



Mane Events

NOTES FROM MR. JONES

Blessings. By the time you get this, we will be half way through the current school year. I am very pleased with how our students are performing both in the classroom and around the school.

For me, Christmas is a time of thankfulness and reflection on the blessings we have. I am very blessed to be working at such a great school. We have an awesome faculty who work hard for our students to be successful. Our support staff is the greatest. And, of course, overall, our students are wonderful to work with. There are times when things aren't going as great as we would like and times when we don't always agree on what to do. However, day in and day out, the vast majority of our Mustangs are doing great. And that is a blessing for me.

Education in Florida is changing rapidly and many of the changes will affect our current students. Enclosed in this newsletter (page 3) is a chart outlining the graduation requirements for our current 6th, 7th and 8th grade students. The requirements get tougher for each grade level with the 6th grade having the greatest changes. Also included in this newsletter is a letter from Guyla Hendricks, our Chief Officer for Curriculum which explains the changes put forth by the state last year. Please note that these increases in graduation requirements are state law and will affect all students in Florida schools.

PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS

At the beginning of this school year, the School Board put into effect a policy which requires middle school students to pass all 12 core courses taken in middle school in order to be promoted to the 9th grade. This means that a student who fails a math, science, social studies, or language arts class must re-take and pass the class. Currently, the only way to get credit for a failed core course is to take it over the next year, take it online, or take it over via the credit recovery program. In the past, a summer credit recovery program was offered to 8th grade students who failed a core course. However, given the current school budget crisis, we can no longer guarantee an option for summer credit recovery. Therefore, students must assume that they must pass all 12 required middle school core courses before the end of this school year. We are offering credit recovery for 8th grade students during our after-school tutoring program. Any parent with questions about this policy and whether their child may be affected should contact Mr. Jones or Ms. Lamb, our guidance counselor

There have also been changes in the promotion requirements for middle school students which are covered in an article in this newsletter. Overall, this is a time of great change in what is expected of our students. My suggestion to parents is to know what the academic requirements are for your child and keep up with their progress in school. It has never been more important for parents, teachers, and administrators to work together for our children.

TUTORING

In order to help students with failing grades, we offer tutoring on Monday, Tuesday and Wed. afternoons in the cafeteria from 3-4pm. Transportation is available for students who need it. There are two buses available. Please contact Mrs. Bouton at 689-7229 to find the stop nearest to your home.

Morning tutoring is also provided on Monday, Wed. and Thursday mornings from 7-8am in room 610. Parents must bring students to morning tutoring.

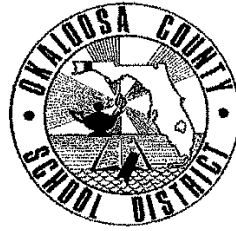
STUDENT'S FAILING GRADES

As of Tuesday, December 7, there are 48 students who would be retained if this were the end of the school year. This includes 10 sixth and 10 seventh grade students with at least 3 F's and 28 eighth grade students with two or more F's. There are an additional 19 sixth grade and 18 seventh graders with 2 F's who would have to make those classes up next year. There are 47 eighth graders with 1 F. Should budget woes prevent Summer Intensive Studies students could be in jeopardy of being retained. Please check your child's grades and, if they have an F in a core class, help get them motivated to do what they have to in order to pull their grade up in the second semester.

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OKALOOSA COUNTY

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
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Dear Parents,

With the passing of Senate Bill 4, a number of changes are being implemented which impact course requirements for graduation. These changes are based on the following research:

- There is clear and compelling evidence which shows that the level of coursework taken in high school is the best predictor of success in college and in the workplace.
- Data shows a strong correlation between taking higher-level mathematics courses in high school and achieving success in college and employment in high-growth jobs.
- Rigorous coursework matters for all students of all ability levels.

It is important that you are aware of these changes in order to plan and prepare for your child's continued success. In order to graduate from high school, this requires that students take certain courses and, in many cases, take the state end-of-course exam for that course. These new graduation requirements will be phased in. In the beginning stage, students will have to earn credit for the course and, if the end-of-course exam is required, the exam will count as 30% of the 2nd semester grade. In subsequent years, in order to earn credit for the course, students will have to "pass" the end-of-course exam with a Level 3. On the next page, you will find a chart that identifies which state end-of-course exams will be administered to entering Grade 9 students, by year of entry, and whether the exams will count as a percent of the 2nd semester grade or must be passed with a level 3 to earn course credit.

For example, if your child will be a Gr. 9 student next year (2011-12), s/he will be required to take an Algebra 1 state end-of-course exam, and pass the exam with a Level 3. In addition, your child will be required to take a Geometry and Biology state end-of-course exam with the exam counting 30% of his/her 2nd semester grade. At the bottom of the chart, the FCAT exams are listed which will be administered to your child, indicating which exam and what level are required for graduation.

It is understandable that this information may be a bit confusing. Please don't hesitate to contact your child's guidance counselor or principal if clarification is needed.

