

May 1, 2009

Dear Parents,

Is it really May?! We are in the third trimester marking period, the final marking period of the school year. Students have “spring fever” and think they don’t have to work. This is not the time for them to shut down as we are not at the end of the school year, especially this school year which does not end until June 24<sup>th</sup>. This time of year is very busy as we plan activities for our students to wrap up this school year and begin to plan for the students for next year. *It is important to stress to our students that they must continue to study and complete their school work; it could affect their placement for next year or cause them to attend summer school.* Please be aware that no child will be promoted to the next grade level without passing her/his present grade level. It is a good time for you to contact your child’s teachers and/or the guidance counselor if you have any concerns regarding your child’s progress – it will be too late to help your child in June. We want all of our students to successfully complete the 2008 - 2009 school year.

Please be aware of the following information to help you plan for May and the future:

- **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Parents:** As per state law, all students entering the seventh grade must be properly immunized. All students entering the seventh grade next year (2009-2010) must have their vaccinations up to date before the start of the school year. *Students who are not immunized will not be allowed to attend school until they are immunized.* Students entering 7th grade are required to have the following immunizations:
  - 1 booster dose of Tdap (TD)
  - 4 doses of Polio vaccine (must have one after the age of 4)
  - 2 doses of MMR
  - 3 doses of Hepatitis B
  - 2 doses of Varicella (or documented history of chickenpox disease)
  - 1 dose of Meningococcal conjugate (Meningitis)
  - (A documented Physical exam is also required)
  
- **New Telephone Number:** A new telephone number has been added to alleviate the high volume of telephone calls, **710-7500**, #2 for the middle school or #3 for the high school and the menus will direct you to the appropriate department. Thank you.
  
- **Teacher Appreciation Week:** May 4 - 8<sup>th</sup>. It’s a good week to say, “thank you” to our teachers and assistants for all they do!

- **PTO Pancake Breakfast:** May 9<sup>th</sup> at the Applebee's Restaurant in Smithfield, 8:00 – 10:00 A.M. See the PMSPTO website for details, [www.pmspto.org](http://www.pmspto.org).
- **Grade 8 Assessments:** during the month of May, P.M.S. grade 8 students will be Tested in two areas. The RI Department of Education requires that all students in grade 8 be tested with the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) in Science. RIDE also requires that all students in grade 8 be tested in technology literacy (computers). The focus of the **assessments** is student skills. All grade 8 students must participate in the testing this month. Please encourage your child to do well as educational decisions may be based on the students' results. We expect to receive the results in September/October 2009. "Show what you know!"
- **Salsa Challenge Kickoff:** May 12<sup>th</sup>, students can whip up their favorite salsa and enter the contest for one of many prizes. Whole Foods Market and local farms will be present to the students the importance of local produce. Judging will take place on May 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- **Smooth Move:** There is a meeting for parents of our incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade students on May 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 P.M. in the auditoria.
- **Washington, D.C.:** 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will visit our nation's capital on May 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>.
- **New Website:** Check out our new and improved website, [www.fg.k12.ri.us](http://www.fg.k12.ri.us)! It is a work in progress right now, but please continue to check it periodically as we will continue to add information. Our monthly calendar is posted!

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of a very important meeting that takes place this month, the Foster-Glocester Regional School District Financial Meeting on Friday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 8:00 P.M. in the high school auditorium. I urge you to attend the meeting this Friday; your vote is needed to adopt the 2009-2010 budget so that we can continue to bring the best educational practices to our students. Your continuous support of the middle school and our programs contributes to our success and is greatly appreciated.

Again, we are in the last trimester, the "home stretch", of the 2008 - 2009 school year. There are many activities planned for our students. It is important for students to stay on task and behave accordingly so that they may end this school year on a positive note and enjoy the last weeks of school with their teachers and friends.

Sincerely,

Patricia Marcotte  
Principal



## **Kids.gov Offers Safe Links**

Kids.gov is a family friendly website that's helpful to children. Featuring more than 1,200 links to Web pages from government agencies, schools, and educational organizations, the site makes it easy and safe for kids to learn, explore, and have fun online.

Activities are available for students from kindergarten through eighth grade. Children will find interesting facts on numerous topics, including going green, living in space, and using math in the everyday world. Kids.gov is a trusted source provided by the U.S. government for the enjoyment of all.

## **Social Network Sites Make Teen Girls Sexually Bolder**

Teen girls are more likely to use online networking to make sexual advances, says a survey commissioned by Nivea Visage Young skin care manufacturer. Girls use social network communities on their phones and the Internet to flirt, get dates, and act more boldly than they would face to face.

*Fun, Young and Independent* (www.fyimag.co.uk), an interactive online magazine for young women aged 16-19, says that using sites such as *Facebook* and *MySpace* brings about a marked difference in young women's behavior. Sex and relationship expert, Tracey Cox, said that there certainly needs to be some policing.

The Internet and social networking sites have also made it easier for teenagers to share and find information about sex. Sixty-eight percent of the 16-18 year olds said it was less embarrassing to find out about sex online.

"This is a far cry from the traditional view of teenagers being awkward, shy, and ill-informed about sex. There's no doubt social networking has had a dramatic impact on teenage sexuality and their access to information about sex," Cox said.

There are other worrisome trends. One third of teenagers said they'd had sex at a party.



## **Helping Kids Be Themselves**

Our children face a lot of challenges, such as trying to be popular and successful at school and maintaining a good relationship with their families. The pressures to achieve these goals are enormous. At the same time children also have the pressure of just trying to fit in with their peers. There is almost nothing worse for a child than to be singled out as being different from

everyone else. That can result in taunting, bullying, and being ostracized from social networks and activities.

