

# CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION NEWS STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT UPDATE

**JUNCTION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
MRS. MARY SAKUMA, SUPERINTENDENT/PRINCIPAL**

## Junction Staff Plans Parent Math Night



Last spring our teaching staff participated in an extensive evaluation and review process of the mathematics programs approved by the State for adoption. The programs Junction ultimately selected were also selected by nearly all schools in the county. With the adoption of any new curriculum materials comes the excitement of the new textbook...along with perhaps a little anxiety (on the part of

both students and parents ) about new formats, different ways for students to demonstrate what they're learning, and a different "look" to the homework. I want you to know that the Junction staff hears you and we want to provide an opportunity for you to learn more about our newly-adopted textbook series.

We invite all of you to attend a **Parent Math Night for enVision Math** (K-5) on Thursday, October 2 at 6:30 p.m. in the gym. (A separate session for **McDougall-Littell California Math & Algebra** (6th—8th) is being planned for another night.)

In the meantime, **you can help** by asking your child to talk with you about what he/she is learning in class. This holds the child accountable for his/her own learning and will help you determine whether he/she is in need of extra help. If it's clear that your child doesn't understand his/her math homework, write a note to the teacher or leave a phone message. See other homework tips inside this issue. We want to support your child's success, and we can do it better when we all work together!

### Special points of interest:

- **Parent Math Night for K-5 Parents: enVision Math, Thursday, October 2, 2008**
- **State Testing Results & Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement**

## Did you know?

School funding is based on actual student attendance days. Each year, schools (including ours) lose tens of thousands of dollars in state funding due to student absences. Of course, when a child is ill, he/she needs to stay at home. However, when families take vaca-

tions when school is in session, it ultimately has a negative impact on all student programs. Please make every effort to plan family vacations during our scheduled breaks. Thank you!

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Did you know? Students

who get enough sleep can concentrate better and learn more. For elementary school children, that means 10-11 hours a night. For middle school students, 9-10 hours is recommended.



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**Junction students continue to score at or above state averages on the CSTs**

## California Standards Tests (CSTs)

A few of you have asked me questions about last spring's California STAR testing results at Junction, and I thought it might be of benefit to everyone if I addressed some of these questions in a communication out to all parents.

Recently parents of (spring 2008) 2nd through 8th graders received the STAR Student Report that provides their students' 2008 test results for the **California Standards Tests (CSTs)** and other tests. *The purpose of the CSTs is to determine how well students are achieving California's content standards. The state target is for all students to perform at the proficient or advanced level on the CSTs.* Additionally, in early September,

the Accountability Progress Report (APR), which includes the Academic Performance Index (API) and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reports was released to the public.

The facts are as follows: ***Junction Elementary School District continues to perform at or above the statewide average for California Standards Tests results.*** Unfortunately, our API scores at both the elementary and the middle schools experienced a drop this year. While we remain well within the required levels of achievement required by federal law under No Child Left Behind, the results are not acceptable to us. We know our students can demonstrate a much higher

level of achievement. To address this, we are making changes in scheduling and class configurations, in pacing of instruction and benchmark testing, as well as carefully examining teaching practices, all with the aim of having a laser-like focus on student achievement.

***You can help support our efforts by emphasizing the importance of participation in class and of turning in assignments on time, by monitoring your child's homework (and making sure your middle school student is using his/her planner daily), and by letting your child's teacher(s) know when your child is experiencing difficulty.***

**Thank you for your support!**



## Junction Middle School Offers a Variety of Extracurricular Activities for Students

Junction Middle School is proud of its long-standing tradition of offering a variety of extracurricular activities for its students. Your middle school student has the opportunity to participate in the following

activities: **athletics** (including soccer, volleyball, basketball, baseball, softball, and track), **Art Club**, **Newspaper Club**, **Tennis Club** and **Student Council**.



These programs offer students an opportunity to develop important leadership and social skills as well as give students an outlet for development in areas of particular interest.



## Junction Adds Accelerated Reader Program Component

Junction Elementary and Middle Schools will continue to offer the **Accelerated Reader (AR)** program. Our goal is to make AR more of an integral part of our total reading curriculum.

This year we are adding the *STAR* (not to be confused with the state testing program) assessment component to our Accelerated Reader Program. Each

quarter or trimester, 2nd through 8th grade students will take a computerized reading assessment that will give teachers the following key pieces of information: 1) each student's independent reading level; 2) a level range within which students should select their books (to aide students, parents, and teachers in selecting appropriate reading material for students); and 3) a al-

ternate measure of the progress the student is making.

