



# DOLORES MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

October 2013

## *What do teachers do during Early Release Time on Wednesdays?*

This is a topic that I get asked on a regular basis. Let me describe some of the activities that our teachers are busy working on every Wednesday afternoon. Our teachers have time set aside to look at data on student achievement, discuss the primary questions of:

- \*What do we want our students to know and be able to do? (Student Learning Outcomes-Standards)
- \*How will I know they learned the concepts and content important to move on? (Assessments)
- \*How do we respond when our students do not understand the material? (Remediation)
- \*What will I do if a student already understands the material? (Extension opportunities)

Our faculty have been engaged in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). These teams are working to develop guaranteed and viable curriculum. As described by Robert Marzano, a prominent author and researcher in the field of education; guaranteed and viable curriculum is the content and skills that every student needs to know and be able to do. They must be provided adequate time to acquire the skills and content. Each subject area has a given set of standards set forth by the State.

### **In this issue:**

Early Release Wednesdays.  
Construction Updates  
NEW MS Science Elective Class  
Class reports from Mr. Somers  
Activity/Athletic Updates  
Important Dates

Working in PLCs, the staff must come together to identify most important concepts and skills required to create a strong scope and sequence. They must also determine appropriate forms of assessment and activities to engage students in the material. Teachers must also respond to the student data to determine extension and remediation steps, if needed. Working together allows for a rich conversation within departments to discuss vertical articulation and scope and sequences for each grade level, and within grade-level teams to discuss individual student performance across multiple subject areas. This dialogue is essential to increase student achievement in all areas.

Some time has also been set aside for professional development opportunities. These will include ways to improve professional practice. Senate Bill 10-191 Great Teacher, Great Leaders was designed improve instruction in the classroom through defining effective teachers and principals. We will be going deep into the new evaluation system to understand what we need to do to move from good to great.

Sincerely,

Brandon Thurston  
Secondary Principal  
Dolores Schools

## Construction Update:

New drawings are available in the MS/HS offices, as well as the Elementary Office. The architects are working with the General Contractor FCI to finalize orders and prep for upcoming demolition. We have been able to work through many design challenges related to floodplain issues, fire hydrant placement and pressures, safety and security, and more. We will be breaking ground around the first of the year.



## A NEW CLASS FOR THE MIDDLE SCHOOL...SCIENCE ELECTIVE

Some 7th and 8th grade students are involved in a project-based learning unit about physics. The science elective classes participated in a "choose your own adventure" survey about their science interests. Their top choice was "The Physics of Amusement Parks."

Students are currently building their own scale amusement park rides, and creating documents that explain the physics involved in the ride. Does their ride rely on the potential energy from an object's position? How much force can their ride generate based upon its acceleration?

"While making our amusement park, I learned Newton's laws. By dropping a gumball down our Candyland rollercoaster, it will gain acceleration and momentum. It needs to gain enough acceleration and force to make it around the loop," said 7th grader Elena Cosner.

"The students work well together when they get to do something they enjoy," said 12th grader JT Kotarski, who is a peer mentor in the class. "They each add their individual input about what will work and what will be cooler. They each have a part in the final product."

"[This project] has helped me understand that gravity isn't the only part of rollercoasters. They rely on friction and centripetal force," said 8th grader Hailey Burress. 7th grader Tatum Majors added, "Our Pirate Ship ride has to have marbles inside it that roll back and forth to keep enough momentum for it to keep swinging."



Photo caption: 7th grader Kevin Lyons and 8th graders Matthew Seckman and Justin Purkat work together to overcome problems with their "splash zone".

## SAVE THE DATES...

Oct 25th District PD

November 27th-29th Holiday-No School

December 19th End of Quarter 2

December 20th-January 6th Winter Break

Dolores School Board meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month in the District Office 7pm

Dolores Middle School Steering Committee and the High School Steering Committee are meeting together 4pm, the 4th Wednesday of the month in the MS/HS office

Dolores Re-4a Accountability meets at 4pm at District Office the 3rd Tuesday of the Month

What's going on in Mr. Somers classes?

**Psychology:** We have completed one and three-quarters units in the textbook which cover the basics of Psychology, as well as the development of personality. We have viewed a documentary entitled "Raising Cain" which reflects on the realities of male youth in our contemporary society. We have experienced excellent discussions about many psychology-related topics such as: Families of origin, effects on children from "fatherless" homes, animal consciousness and the elements that comprise any successful relationship. All students are currently working on a "relationships" independent research project which is due at the end of the first semester. We have been brainstorming and developing survey questions to gather data from friends and family. These students are pursuing a for-college-credit course that is discussion-based and involves a great deal of reading, researching, writing and processing.

