

# PLAIN TALK

## Quarterly news and views from Sierra Vista Junior High

### Important Information

#### School Holidays

**Memorial Day:** May 31

**Minimum Days:** April 22, April 29, May 5,  
June 2, June 3 (last day of school)

#### Grading Timeline

**April 30** End of Quarter 4 Progress  
Report grading period.

**May 6** Quarter 4 Progress Report  
Grades MAILED home.

**June 3** End of 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter grading  
period.

**June 9** Quarter 4 Report Card Grades  
MAILED home.

### Principal's Message

Greetings Sierra Vista Families,

Believe it or not, we are in the home stretch. The 4<sup>th</sup> quarter has begun, as has the countdown to the end of the year. However, there are many important events yet to come that are very important to your students and Sierra Vista.

#### STAR TESTING

As you know, the STAR exam is one of the most important tests given during the year, and it means a great deal to us at Sierra Vista. In recent history, Sierra Vista has demonstrated some of the strongest growth of any school in the district. Last year, we had the largest increase in scores in the district. These results give us confidence that our focused efforts on student achievement are working. It also informs us that parents and students also see this as an important tool in our efforts to help us reach the goal of education for all students.

Information gathered from the STAR exam is increasingly being used in the placement of students as they matriculate from grade to grade and school to school. This emphasizes the importance of this exam for your student. The STAR exam also gives information on how a student is progressing towards the California High School Exit Exam that each student takes in his or her 10<sup>th</sup> grade year. This exam is now required of every student in order to receive a high school diploma. To stress the importance of the STAR test, the Hart District began publishing student results on all official high school transcripts.

The STAR testing schedule will be similar to previous years with the exception of the final week. We coordinate our testing to preserve as much instructional time as possible without having the students suffer from test fatigue. We have three testing dates, each approximately one week apart. The first two testing days are adjusted minimum days, with the final day a regular minimum day.

**Thursday, April 22 - STAR testing**  
(adjusted minimum day 7:45-12:00)

**Thursday, April 29 - STAR testing**  
(adjusted minimum day 7:45-12:00)

**Wednesday, May 5 - STAR testing** (regular  
minimum day 7:45-11:35)

Here are ways you can help your student do well on the STAR exams as we continue our partnership in your student's success:

- Review your student's scores from last year and previous STAR tests, and set goals for this year.
- Ensure your student has a good night's sleep prior to testing days.
- Ensure your student has a healthy breakfast on the days of the tests.

- You can find more information at the state's education website, [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov). Select the "Testing and Accountability" tab then select the link to the STAR information screen.

## END OF YEAR ACTIVITIES

Due to the cancellation of a formal promotion ceremony, the schedule of 8<sup>th</sup> grade activities at the end of the year has changed. We are excited to celebrate with our 8<sup>th</sup> graders through a number of activities.

Thursday, May 13 - 8<sup>th</sup> grade awards night  
 Tuesday, June 1 - Yearbook Distribution  
 Wednesday, June 2 - 8<sup>th</sup> grade Disneyland Trip  
 Wednesday, June 2 - 7<sup>th</sup> grade awards day  
 Thursday, June 3- 8<sup>th</sup> grade BBQ celebration



You can refer to our website for times and details of all upcoming Sierra Vista events.

Best wishes,  
 Mark Crawford  
 Principal  
 Sierra Vista Junior High School

## AP CORNER

**Bullying:** Bullying is a problem on every campus and Sierra Vista is no different. As always, we continue to encourage parents to talk to their students about bullying. It is important that they understand what bullying is and to report it when they see it. Page 14 in the student planner is a great resource that details what Sierra Vista defines as bullying.

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Strikes:** As we approach the end of the year, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Strikes policy will be starting. 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who are not following school rules will earn "strikes." The following policy will be in place starting the week of April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2010:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Strike— At minimum, a Saturday School and/or additional school consequences.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Strike—Loss of Disneyland and school consequences
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike—Loss of 8<sup>th</sup> Grade BBQ Celebration and school consequences.

*8<sup>th</sup> Grade Academically In-Eligible Students:*

- 1<sup>st</sup> Strike-At minimum, A Saturday School and/or additional school consequences
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Strike-Loss of 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Celebration
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Strike- Suspension

**\*\* Student will have six days to earn the activity back. However, if they earn a strike with less than six days before the next activity then the activity can not be earned back. The six days must be days present at school with no further incident.**

**Dress Code:** For the girls, please remember we have a two inch strap rule on tank tops and shorts need to be of modest length. For the boys, no oversize clothing or sagging pants. Boys should also be reminded that baggy plaid shorts with socks pulled up, in any color, are not allowed on campus. Be sure your student's shorts fit properly at the waist and that socks are low or ankle style socks.