Accelerated Reader is a program designed to increase students' reading fluency and comprehension by providing meaningful practice. It encourages students to set long- and short-term goals. With the help of the assessment component, students can track their progress and visualize their own success!



**Our goal is to make Accelerated Reader an integral part of our Reading program**

## Music & Band Programs

Junction Elementary School District has a long-standing tradition of offering quality classroom music and band programs for our students.

Elementary students receive approximately 30 minutes of classroom music instruction per week. This class is taught by our music specialist, Mr. Chris Uchibori. This year we are piloting **Silver Burdett Making Music** which will provide de-



velopmentally appropriate music learning activities for students in grades kindergarten through fifth. This sequential curriculum builds students' knowledge and skills within and across grade levels and engages ALL students in the music making process.

Additionally, students in the 4th through 8th grades have the opportunity to participate in our outstanding band program.

Mr. Uchibori offers instruction to students from beginning to "Super Band" level. Last year our band participated in the local school band competition and came away with high honors, scoring higher than bands from much larger schools. For the past two years, Mr. Uchibori has worked with some of our more advanced students to prepare for the Chico State Solo & Ensemble competition. Both years our students have earned Superior marks.

**A 1999 study from the Arts Education Partnership indicated that students with higher levels of arts involvement were more likely to be high achievers on tests, were less likely to drop out by grade ten, and were more engaged with learning during the school day.**

## Arts Attack!

Beginning this year, all Junction Elementary School students will have the opportunity to have an "**Arts Attack!**"

This award-winning program (which we piloted at several grade levels last year) is a video-based art curriculum developed for

use in elementary and middle schools. (Our middle school students will experience the program as part of the "exploratory wheel.") The lessons are designed for learning to take place through hands-on experience, with the emphasis on art process rather than on lengthy presentations.

Program goals include: to teach every child to express him/herself through art, to understand the art elements and principles, to study the art of other artists, cultures, and historical periods, and to teach students to see and understand the aesthetic elements of art.



**The Visual & Performing Arts are an important part of your child's education at Junction**

## Junction is the Small District with BIG Results!

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

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### Our Mission

The mission of Junction Elementary School District, in partnership with students, family, and community, is to promote excellence, achievement, and self-worth, enabling students to be life-long learners and productive members of our changing world.

## Exploratory Wheel Adds to Middle School Curriculum

This year all middle school students will be participating in our newly-developed "Exploratory Wheel." This program has been developed to ensure that all middle school students have specific coursework (outside the core curriculum) that will help prepare them for their high school experience.

At Back-to-School-Night our teaching staff and I had an opportunity to share with you the courses our students will be taking during this time. For those of you who weren't able to attend, they are as follows:

**1<sup>st</sup> Quarter only: Botvin Life Skills for all 6<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade students:** This research-based course is the top-rated substance abuse prevention program in the nation. The course is required as part of our Local Educational Agency Plan under the No Child Left Behind Act. In the 2007-08 school year, all Junction Middle School students received the Level 1 course. This year, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> graders will receive Level 2 and 6<sup>th</sup> graders will receive Level 1 instruction.

**Foreign Language (Spanish) – Mrs. Andrade**

**Visual Arts (Arts Attack!) – Mrs. Hall**

**Computer Technology & Keyboarding – Mr. Marshall:** This course will be required for all 6<sup>th</sup> graders and will be offered 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters only

**Career Explorations & Financial Literacy – Mr. McCoy/Mr. Marshall (4<sup>th</sup> qu.)** This course will be required for all 8<sup>th</sup> graders and will be offered 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters

**Video Production – Mr. McCoy:** This course will be offered 4<sup>th</sup> quarter only.

## Student-Led Conferences at the Middle School

Junction Middle School is off to another great school year. This year's "buzz" includes talk about all the new programs and opportunities for student learning being offered this year.

For the first time ever, the middle school has instituted **Student-Led Conferences**, an opportunity for each student to share with his/her parent all that he/she is learning and accomplishing.

Students have set goals, are collecting work samples, test data,

and many other items they'll discuss with their parents. Although a few students have stated they're a little nervous, most are very excited about this opportunity.

Students are working hard in preparation for these conferences, which will take place on October 20 & 21.

If you have not verified the time of your conference, please call the middle school

office at 547-5494.



Any parent also wishing to schedule a traditional conference with their child's teachers can schedule that through the office. There are times available on October 22, 23, and 24.