

Since 1999



Mare Island Technology ACADEMY

September, 2013
Parent Newsletter



"Growing great minds and caring hearts"



Director's Message - Soaring Like an MIT Griffin!

The results are in for the 2013 California Standards Test, and in nearly every category MIT's students turned in their best performance ever! Particularly in the overall school performance metric, called "Academic Performance Index" (or "API" for short), MIT has shattered its previous record and now both the middle and high schools stand uncontested as the top-ranking API secondary schools in Vallejo. Check out these soaring Griffin numbers!

	2012	2013	change
MIT MS	765	780	+15
MIT HS	723	775	+52

And as good as those numbers are, check out how we stack up against other local Solano & Napa schools...

Middle Schools	API
Green Valley	857
Benicia MS	853
Jacobs MS (Dixon)	803
Vaca Pena	799
MIT MS	780
Grange	775
Crystal	756
Hogan MS	721
Solano MS	674
Franklin MS	633

High Schools	API
Benicia HS	830
Vanden HS	825
Rodriguez	801
MIT HS	775
Napa	770
Will C. Wood	738
Armijo	734
Bethel	724
American Cyn	717
Vallejo	663*

* no score reported - score is for 2012

** to see the #'s yourself, go to <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/apireports.asp>

Summing all these numbers up, clearly MIT has made significant progress in the area of API, but that much still needs to be done. In particular, our first goal is to get to the magical "800" level which is the industry standard for excellence. After that it's to be the highest performer in the county. To accomplish this MIT is working hard to strengthen our math program, employ AVID strategies school wide, and roll out the new national common core standards (see article on page 2). In combination, these strategies will continue to bring dramatic gains.

When all is said and done, API is just a number, but in that it's based on actual student performance it gives a good snapshot of overall school academic culture and results. And those results prove once again that our students are learning, and that collectively we are soaring with Griffin pride!

Yearbooks on Sale!

RSVP your 2014 MIT yearbooks now for the relatively inexpensive price of \$55. The cost will continue to rise throughout the year (going up to \$60 on 11/1), so grab 'em cheap while you can!

Volunteer Opportunities!

One condition of enrollment at MIT Academy is the parent commitment pledge. This year the program is being run by Miriam Ascencio, who reminds parents there are several upcoming volunteer opportunities:

- ☞ Saturday work parties to spruce up MIT Academy - among the fastest ways to rack up commitment hours, especially if you bring multiple family members!
- ☞ Cafeteria assistance - watch your child eat a healthy lunch and help over 800 others do the same by assisting in the cafeteria during lunch!
- ☞ Morning traffic monitor - help needed between 7:30 and 8:15 on both sides of the campus (Rainier and Positive sides) to help usher students safely on campus.
- ☞ Teacher Assistant - watch your child grow academically with a "ring-side" seat in the classroom!
- ☞ Strategic Planning - help MIT plan for the future by participating in the MIT strategic planning process! This year's update and planning session is scheduled from 8:00 - 3:00 on Saturday, January 25th.

For any of these or other Parent Commitment opportunities, contact Miriam Ascencio at mascencio@mitacademy.org or at extension 115.



Got eScrip?

All parents! Make sure that you sign up for MIT Academy's eScrip program - it's easy to sign up for, and a painless way to support MIT's terrific programs. If you have questions, please contact Lara Castro at lauralara@mitacademy.org.

Important Upcoming Dates!

- Tu, 9/3: Canned food drive! (deliver to main office)
- W, 9/4: Chevy's Night! (Senior fundraiser)
- M, 9/9: VOORP Meeting, 4-5, Room Z
- Tu, 9/10: Fiscal Committee Meeting, 3:45, Room Z
Board of Directors Meeting, 5:30 p.m., Room Z
- W, 9/11: Picture Day! (free dress day!)
- W, 9/18: Senior Portrait Day (free dress for seniors)
(3rd Wed) African American Parents Assoc., 6-7
"El Dia del Grito" celebration/luncheon
- M, 9/16: Bingo Night (Senior fundraiser)
- F, 9/20: (4th Monday) ELAC Meeting, 6 - 7, Room Z
- M, 9/23: (4th Tuesday) PTN Meeting, 5 - 6, MPR
- T, 9/24: End of 1st Progress Reporting Period
- F, 9/27: X-Games, American Canyon Gym, 5 - 9 p.m.
- Th, 10/4: 1st PR Report Cards mailed home
- F, 10/11: First PR Honor Roll!

After School Program News & Announcements

Jeff Katz, ASP Coordinator

Parents: The MIT After School Program (ASP) is off to a record start with over 200 student participants enrolled! Students and parents are doing a great job, but please keep the mind ASP is funded through a federal grant and for grant accountability purposes we must follow certain rules – or we risk losing our funding. Ouch!