Because the temperature is heating up, some of our girls are trying to dress with less. For example, we are noticing tank tops that do not meet the 2" requirements and very short shorts. As summer approaches, please make sure, your student is following the dress code. You can also refer to the student planner for the official Sierra Vista Dress Code Policy.

**When students are in violation of the dress code, many times they are assigned loaner clothes. Students need to return loaner items washed within five days in order to collect any confiscated items. Students who do not return loaner items will receive a Saturday School. This could also result in 8<sup>th</sup> graders earning strikes.**



### **Awards Ceremonies Coming**

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Thursday,  
May 13 @ 7:00 P.M.

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade:** Wednesday,  
June 2 @ 9:00A.M.

Receiving an award is  
an honor. We

encourage students to dress in a manner that reflects the occasion, i.e. nice dress pants (no jeans), simple dresses or skirts for girls. For boys: collared shirts (no t-shirts) and pants (no jeans). High heels are discouraged, since seating is in the grass area.

### **Dismissal**

Students are not allowed on any other campus after dismissal. This includes other junior highs, elementary schools, and high schools.

### **CADRE Seminar**

William S. Hart Union High School District Presents a District- Wide/City-Wide CADRE (Comprehensive Alcohol and Drug Reduction Education) Parent/Student Seminar

**Location:** West Ranch High School Theatre

**Date:** May 4, 2010

**Time:** 7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

The William S. Hart Union High School District is hosting a District-wide/City-wide CADRE parent/student drug awareness seminar on May 4, 2010, from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., in the new West Ranch High School Theater. We are encouraging all schools in Santa Clarita to participate.

Sergeant Tom Lorenz of the Glendale Police Department will be the keynote speaker. He will offer information regarding drug and alcohol use and abuse by school age children in the local community. On this particular evening, he will talk about trends in drug abuse, getting high on over-the-counter drugs, and the use of marijuana

This seminar will expose attendees to the latest phenomenon in substance abuse and addiction. The abuse of over-the-counter (OTC) drugs is a growing problem in our community. OTC drugs are cheap and widely available methods for getting high and are abused by adolescents and young adults. Attendees will learn about OTC drug pharmacology and will become familiar with methods on how the drug is used. We will also have a segment on marijuana, the Myths of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol ( $\Delta$ 9-THC).

There will also be a presentation on how the CADRE program works and an opportunity to enroll students in the district's voluntary random drug testing program. Handout materials will be provided by the MEDTOX DAR program, which conducts the district's drug testing.

The evening program is for students, parents, family, neighbors, and friends. It is an educational program to offer an insight into what our students have been exposed to in the way of illegal drugs. We look forward to seeing Santa Clarita parents and students at this important event. A drawing for free Magic Mountain tickets will be held for students in attendance. Please e-mail Dr. Darryl S. Adams at [dadams@hartdistrict.org](mailto:dadams@hartdistrict.org) if you have any questions.

### **Notes from the ASB office:**

This quarter ASB is dedicating the next six weeks to honor and recognize all the staff at Sierra Vista. We begin by recognizing our amazing custodians, followed by our campus supervisors, teacher assistants, administrative assistants, administration, and teachers. The kids who earned perfect attendance will be attending a trip to Magic Mountain on May 27th.

The Disneyland trip is scheduled for Wednesday, June 2nd. Permission slips went out on Friday, April 23. Sales are from April 26 to May 7, no exceptions. Students

must have a valid ID card, the permission slip, which should be signed in three places, and payment ready when they go to the ASB office. A letter with complete details was included with the permission slip. Please be sure you read it over carefully. Additionally, friends that want to be on the same bus with one another must turn in the completed permission slips and payment to the ASB office at the same time. Please check out the SV website for details. The 8th grade BBQ will be on Thursday, June 3rd from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. 8<sup>th</sup> graders eligible to attend should not arrive before 8:45 a.m. We are planning an amazing and memorable day for our 8th graders.

**CHECKS**...Please put your student's I.D. number on all checks turned in at school. Also, any check returned to us for insufficient funds, closed accounts, etc. will be charged a \$10 return fee, and your student will be placed on the CASH ONLY list for the remainder of the school year. Students who have not cleared the returned check will not be allowed to purchase tickets for dances or end of the year activities until this has been taken care of. Please contact Rose Wagenaar at ext. 2033 if you have any questions regarding this.



**GIFT CARDS**...Any donations of gift cards would be greatly appreciated. These cards are given out to students during the year as prizes and to thank students for doing something extra. Please send your donation to the ASB office.

