:00 – 9:20 on the first Friday morning of every month. But there won't be any loss of instructional time, however, as school will now let out at 3:38 (versus last year's 3:36). We're certain the kids will gladly trade 2 minutes per day for the chance to sleep a bit more on the first Friday of each month! And for those students who have to be at school bright and early, our ASP program will provide supervision, activities, and warm dry classrooms on those mornings for those who need it.

In addition, Wednesdays have been reconfigured so as to give kids a chance to eat lunch earlier on minimum-day Wednesdays, with lunch now falling within the school day instead of at the end, which was tough for some kids (and grownups, too!).

The schedule adjustments are as follows:

Regular days: 8:04 – 3:38 (note 2 extra minutes)
Min Day Wednesdays: 8:04 – 2:14 (includes 11:21–12:01 lunch period)

1st Friday every month: 9:29 – 3:38
(optional ASP available in morning)

Attendance and Food Service News

Attendance. Student absences are cleared with a written note from parents. A call to the attendance clerk is welcome, but not necessary. Any student who has been marked absent in any class of his classes for the day will receive an automated call from the school letting the parent know. Parents can then look on the Parent Portal to find which class their student was marked absent in. If there was a mistake, the teacher should be contacted to make the correction.

Food Service. New Year, new menu, new prices. Our monthly menu is posted on our website and hard copies are made available in the main office. Your student may also pick up a copy in the lunch room. Parents are encouraged to come and have a meal with their student and check out our program themselves. Breakfast is \$2.25 for students, \$2.75 for adults, and lunch is \$3.50 for students and \$4.00 for adults.

MIT Food Service takes part in the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs. If you haven't already, please pick up a form in K2 form Debra Fliemann and apply to see if you may qualify for free or reduced breakfast and lunches during this school year

Lunch Deposit. Important announcement for Lunch Deposits. Lunch money will only be taken before school and lunch time in the Main Office until further notice. If you are requesting to put lunch money on an account outside of these times you will be asked to come back.

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

Parents, please note the following traffic safety alerts:

Remember that during pick-up and drop-off times Positive Place is **one way only**, and cars must access school via Rainer way (next to Loma Vista Elementary). There have been several incidences 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 MIT back gate (across from Loma Vista farm). Parents dropping off students at this location will then have the option to turn left (east) at the end of the block and avoid the significant congestion on Positive Place!