**Blake Summer 2013 Learning and Endeavors**

Science: Blake Middle school science teachers were very busy this summer and are looking forward to an exciting and productive year. The Heims spent time with their son, Jacob as he learned to stand and get up to mischief this summer. At the same time Jason Heim participated in a technology webinar as a teacher leader with an ipad pilot initiative. Marjorie in her role as a cluster leader took a leadership class and also an inquiry based math applications class. Ms. Dengos began classes in her pursuit of an administrative license. 6th grade teachers were involved in a variety of professional development over the summer, including training for the use of the Nexus Tablets, mathematics instruction, and leadership development. The 7th grade teachers met as a group to evaluate and update the life science curriculum and ensure a seamless transition for Mrs. Musto, the newest member of the team. Mrs. Silva traveled to Montana State University to present her classroom research in completion of her M.S. in science education and followed that with a well-deserved trip to Yellowstone National Park. Congratulations Mrs. Silva. Ms. Chaisson, the newest members of the 8th grade science team took a physics class in optics at Boston University while she prepared for this year at Blake and Mr. Gibbs attended the annual TEC summer science institute at which cutting edge researchers from area institutions shared their work with local middle and high school science teachers.

Wellness – We took graduate courses in health education, ran recreational programs for children, worked at summer camp, grew our own food and practiced direct farm to table eating. coached youth sports, traveled, welcomed a new puppy into our family, and bought a first home!

Social Studies – 6th grade teachers worked on common map assessments (countries, major cities, landforms, and bodies of water), common work flow for the three teachers on the same cluster, and establishing common projects; 7th grade workspace folders were updated and curriculum digitized for organization and a streamlined process of documentation; 8th grade teachers worked on a common computerized assessment for each unit, along with a reflection assessment worksheet for students as a guide for improvement; unit maps were updated and course work taken for professional development

World Language – The movement is still on for the use of authentic sources in all levels of World Languages in Medfield. This summer we had several projects: Ms. Batts, Ms. González, and Mrs. Manning worked on the eighth grade vocabulary lists and making them relevant and accessible to our students. Ms. Manning is going to be continuing her work into this school year as she will be visiting Spain and Puerto Rico to record and interview native speakers for our use in school next year. The department is very excited about the possibilities! Additional the use of the internet and ipads will allow our classrooms even further access to the Spanish-speaking world. Also, Ms. Dalpe contacted friends and relatives in Madrid and Paris this summer. They agreed to make short skits in Spanish and in French to be used in conjunction with our 6 Spanish and 6 French chapters!

They have sent all their skits to her and she will be to be able to share her relationships with these wonderful people all through the year, by sharing their skits with her new students. She is planning to use transcriptions in listening activities and eventually, to learn how to use them even more creatively this year, perhaps in a Nearpod! With all these new resources, our teachers are enthusiastic and ready to begin a new school year.

English – Congratulations to Brian Gavaghan and Elise Malone for recently completing their graduate degrees at Framingham State College! Blake English teachers tapped into their lifelong learning appetite by taking many summer graduate courses. From Kathleen Caprio’s course work on “Boys in Writing” to Eileen Hurley’s “The Nature of Narrative” to Sarah Pratt’s “Good Books. Good Authors” to Ian Gagne’s work in postmodernism, our department used summer hours to expand what we know and how we teach. **Grade 6** used summer R&D time to research, annotate and create graphic organizers for nonfiction articles that will supplement fiction for the year. Having nonfiction companion literature in meaningful ways deepens students’ understanding of the themes developed in the stories and plays read throughout the year. **Grade 7** spent time working collaboratively on a new short story that will launch students’ yearlong literature study. In addition, Grade 7 teachers began their investigation of which short stories will be used to replace the novel *So Far from the Bamboo Grove* in the coming of age unit. **Grade 8** spent summer R&D time digitizing the literature included in the Grade 8 English curriculum. Each piece of literature is now accessible for teachers and students through iBooks and SUBTEXT, an interactive App program. In addition, all Grade 8 teachers are now familiar with the process to digitalize books and create margin prompts for students reading literature on SUBTEXT.

Mathematics – Faculty in the Blake Middle School Math Department have been very busy over the summer enhancing our knowledge of the teaching of mathematics. We have taken a wide variety of courses from science and engineering to the neuroscience behind math. We are continuing our examination of the Common Core State Standards and its implications in our curriculum. All of our teachers have been participating in work in technology, whether in the areas of tablets and iPads or for daily lesson enhancement. The Math Department looks forward to implementing this new knowledge in the 2013-2014 school year. Welcome back!

Fine Arts and Music – course work; 6th-8th grade lesson designs for summer reading book, Wonder; 6th-8th grade course and curriculum alignment; adaptation of curriculum to adjust to new course design

Pupil Services – student scheduling; participation in Malala Day at the United Nations;.new student registration and transition work with students/families; graduate course work

Life/Interest-Based Learning – Exercise; family time; trips to Nantucket, Cape Cod, Arizona; coaching and working at lacrosse camps, basketball camps, soccer camps, Pilgrim Day Camp, and academic camps; family time; museums gardening; iPad workshop; sailing; music lessons; tutoring