



Vista Grande High School

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January 15, 2008

Upcoming Planned Events/Important Dates:

January 20	ALL sophomores (and others) will begin the NM High School Competency Exam
January 23	Last day of NMHSCE
January 21	VGHS Governing Council meeting at 5:15pm
January 23	Last day to finish the NMHSCE
January 26	Beginning of Spring Expedition immersion

Language Arts Instruction

We feel fortunate to have Ned Daugherty serving as a long-term sub at VGHS. He is energetic and committed to the students and the mission of VGHS. He is also a good instructor and has made the decision to officially enter the teaching profession. He applied for the vacant position and, along with other interested applicants, interviewed with our interview committee. He is applying to be a teacher through the NM Alternative Licensure Program. Upon his acceptance into the program he will be a licensed teacher. In the meantime, VGHS, like many other schools in New Mexico has a long-term substitute teacher in place. Mr. Dougherty is working closely with certified teachers on staff and students taking Language Arts have received full and proper credit for this class at VGHS and will continue to do so.

New Mexico High School Competency Exam (NMHSCE)

From January 20 through January 23 VGHS will be administering the NM mandated NMHSCE. All students in New Mexico must pass all portions of this test in order to receive a diploma. All 10th graders will be taking this test on these days. Any 11th graders who have not previously passed all sections of the NMHSCE will be retaking these sections of the NMHSCE. It is very important that your student come to school healthy, rested and well fed during each day of the tests.

Computers, Lockers and Student Possessions

Your child has been loaned a very valuable resource – an Apple Power Book. We have also made available a locker for the purpose of storing and securing their personal possessions as well as those loaned to them. It is each student's responsibility to keep track of and to responsibly care for all school supplies loaned to them (including their computers). If a student misplaces his/her computer, leaves it in an unsecured location or fails to properly care for the computer such that the computer is lost or damaged, the student may be held accountable for replacing the computer. It should be noted that the insurance purchased by families for student computers will not cover replacement following careless treatment of the computer.

School Agendas and School Supplies

Every student at VGHS is required to have a calendar agenda with them during all their classes. Students should record critical due dates and homework assignments in these agendas. Any students who lose track of their agendas will be required to purchase a new one for \$5.00. We will call families when this occurs to make sure that are students always have this important organizational tool. Students are also expected to keep a separate spiral notebook for each subject area

Elective Session #2

The second session of after-school electives begins January 20 and ends March 12, 2009. **To receive credit toward graduation**, students are required to complete two of the three elective sessions during the school year.

Spring Schedules

In the spring semester students will no longer have schedules requiring them to be in groups. Each student will have his/her own individual schedule. Ninth grade students will be taking these classes: Language Arts I, Modern US History, Biology, a math course, Spanish, Crew and a seminar course. Tenth grade students will be taking these classes: Language Arts II, Modern World History, Biology, a math course, Spanish, Crew and a seminar course. Eleventh grade students will be taking these courses: Chemistry, Humanities, Math, Crew, Internship and Leadership. These schedules will be given to students at the beginning of next week.

Spring Expeditions

The VGHS 9th and 10th grade Spring Expedition is called "Who's Stealing My Water...Whose Water Am I Stealing?" The 11th grade expedition is called "The Hero's Journey." These expeditions are the focus of our entire spring semester. Students in the 9th and 10th grade will be learning their course content while exploring water resources in Taos County including recreation, agriculture, riparian ecosystems, acequias, water conflicts and more. Students in the 11th grade will be learning their course content while exploring the lives and experiences of leaders, philosophers and other admirable individuals, as well as what they can learn from them.

Spring Immersion Experience

After the NMHSCE we will officially kick off our spring expedition by creating an overall experience that we hope will drive home the point of the importance of water. For three days water at VGHS will be a precious and limited resource. You and your student should expect some inconvenience – this is one of the points. During the immersion students will be attending their regular classes and experiencing what most people in the world experience all their lives – the preciousness of water and its life-supporting value. We expect that students will persevere as they experience this.

Taos School Board Elections

The Taos Municipal School Board will be holding its election for new board members on February 3. One candidate for the District 3 Seat who has been a determined advocate for school choice is Thomas "Chubby" Tafoya. We encourage you to look into the positions of all the candidates and to make an informed decision on February 3.