We can see the effort children make every day to look, talk, dress, and act like everybody else. Sometimes they do it to be popular, but mostly they are just trying to fit in.

Often this attempt to appear like everyone else can have the effect of turning them into somebody else. They can lose the ability not only to express themselves in appearance, but also to think and act independently. This can lead to many difficulties ranging from a loss of self-confidence and esteem to blindly following the path to early drug or alcohol use.

Parents have a crucial role to play in helping children be themselves and be true to their own values and beliefs. Even as we gently nudge our children toward the path we would like them to choose and the people we would like them to be, we also have to recognize their individuality and encourage them to be their unique selves. With the pressure they receive at school to conform with friends, they just don't need a similar push to conform at home.

We have to find ways to let children express their individuality at home so they will feel confident enough to stay strong when they interact with others. This doesn't mean allowing lax or inappropriate behavior, but it does mean celebrating and acknowledging their differences and uniqueness, even within the family unit. We can also provide solid direction and guidance so that they can find their own path and individuality

within acceptable social and family norms.

This is not an easy challenge for many parents to meet, but if you can help your children find their own way to fulfilling their destiny, they will feel good about themselves and confident in their abilities to succeed. You can also reinforce the message that just fitting in will never be good enough to allow them to reach their full potential. Each person needs to be not just himself or herself, but the best self he or she can be.



## **Set Your Child Up for Success**

Preparing for high school while in middle school is just as important as preparing for college while in high school. Students today need a work ethic that will serve them well throughout high school. But many times they are forced into that work ethic by necessity once they start college.

EduGuide--a national nonprofit organization that provides many guides, tools, and resources to help parents make the most of their children's education from cradle to college--offers advice for

parents for raising a successful student. The organization's downloadable publication, "Middle School EduGuide," also provides tip for keeping young adolescents safe.

The online publication is available free at [www.EduGuide.org/mseduguide](http://www.EduGuide.org/mseduguide).

EduGuide also recently launched an online community where parents and students can ask questions, get advice, and share experiences.



## Five Ways to Help Middle School Kids Delay Their First Drink

There's no time like the present to talk with your kids about the dangers of drinking alcohol, according to the Science Inside Alcohol Project of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Nearly 20 percent of 14 year-olds say they've been drunk at least once, according to the Surgeon General. And recent news points out dangers of alcohol use by the young:

- The Partnership for a Drug-Free America recently released a study that says 73 percent of 6,500 teens surveyed said school

stress caused them to drink and take drugs.

- A Columbia University student said "problem parents" who let their kids stay out past 10 p.m. on school nights are putting their children in situations where they are at risk for drinking and drug use.
- About 100 university leaders called for a national discussion of lowering the drinking age back to 18, saying it's not clear that 21 works.

The middle school years are crucial in the battle to prevent early alcohol use. Young adolescents' bodies and friendships are changing. They start pulling away from parents, yet seek out other adults for guidance. It's the most vulnerable time, specialists say, but also one of the last times adolescents still can be influenced by adults.

No one sets out to be a disengaged parent. But it's hard to be vigilant and talk to your kids about complicated issues when you are constantly on the go.

"As parents better understand the psychological effects of alcohol on the body and the fact that their children might be starting younger, it can motivate them to have this sometimes awkward conversation," said Shirley Malcom, head of the Education and Resources Directorate at the AAAS. Members of the AAAS Science Inside Alcohol Project are writing a book for middle school parents and developing an interactive web-based science and health curriculum explaining how alcohol affects adolescents' brains and bodies.

The team of experts suggests parents take these five steps to talk with their kids about alcohol:

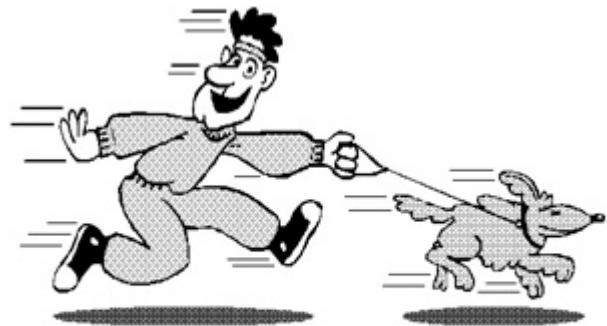
- **Find teachable moments.** If a celebrity your child admires admits to a drinking problem, talk about it. Ask your child if he or she knows anyone who drinks alcohol and whether it is at parties or has been brought into school. Keep the conversations going often. Answer the child's questions.
- **Talk to your kids when everything is fine.** Middle school students are volatile, hormonal beings. They are sweet and wonderful one moment and blow up the next. Pick a time when things are quiet and they're a captive audience, such as in the car on the way to school. Don't take no for an answer.
- **Engage your kids in the science of alcohol.** Adolescents are incredibly self-involved. Alcohol can cause memory loss, impair sports performance, incite embarrassing behavior, and affect how those who drink feel and look. Make your children aware of these facts. If there is a history of alcoholism in your family, discuss genetic predispositions toward alcohol abuse.
- **Be vigilant.** There's no alternative to monitoring your kids. Have an early curfew. Know where they are at all times. Even if you are not home on a weeknight, make sure you can reach your kids by phone. Get to

know their new friends and their parents. Find out what their rules and level of engagement are.

- **Learn to trust your child.** Now's the time when all the work you've put into creating a value system for your child begins to pay off. Set limits and enforce rules, but remember to give your child room to make decisions outside your comfort zone. Praise children when they do well. It's worth a thousand words.



**May 25<sup>th</sup>** Please remember all who have given their lives for freedom.



"So far it's working out great! The vet wanted him to get more exercise, and I've lost fifteen pounds!"