### **Box Tops for Education**

The Painless Way.....  
Everyone knows how hard it is in these tough economic times for schools to be able to provide for additional programs and extras for the students. Various fundraisers are offered from time to time, all of which do involve purchasing of an item(s) and services. There is a simple, "PAINLESS"

way to raise some funds which does not involve extra purchasing.

Simply go through your pantry and look for items that you have already purchased that feature BOX TOPS on the wrapper or box. Many of us use these items all the time, and what could be easier than clipping out those Box Tops and sending them in? Indeed, at the junior high school level the hardest part of this is having your student bring them and remember to turn them in!

Sierra Vista raises about \$400 a year through Box Tops for Education, and while it does not seem much, every dollar does help. We would like to increase this amount to \$500 this year. There are collection boxes in each of the team leader's classrooms as well as the receptionist's desk. There is a monthly drawing, and the winning student wins a gift certificate.

Write the name of your student and team on the back of the Box Tops and send them in. For those of you who have a large quantity of box tops, and writing the names seems daunting, simply put them in a bag and write the name of the student and team name on the bag, and we will do the rest. Many parents have confessed that they have quite the collection, but their students will not bring them in. If this is the case, please call Indira at 661-803-5164 to make arrangements to collect them from you. **LOOK, CLIP, SEND/CALL! PAINLESS!**

### **News from the Library**



#### ***Start looking for those books!***

The end of the school year is quickly approaching. **All library books are due to the library on Friday, May 21<sup>st</sup>.** Students will still need a book to read daily during R.E.L.A.X. The public library or home libraries are good alternate sources of books at this time. Teachers are scheduled

to bring their classes to the library to return their textbooks during the week of May 24<sup>th</sup>. Students who owe library and/or textbooks will not be allowed to participate in end of the year activities, and will face delays in receiving textbooks in August for the next semester. Please locate these books now.

**Get a head start on your first SRC Quiz in August.**

State standards require students to read 1,000,000 words each year. The average book for junior high students has 100,000 words. Therefore, we require that students read at least two books per quarter in order to meet this standard.

During the summer, it would be helpful for students to read the first required book for their SRC testing. It is called Rules by Cynthia Lord. Both 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will be tested on this book in August. A second book is only required of 8<sup>th</sup> grade Enriched English students. This book is The Devil's Arithmetic by Jane Yolen.

More details about SRC may be found at <http://www.hartdistrict.org/sierra/library/index.html>.

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade Bookmark and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Poster Contest Winners!**

All students were required to submit an entry to their English teacher for a grade and a chance at a prize from the library. Students chose a favorite fiction book to illustrate on a bookmark or a poster. Prizes will be awarded at the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade award ceremonies at the end 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

Congratulations to the winners of the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Bookmark Contest:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Larissa Bird for Goose Girl
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Allison Miller for Dragon Rider
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Yuji Heid for Single Shard
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Place – Kayla Yonkers for Hoot
  - 5<sup>th</sup> Place – Adam Weideman for Coraline
- Honorable Mentions: Kareena Paz, Jocelyn

Gonzales, Dylan Lloyd, Dylan Locker, Kayla Kimball

Congratulations to the winners of the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Poster Contest:

Grand Prize – Aram Kazarian for Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets

1<sup>st</sup> Runner-up – Beau McMartin for Island of the Blue Dolphins

2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-up and Student Choice Winner – Sabrina Bhatti for Eclipse

3<sup>rd</sup> Runner-up – Samuel Gotcher for Jurassic Park

Honorable Mentions: Katelyn Bohmer, Rudy Larrea, Travis Gorman, Jayson Cayanan, Vanessa Lopez

**CJSF – Honor Society News**



The California Junior Scholarship Federation is the Honor Society of Sierra Vista JHS.

Students who will be in 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the fall of 2010 may apply if they have obtained at least a GPA of 3.5 when averaging their grades from their four academic classes from the spring 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter report cards. Ten hours of community service are required, along with an application. Candidates for the fall honor society may begin doing these service hours now and throughout the summer.

Lists of organizations in need of volunteers, application due dates, and general information about CJSF are listed on our Web site at <http://www.hartdistrict.org/sierra/index.php>. Click "On Campus" then "Honor Society."

Students who will be in 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the fall of 2010 should check with their new high school regarding the requirements for joining the California Scholarship Federation (CSF).

## Math Department

CONSUMER  
ELECTRONICS  
RECYCLING –

The Math Department is again collecting used (working or not) consumer electronics for recycling. You can send your items to your child's math teacher or take them to the office. The list of recyclables includes...



