

Since 1999



# Mare Island Technology ACADEMY

July, 2013  
Parent Newsletter

*"Growing great minds and caring hearts"*



## Director's Message – MIT Looks Ahead!

By Matt Smith

The arrival of July 1<sup>st</sup> means we are now officially in the 2013-14 school year, our 15<sup>th</sup> year of operation, and what an exciting year it promises to be! 2014 is poised to be MIT's best year ever, from facilities, to enrollment, to academic success – so check out some of what's in store!

- New classrooms! Due to its burgeoning student population, MIT will be opening two new classrooms this year – "room Z" (previously used for board meetings), and the new independent study annex in the Everest Center. Both of these new classrooms will help MIT to keep up with its high enrollments and its growing status as the most popular school in Vallejo!
- Expanded programs – last year we made great headway in improving student performance through our "Response-to-Intervention" ("RTI") and Academic Recovery programs. Both programs will be expanded and improved to insure the success of *all* students!
- More electives and "high end" offerings – this year will see the rollout of three new high school Advanced Placement ("AP") classes – AP Spanish, Mandarin, and Calculus. In addition, MIT will begin offering Microsoft and Adobe industry-approved certifications in Word, PowerPoint, and Photoshop.
- And finally, MIT will be rolling out an ambitious new effort to adopt the new national Common Core standards (see related article on page 2). Although adoption of these new standards is not required until 2014-15, MIT retains its position as an educational leader by embracing these "College Ready, Career Ready" standards a year ahead of schedule.

In its 15 years of existence MIT has become an educational vanguard, and our success speaks for itself. And above all, these efforts are aimed at the success of *your* child. As we enter this exciting new school year, I offer the collective services of every staff member at MIT to make your child's experience a positive and rewarding one. As we prepare our students for college and career success, be assured that all the school's resources are aligned behind the success of *your* child, and we want both you and your child to fully benefit from it. So welcome to the new year, and *expect success!*



## 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 during either assigned day/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 signups (\$ optional)
- Yearbook signup (\$ optional)
- Uniform Central: uniform information & patch distribution (\$ optional)
- Project \$20.14 (donation, \$ optional)
- 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.

## Important Upcoming Dates!

- W, 7/4: July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday (all offices closed – school resumes 7/5)  
M, 7/8: VOORP Committee Meeting, 4–5pm, room F  
Tu, 7/16: Fiscal Committee Meeting, 3:30pm, room F  
Board of Directors Meeting, 5:30pm, room F  
F, 7/19: Last day of summer school  
M–Th, 8/5–8: 6th grade "Jumpstart" program, 8:30–2:00pm  
T–Th, 8/13–15: Griffin Days Student Orientation (see above)  
M, 8/19: First Day of School! (regular schedule)  
T, 8/20: Curriculum Committee, 4–5:30, room F  
W, 8/21: African American Parents' Association (AAPA) meeting, room Y, 6–7pm  
F, 8/23: Parent Ice Cream Social, 4–6pm  
Back-to-School Middle School Dance, 4–6pm, MPR  
M, 8/26: English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC), 6:30–8pm  
Th, 8/29: Back-to-School Night, 5–8pm

## MIT Uniform Update



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). Although 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 Fliehm** at [dfliehm@mitacademy.org](mailto:dfliehm@mitacademy.org) or Ext 155.

## MIT's Key to Success – Parent Commitment! By Miriam Ascencio

Parent Commitment hours are determined by the number of years your **OLDEST** child has been enrolled at MIT. Parent hours are updated biweekly and available to check on the MIT website. There are myriad ways to complete your 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 707-552-6482 Ext. 115.

### HERE ARE 3 EASY WAYS TO EARN HOURS THIS MONTH:

**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” PACKAGES** – 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 pens (blue, black or red), (1) pack of pencils #2, (1) pack of dry erase markers (variety of colors), and (2) reams of computer paper. And feel free to include anything else you might think a teacher might appreciate to start the year!

### 3. JULY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

- Saturday Work Days (starts at 8:00am), 7/20 & 7/27 (no work day on 7/6);
- Summer school office help – call Toni Feller (ext. 100) for information.

## Bring on the Common Core! (Part 1 of 3 on the new CCSS standards)

As much as folks like to complain about California education, for the past 20 years there has been one area in which California has been an undisputed leader– a strong and rigorous set of *standards* that all public schools are expected to teach. These standards are tested annually through the so-called STAR (or “CST”) tests, and results are published annually in a variety of formats (a regimen that MIT has done very well by, btw!).

Over the years, other states have followed California’s lead and adopted their own state standards (though few if any are as comprehensive and rigorous). The result has been a mash-up of state expectations that, while helpful, vary in quality and are poorly articulated to one another. Hence it’s difficult if not impossible to compare the performance of a middle school in Vallejo with, say, Chicago or Tulsa. Indeed, it’s been left up to individual states to determine what constitutes “success” (in our state, that measure is called the *API*, or Academic Performance Index), and comparing success rates from one state to another has been virtually impossible.

Recognizing the value of standards but the inherent problems with everyone using their own, a commission of state governors convened a taskforce of college and career “deep thinkers” to discuss what *they* needed, and in particular what a set of standards would look like that led high school graduates to be truly **college and career ready**. After studying existing systems, they came up with a new set of K-12 *voluntary* standards that, when met, would lead to college and career success. These became known as the *Common Core State Standards* (“CCSS” for short), and over the past three years they have been adopted by 46 states. The commission gave participating states until the 2014-15 school year to prepare to be tested on these new standards, and in particular to ready their schools for a new testing program called *SMARTER Balance*, which is computer-based and in California will replace the current CST-STAR system the year after next.

MIT Academy embraces the new Common Core State Standards (“CCSS”) because our curriculum is already uniquely aligned to college and career readiness, and MIT’s project-based curriculum already promotes the “deep thinking” the CCSS requires. As such, MIT is uniquely situated to adopt the CCSS and to do well on the SMARTER Balance testing beginning the year after next. MIT will begin “rolling out” the new standards this year with an aim to fully implement them next year. Frankly, we see this as another opportunity for MIT Academy to shine and to be recognized for its forward-leaning educational programs, and as such we eagerly anticipate the transition to the CCSS regimen. And like many other schools state and nationwide, MIT Academy will begin that transition this year, with an aim for full implementation next year. As always, MIT intends to hit the ground running!

**Next Month:** so what *are* the CCSS standards, exactly?

**October:** how is MIT Academy transitioning to CCSS?

## Hey Incoming Sixth Graders – Ready, Set, Jumpstart!

Registration for Summer School Jumpstart 6<sup>th</sup>-graders is underway! Don't miss this opportunity for your new student to make a smooth transition to MIT. *Jumpstart* is a four-day fun and engaging introduction to MIT that promotes MIT orientation, basic technology skills, and community-building. Participants receive daily lunch and an official MIT flash drive. Jumpstart runs from 8/5 – 8, from 8:30–2:00 (partial attendance is allowed). If you did not receive a form, you can pick one up in the main office or on the website. Jumpstart forms are due by July 31<sup>st</sup>, so don't delay!