- Students are signed in automatically by staff, but it is critical parents sign their students out at the end of the day using the biometrics scanner in the main office.
- Parents can pick up their kids at any time after school, but it is preferred (again for grant eligibility rules) to pick them up between 5:30 – 5:45. Final pickup must be by 6:00 p.m.
- All students enrolled in ASP are eligible for the free dinner program, in which they get a nutritious sack dinner right after school.
- And did you know ASP also has a before school program? If you are enrolled in ASP, you may also attend the Before School Program, starting at 6:30am in room P.

If your child is not yet enrolled in ASP and you are still interested in signing him or her up, contact Jeff Katz at jkatz@mitacademy.org.

School & Senior Pix!

School portraits for 6th to 11th grade students will be taken on Wednesday, September 11th in the Omega gym. All 6th to 11th grade students will be photographed on that day for their yearbook photo, and can come in **free dress!** Anyone interested in buying a packet must bring their order form and money with them on September 11th.

Senior portraits will be taken on Wednesday September 18th (schedule to follow). Again, this is a free dress day for seniors who may wear school appropriate, non-uniform clothing for their portrait.



Scholar-Athletes Steppin' Up!

Did you know over 40 MIT high school students participate in after school sports at either Vallejo or Jesse Bethel High School? Our athletic director is Jeff Katz, who reminds all students participating in high school sports that they must have a completed sports form, available in H2 from Mr. Katz. For more information contact Jeff Katz at jkatz@mitacademy.org.

CAHSEE at the Bat!

Parents, the California High School Exit Exam (CASHEE, pronounced "Casey") math and English test is a state-mandated graduation requirement initially given in the 10th grade. This is a reminder that those juniors and seniors who did not previously take or pass either of the exams will get their next chance on October 1st (English) and 2nd (math). To those affected, good luck and good testing!

Entering & Leaving Campus

We had a great opening and parents have been doing their part, but just a few reminders for parents and students:

- ☞ There is a morning drop-off at the back gate on Rainier (between MIT and Loma Vista Farm); cars can then exit by turning left on Olympic and avoiding the Positive Place congestion.
- ☞ By city ordinance, during pick up and drop off times Positive Place is one way – **please do not cross over the cones at the top of Positive Place!**
- ☞ After school starts, all students, parents, and visitors should enter campus by the front gate next to the office.
- ☞ The middle school gate on Positive Place is for exiting students only – for security purposes it is not to be used to enter campus.

Thank you for your cooperation and for keeping MIT the safest school in Vallejo!

The March to Common Core Standards (Part 3): So What Exactly is MIT Doing to Transition to CCSS?

Over the past two issues we have reviewed the "big transition" schools are making to adopt the new common core standards, and in particular the California Common Core State Standards ("CCSS"). California is one of 45 states who have adopted the new K-12 voluntary standards for education, and beginning next year California will replace its current state CST testing regimen with the new computer-based "Smarter Balance" system which will test the California version of the common core.

To review, the common core standards were initiated by a coalition of state governors who wanted students to have a higher level of **college and career readiness**. Drawing from colleges and employers, and using the best thinking and programs available – including California's excellent state standards – a new set of standards was developed. These are being "rolled out" this year across the nation, and as usual California is taking a leading role in the effort. And for its part, MIT Academy is in front as well!

This year MIT Academy is doing the following to implement the CCSS:

- Extensive staff development for all teachers in what the CCSS are, and how it impacts each subject area from science to PE;
- Staff training in "expository writing" techniques (non-fiction, such as persuasive essays) that are a key component of the common core;
- A new 6-12 math curriculum, called "College Preparatory Math" (or "CPM" for short) that is aligned to the new common core standards;
- Broader use of school-wide AVID techniques that emphasize CCSS strategies, such as "Cornell Notes" style note-taking, "WICOR" organizational strategies, and more deep-thinking / meta-cognitive strategies such as Philosophical Chairs and Socratic Seminars.

MIT has worked hard to become one of the leading schools in Solano County (see article on page 1), and we remain committed to providing cutting-edge college-preparatory education to our students. Adopting the common core standards is a key part of staying on top of the game, and happily for us the CCSS tie directly into MIT's strengths and interests. As such we embrace the new common core and stand committed to being the best at implementing these truly 21st century standards. And as always, we welcome your feedback as we roll out this exciting new chapter of American education; if you have any questions please contact Alex Insaurralde at ainsaurrale@mitacademy.org, or 552-6482, ext. 108.