- ink jet and laser printer cartridges
- cell phones
- ipods
- digital cameras
- digital video cameras
- personal gaming systems (DS, PSP)
- notebook/laptop computers

We do not need chargers, cases, etc. for the items, only the items themselves. The items will be sent to a company called EcoPhones who recycle the electronics. Email Mrs. Coleman (kcolema@hartdistrict.org) for more information.

## The Surfers

Thank you to all our SURFERS parents for all of your support this year. We have truly enjoyed getting to know all of our students and are grateful for all you have done to assist your child through this very challenging first year of junior high school.

In Pre-Algebra/Algebra A, students are reviewing all concepts and California State Standards covered this year in order to prepare for the Final Exam taking place on May 26th. Algebra A will have a Chapter 5 Test on Thursday, May 27<sup>th</sup> and Friday, May 28<sup>th</sup>. Please help your child at home by making sure your student is allowing enough study time each night to adequately prepare for these exams.

In English, our main standard focuses for fourth quarter are narratives 2.1 and media persuasion 1.8. The narrative assignments immerse poetry as well, and students will have the opportunity to write various poems this quarter. The original narrative

assignments are due April 30th. The media project is done completely in class and includes a verbal portion as well. The final SRC reading quizzes are April 20th and May 18th. Also, the final notebook checks are April 28th and May 26th. Finally, the quarter final will be given on May 28th.

To wrap up the year in history, we will be discussing the Protestant Reformation, Age of Exploration, Scientific Revolution, and finally, the Enlightenment. Students will have the opportunity to work in groups during the Protestant Reformation project, examining the similarities and differences between the two churches during the Reformation. Later in the quarter, students will participate in a Columbian Exchange activity that focuses on the foods, animals, plants, and diseases which were exchanged between the "New" and "Old" worlds. Students will be assigned an item card and will make the journey from one world to the other, eventually analyzing the effects those items had on their environment.

This quarter in science, we will be looking at changes over time and how different species have come to fill all the niches on our planet. We will also be looking at how all of these organisms are classified into their different domains and kingdoms. At the end of the quarter, we will be building skills that the students will be using when they start Physical Science as 8th graders. We will be looking at graphing, data tables, recording data and experimental design. Our SURFERS team activity day is scheduled for May 17<sup>th</sup>. Students must have positive citizenship to attend, and any student receiving two N's or a U on their third quarter progress report will not be permitted to participate. Thank you for reminding your student to be on their best behavior in class and on campus so that they are able to share in this end of the year activity. Please continue to check SnapGrades for updated grades and homework information.

## The All Stars

The end of the year is rapidly approaching, and we are working hard to make these last few weeks memorable. The end of the year reward day is set for June 3<sup>rd</sup>, and any student who receives a U or more than one N, or missing work, will not be allowed to participate in that activity day.

In science, we are finishing the year strong. We have made our voyage through the Galapagos Islands, and we are now preparing for eighth grade science. It has been a great year.

In Pre-Algebra, we are preparing for the STAR by reviewing the 7th grade standards taught throughout this year. After STAR testing, we will be re-visiting integers, equations, and fractions in order to prepare for 8th grade.

In Algebra A we are going to be working on Chapter 5, which deals with writing linear equations in different forms.

In English, we are completing our fairytale unit, and we will be moving on to writing our narrative stories.



We are also going to focus on media persuasion techniques while looking at television, radio

and T.V. commercials, and print ads.

We end this year in history with a study of the Early Modern Era, specifically Exploration, the Enlightenment, and the Scientific Revolution. We will be focusing on key concepts that lay the foundation for our modern economic and governmental systems today. It has been a fun and challenging year exploring the History of our world!

## The Dream Team

Welcome to the final stretch! The year is almost over, and here's how we've been wrapping it up:

Mr. Harper's classes have investigated the split of Christendom during the Protestant Reformation. We are now exploring the world with Columbus, Magellan, and many other great adventurers that sailed all around the unknown world. Next, we will learn about great scientists like Galileo and Newton and about great philosophers like Voltaire and John Locke.

In Miss Terranova's science class, we are discussing natural selection and the theory of evolution. Later in the quarter, students will begin learning about geologic events that have occurred throughout Earth's long history. And finally, we will wrap up the year by preparing students with the skills they need to succeed in 8<sup>th</sup> grade science.

Ms. Stauch's classes will examine the various ways persuasion is used through speech and media. Students will finish the quarter by combining all of the reading and writing strategies taught throughout the year and begin their first in-class Book Clubs.

In Mrs. Skoczylas's Algebra 1AB class, we are heading into the home stretch and currently working on Ch. 12. In Algebra A, we are reviewing pre-algebra standards and will be finishing the year with linear equations.

