

Crater Renaissance Academy



NEWSLETTER DATE: JANUARY/FEB 2009

A note from the Principal: The 1st Principle of CES

In an earlier newsletter I shared the ten educational principles that Renaissance is implementing as a member of the Coalition of Essentials Schools (CES). We believe the implementation of these ideas will help RA become a great school. The first of the ten principles is "*The school should focus on helping young people learn to use their minds well.*" This article describe what this might look like in action and is our primary focus this year. The info in this article comes from the CES Project Benchmarks; these will serve as guideposts as we continue to develop RA. Some of the language is copied directly from the benchmarks; other parts have been summarized. See the article on the back of this newsletter for some news about our relationship with CES.

Essential questions -- questions and problems to which content represents answers. Essential questions on every level—from the most encompassing schoolwide questions to the specific question posed in a particular unit of a particular course—should shape the way students learn to think critically for themselves. Consequently, essential questions are related to the school's goals: that each student masters a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge.

A **performance-based assessment system** is an approach that asks students to demonstrate what they know, what they can do and what they understand. The important factors in moving to this system includes helping teachers change what they teach, how they teach it, creating higher expectations for student work, looking at the growth of student work regularly throughout their time in RA and inviting experts to regularly review our progress as a school.

Habits of mind are a set of thinking practices that help people develop their critical and creative thinking skills. They are the characteristics of what intelligent people do about problems whose resolution is not immediately apparent. That is, these are the mental habits individuals can develop to make their thinking and learning more self-regulated.

A school's goals should be simple: that each student master a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge. These skills and areas will reflect the traditional academic disciplines to some degree, the program's design should be shaped by what students need to be prepared for life after high school.

An **interdisciplinary curriculum** combines several school subjects into one active project or is organized to cut across subject-matter lines, bringing together various aspects of the curriculum into meaningful association. It focuses on broad areas of study since that is how children encounter subjects in the real world—combined in one activity.

Student-Centered Teaching and Learning focuses on the needs, abilities, interests, and learning styles of the students and should impact what is taught and the interactivity of courses. Teachers should serve as coaches, to provoke students to learn how to learn, rather than the more traditional model which places the teacher at its center in an active role and students in a passive, receptive role. Student voice should be central to the learning and requires students to be active, responsible participants in their own learning.

I encourage Renaissance parents and students – and teachers of course -- to examine the CES benchmarks and measure our school's progress. Are we there yet? Not even close, but we are moving down the path of becoming a beacon school.

COMMENTS FROM OUR RA PARENTS

It was so great to see the energy and effort invested in the families at Renaissance...and as parents we came away "full" with all that you intend to do !! CRA is amazing...I am so impressed!

-Renaissance Parent

JANUARY 09 STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

ACADEMIC:
EMMILY GREB

CREATIVE:
JESSI WORLEY

CITIZENSHIP
TARREN MITCHELL

UPWARD MOVING
CRISTIAN SEGUNDO

ROTARY STUDENT
SAMANTHA REED

CONGRATULATIONS!

**AP Courses on
Crater Campus**

* English Literature
and Composition

* English Language
& Composition

* Psychology

* Calculus

* Studio Art

* U.S. History

* European History

FIRST SEMESTER HONOR ROLL

S.A.T. Test Dates

Register by 2/10/09

For 3/14/09 test

Register by 3/31/09
for 5/2/09 test

Register by 5/5/09 for
6/6/09 test

www.collegeboard.com
to register

**Crater Foundation
Application**

Applications available online
at www.district6.org, click
on Crater Campus, & then
Crater Foundation.

Upcoming Dates

February 7, 2009

Semi-Formal

February 7, 2009

Bellas Artes Celebration-7:00 pm PAC

February 11, 2009

OMSI Assembly

February 23-27

Teatra Milagro

March 12

Band Concert- PAC 7 pm

April 22 & 23

Crater Campus Blood Drive

May 9

Prom

June 2

Baccalaureate

June 3

Graduation



Renaissance Academy Joins Prestigious Organization

In the fall of 2008, Renaissance Academy was invited to join the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) Small Schools Network. Renaissance Academy is the only high school in Oregon to become a member of the CES Small School Network.

Schools are selected based on a set of CES Common Principles in the area of student achievement, teaching & learning, school culture, school practices, community connections, leadership & continuous school improvement. The network is dedicated to creating & supporting small schools throughout the country that are instructionally powerful & that offer challenging curricula to students. Further, CES Small School Network members are expected to eventually serve as mentors for other high schools that would like to implement the CES Common Principles.