Respectfully,

Guyla Hendricks
Chief Officer, Quality Assurance and Curriculum Support

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TELEPHONE (850) 833-3100 FAX (850) 833-3436

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GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

| CURRENT 8TH GRADE Class of 2015 | CURRENT 7TH GRADE Class of 2016 | CURRENT 6TH GRADE Class of 2017 |
|--|--|--|
| Must pass Algebra I for graduation. Alg. I EOC* must be passed with a Level 3** or higher. | Must pass Algebra I for graduation. Alg. I EOC* must be passed with a Level 3** or higher | Must pass Algebra I for graduation. Alg. I EOC* must be passed with a Level 3** or higher |
| Must pass geometry for graduation. The geometry EOC counts as 30% of the 2 nd semester grade.*** | Must pass geometry for graduation. The geometry EOC must be passed with a Level 3** or higher | Must pass geometry for graduation. The geometry EOC must be passed with a Level 3** or higher |
| Must pass biology I for graduation. The biology EOC counts as 30% of the 2 nd semester grade. | Must pass biology I for graduation. The biology EOC must be passed with a Level 3** or higher | Must pass biology I for graduation. The biology EOC must be passed with a Level 3** or higher |
| | Must pass algebra II for graduation. | Must pass algebra II for graduation. |
| | | Must pass either chemistry I or physics plus one other equally rigorous course for graduation. |
| Summary: Must pass algebra I, geometry, and biology to graduate. 1 EOC (alg. I) required to graduate. | Summary: Must pass algebra I, geometry, and biology to graduate. 3 EOC's (algebra, geometry, biology) required to graduate. | Summary: Must pass algebra I, geometry, and biology to graduate. 3 EOC's (algebra, geometry, biology) required to graduate |
| FCAT: Grade 9/10 Reading and Grade 10 Writing must be passed to graduate. Algebra I EOC replaces 10 th grade FCAT Math. | FCAT: Grade 9/10 Reading and Grade 10 Writing must be passed to graduate. Algebra I EOC replaces 10 th grade FCAT Math. | FCAT: Grade 9/10 Reading and Grade 10 Writing must be passed to graduate. Algebra I EOC replaces 10 th grade FCAT Math. |

* EOC: End Of Course exam. The exams referred to here will be developed by the Florida Department of Education.

** The minimum acceptable level will be similar to scoring Level 3 on FCAT or around 70%. Students will get credit for the course, but cannot receive a diploma until the acceptable minimum score is obtained on the EOC exam. The EOC requirement for some ESE students may be waived based on the student's IEP.

*** All high school courses are semester courses. The EOC will be averaged in with the 2nd semester grade and will have no affect on the 1st semester grade. To get credit for a course required for graduation, both semesters must be passed.



Shoal River Middle School
3200 Redstone Avenue East
Crestview, FL 32539

Return Service Requested

Phone: 850-689-7229
Student Svs. 689-7235
Guidance 689-7447
Fax: 850-689-7245

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Registration for courses taken next year will begin in “February through the HORSE advisory period. We will place the curriculum guide on the SRMS website for parents and students to view.

The Shoal River Mustang Band is finishing up a very busy fall season. We enjoyed supporting our football team at the home games as well as a few pep rallies. On Saturday, November 6, we supported our veterans with a performance in the Veteran’s Day Parade. Last Saturday, December 4th, we marched in the festive Crestview Christmas Parade. On December 7th, we performed our annual Christmas Concert in our gym. Congrats go out to five of our band members. These students auditioned for and were chosen for membership in the 2011 Okaloosa County Middle School Honor Band: Esther Hunker, Sally Yang, CJ Philpott, Joshua Williams and Coltin Fortner.

Parental Involvement

All of this discussion on academic requirements, changes in the rules, and parental involvement leads me to one final note to our parents. Back on October 25 and 26, we had two opportunities for parents to get first-hand information on the above topics as well as get some great tips on how to support your child. At the “Get FED (Family Education Development)” nights we provided free pizza and hotdogs for parents and students as well as free baby-sitting. During this time, we shared the information on the promotion and graduation requirement changes and were able to answer parent questions concerning our students’ academic future in this changing environment. We also provided great tips on helping children study and using available state and local resources. We were terribly disappointed that the total attendance for both nights was about 80 parents. We are considering having another Get FED night in the spring and hope more parents will attend. The issues at stake here are great and the impact of these changes on our students’ academic future is certain.

BULLYING POLICY

As most everyone is aware, bullying has become a national issue. While bullying has been around throughout recorded history, it has become a major problem due to reported suicides from bullying victims. From elementary schools to colleges, we are working to make students more aware of the possible repercussions of their actions when they choose to harass or bully a fellow student. The State of Florida has passed bullying laws and the Okaloosa County School Board has enacted a tough bullying policy. The most important thing that parents can do to help us is make sure that, should your child tell you about a situation at school that could be harassment or bullying, please make sure the school is aware. We will investigate every report and will take action against those responsible.