We also want to thank all of you wonderful Dream Team parents who have volunteered or contributed in some way this year! Working together—parents, teachers, and students—is what helps all of our students be successful. We wish you a relaxing summer!

## Extreme Team



The Extreme Team will be closing out the year with a field trip to North Oaks Park on May 7, a team activity to experience Disney's Earth on May 28, and an end of the year activity on June 2. If you are interested in joining us to chaperone our park field trip, please contact Mr. Copenhagen at [mcopenh@hartdistrict.org](mailto:mcopenh@hartdistrict.org).

In Miss Clark's science class, fourth quarter is dedicated to studying how selective pressures in nature cause species to change over time. While pretending to be birds with various shaped "beaks" in our Adaptations Lab, we see that having advantageous traits increases the likelihood of survival. We will complete the quarter by practicing the critical skill of creating and reading data tables and graphs, in order to prepare for eighth grade.

In Mrs. Caneday's English class, we are mastering our writing skills through journals, poems, and narratives, all written in response to our fourth quarter class novel, The War Between the Classes. We are joined this quarter by a student teacher, Mr. Shane Topolinski. We will be wrapping up the quarter with a media unit in which we analyze and recreate persuasive techniques used in the media.

## The Majestics

Majestic Parents/Guardians,  
Welcome to Quarter Four! Here's what we're working on:

English is into poetry. We have been studying the various types of poems while identifying the figurative language used and the deeper message intended. Check out page 63 in the notebook for the upcoming Poetry Project. On Wednesday, May 12, each class will meet in the MPR for the annual Poetry Slam where students present their poems on stage to an audience of

Plainsmen. Check out our work at [www.wix.lpnay.com/majesticpoetryproject](http://www.wix.lpnay.com/majesticpoetryproject)

Science is out of this world as we study astronomy. This final quarter of 8th grade we are exploring the universe to see what is out there. We will end the year with amusement park physics and rocketry. Students will learn about the physics of roller coasters as they design and test their own models. Other labs will focus on how spinning, swinging, and free fall rides produce those thrilling, stomach-in-your-throat type feelings. Our final project will be the construction of rockets with a launch date set for the week before school ends.



In history, students did an amazing job creating and presenting their Civil War PowerPoint presentations. They learned how to use important software as well as learned how to save and attach files to a flash drive. These are skills students will take to the high school and beyond. As the May 26th deadline approaches for community service projects, students need to complete their 10 hours of service and also their one page summary in order to get credit and receive their completion certificates. I am very proud of the different service organizations students have signed up to help this year. I am confident that students will continue to embark on a lifetime of service in our community. The Majestic teachers are excited about the May 28<sup>th</sup> Santa Barbara Field Trip and want to extend major appreciation to all our parents who volunteered to make our trip a successful and a memorable experience for our students. We also need volunteers for our May 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Ellis Island Simulation. Notices went home to students, and if you are interested in volunteering please contact Cristina Wyatt at [svparentvolunteers@gmail.com](mailto:svparentvolunteers@gmail.com).

As the year quickly comes to a close, all of us on the Majestic Team would like to sincerely thank our students for being so terrific and our families for being so involved throughout the many events we have had this year. We wish every student continued success, and we feel confident that they are prepared to venture on to a successful high school experience and beyond. Congratulations Majestics!  
Majestic Team Teachers: Mrs. Parkinson, Mrs. Pennay, Mrs. Velazquez

### **The Goonies**

In history, Goonies students started the quarter off with STAR testing review. Students will be tested on 6th, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8th grade history. Students will continue to explore United States through the Progressive Era. They will soon be preparing for the much awaited Ellis Island Simulation as well. We will also say goodbye to Mrs. Acquaviva as she goes on maternity leave, and we will welcome Mr. Drabinski, who joins the Goonies team teaching history for the rest of the year.

In science, the Goonies are speeding through astronomy. We have stopped by all the planets and are heading into the rest of the galaxy. We are covering the main topic that will be covered in the STAR Test before we head into a quick review session next

week that will cover all the state standards on the STAR test in chemistry, physics, and astronomy.



After the test, we will return to our astronomy discussions and talk about the theories of the origin of the universe, black holes, and dark

matter. At the end of the year, the 8th grade science department will be organizing some big experiments that review both physics and Astronomy.

Finally, in English, Goonies students are beginning a poetry book project. They will be writing their very own poems using various techniques and literary devices they have learned, such as similes, metaphors, and symbols. Some of the kinds of poems they will write are acrostic, haiku, lyric, and narrative poems. Finally, they will have a chance to share their poetry in class and at the Sierra Vista Poetry Slam in May. All in all, the Goonies will be very busy this quarter!