**Spanish ONE:** Students in Spanish One curriculum are off to an excellent start! We began with a review of the 30 letter Spanish alphabet and then memorized rhymes with the Spanish vowel sounds. We have moved steadily into the textbook acquiring multiple basic grammar points including: how to say, "I hate, I like, I love, temporal expressions (always - never), favorite past times, the verb "to be" and many adjectives to describe ourselves and others. We have begun to successfully distinguish between masculine and feminine adjectives and nouns. We are beginning to master the concept of nouns having a masculine or feminine gender and are working to insure our subject- verb and subject-adjective are in agreement. We have reviewed vocabulary and grammar concepts via board races and completed dictations.

**Spanish Two:** Students have resumed instruction where we left off last year. We reviewed adjectives of nationality, reviewed common classroom objects and school subjects. Students completed projects wherein they took over the task of High School principal for the day and established some creative rules for the day. Students have made "Noticias Corrientes" (Current Event) oral presentations for peers and completed dictations as well.

### *STUDENTS GET INVOLVED!!!*

We have many great opportunities to get involved in school. Did you know that a student who participates in a club or sport on average earns a significantly higher G.P.A than non-active students. Multiple studies have shown that not only does participating in activities likely improve your G.P.A., but it also reduces drop out rates, builds a sense of community in schools, and has positive lasting affects on self-esteem.

### *PARENTS/COMMUNITY MEMBERS GET INVOLVED!!!*

#### **Dolores Middle School Parent Teacher Association**

We are starting a new Middle School PTA this year. This is an exciting new parent organization coming together to support DMS students and staff, If interested please contact Liisa Mecham at [holaprivet@yahoo.com](mailto:holaprivet@yahoo.com)

#### **BOOSTER CLUB**

A lasting tradition here in Dolores. The Boosters and Bear Backers raise thousands of dollars for our students each year. They support athletics and activities ranging from 6th Grade Moab Trip to new uniforms and equipment. Contact Lenetta Shull for meeting dates/times or for donation information. [kx4les0207@hotmail.com](mailto:kx4les0207@hotmail.com)

### **What's this?**

It is a QR code. If you have a QR scanner on your phone and access to the internet, just scan this image and it will take you directly to the Dolores RE-4A homepage. Keep up with announcements, construction projects and more.





Amy Loughry-  
Secondary Art Teacher

# The Art Department

The Dolores Food Market has generously donated pumpkins again this year for art students to carve. 7th-12th grade art students will be carving pumpkins on Halloween day during class and the fruits of their labor will be on display that evening in front of the market.

Student art work will be on display at the Dolores library for the month of November. There will be a reception on Thursday November 21st from 6-8pm at the library with refreshments and live music. Come support student art!



## Middle Volleyball- Coach C

The Dolores Middle School Volleyball Team had a very successful season. A total of 42 girls played this year on the A, B, and C teams. All three squads won many games, with the A team losing only to Ignacio in the regular season, and C team losing only to Dove Creek. At the end-of-season League Tournament on October 12 in Norwood, the A Team took second overall (out of 9 teams) in the San Juan Basin League to Ignacio. The scores of the final three games against Ignacio were 22-25, 25-22, and 22-25, so we made Ignacio sweat in order to earn their win. Thanks to A team Coach Tiffany Hill, B Team Coach Cathy Cullicott, and C Team Coach Ben Tolin, and congratulations to all 42 girls on an excellent season!



## Middle School Fall Athletics and Activities Recap

MS: Football ended the season with a strong showing against Blanding: The highlight of the season was a big win against cross county rival Cortez in week 6.

MS Boys basketball is under way with over 30 athletes out for practice. The first game is on Oct 26 vs. Norwood and Ridgway at Ridgway. The updated schedule can be found on the Dolores website.

Knowledge Bowl kicked off their competitive season with a trip to Dove Creek. The Middle School had two teams compete. Both teams did well to start off the new season.



# High School Fall Athletics and Activities Recap



Varsity Football: Final Season Game is Friday Oct 25 vs. Ignacio at 7pm. This will be our Parent Appreciation Night. Parents please arrive at the field at 6:15.

Volleyball finished the regular season second in the SJBL with a record of 6-2 in league. The team will compete in the district Tournament on Oct 26 at 10 am in Mancos. The Top three teams in the Tournament will continue on to Regional's. Good luck Lady Bears.

The Dolores Band is planning their annual Veterans Day program here at Dolores High School. The program will be held in the Auxiliary Gym on August 11th at 9am.

High School winter sports will begin practice on Nov 13. This includes Boys and Girls Basketball and Wrestling. Please contact the Activities office for more information.

High School Knowledge Bowl kicked off its season with a first place finish at Dove creek on Oct 21. Congrats to these fine young Scholars.



\*\*\*\*\* Senior Jakob Rudosky took 5th place in the State 4A golf tournament. Dolores High School would like to congratulate him on this great accomplishment!



**Dolores School District RE-4A**

***Scott Cooper, Superintendent***

P.O. Box 727 / 100 N. 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Dolores, Colorado 81323

Voice 970-882-7255 Fax 970-882-7685  
[www.dolores.k12.co.us](http://www.dolores.k12.co.us)