

Pontiac Jr. High School Newsletter

Message from the Principal

January 2009

As we prepare for winter break I want to wish all of our families a very happy holiday and a great year in 2009!

On January 5 the staff will have an Institute Day and students will return to school on Tuesday, January 6. During Institute teachers will attend various trainings.

Our Band and Chorus presented a wonderful winter concert at PTHS on December 15! The students did a great job performing and the audience was fantastic! Thank you to all the family and friends who attended the concert. Thank you to Mrs. Ramseyer and Mrs. Hornstein for all their work preparing the students for the concert. Congratulations students on a wonderful performance!

The ISAT tests are coming! On March 2-13 all of our students will be taking the ISAT tests in Reading and Math. The 7th grade

students will also take the ISAT test in Science. The 6th and 8th grade students will take the Writing ISAT test.

We must test every student. Please be sure to keep these dates in mind as you schedule any appointments for your students. They always perform better on tests when they take them with the whole class.

Please watch the school calendar for the dates students receive progress reports and report cards. EVERY student is given a progress report and report card. Our next report card will be sent with students on Wednesday, January 7. Please contact the school if you do not receive either a progress report or report card.

Our school district is in the process of implementing a federally mandated program called **Response to Intervention**

(RtI). This new process was developed to help children learn by addressing problems earlier within the general education setting.

At PJHS we are using a universal screening called MAZE which is a very brief measure of the student's reading achievement. We will administer this screening three times a year. Our next screening will be on January 14. When we review these results we identify any students who would benefit from some extra reading intervention. We will begin utilizing "6 Minute Solutions" after the winter break. This is a regular education researched based activity that will help our students be more successful.

I will continue to share information with you about how PJHS will be implementing RtI in our school.



Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Our 8th grade teachers have been involved in Curriculum Articulation Meetings with teachers at PTHS. These meetings have been very helpful for us as we continue to work on our curriculum to ensure the best preparation possible for our students as they enter high school.

Thank you for all you do to support your student in school. When parents value education, the students achieve so much more.

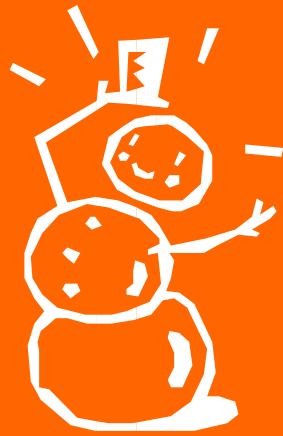
Have a great new year!
Mrs. Judy Donze

School Day...Don't be tardy!!!

The first bell rings at 8:00 AM and students go to their lockers and classrooms at that time. The bell for 1st hour rings at 8:05 AM. At that time students must be in the classroom or they are counted as Tardy for school. If your student is late for a legitimate reason, please call school or send a note and it will be marked as excused. Thanks for your help in making sure your student is at school on time each day.

Lock In Committee ...

Plans are in full swing for the Lock In to be held on Saturday, April 4. The next PTO meeting will be on Wednesday, January 14 at 5:00 PM in the commons. All parents are invited to attend. Students will receive an informational letter for the LOCK IN with the permission form and volunteer form in March. Volunteers will be needed to supervise students and activities during shifts. Please consider assisting with our Lock In. It takes many volunteers to make this a successful event!



7th Grade Greetings!

Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays from the 7th Grade Team:

Mrs. Krueger, Mrs. Wasson, Miss Rapp, Mr. Blair, Mrs. Bammann, Mrs. Hatch, & Miss Uphoff

DON'T FORGET!
DAILY
HOMEWORK IS
POSTED ON THE
7TH GRADE
TEAM'S PAGE ON
THE WEBSITE

Science News:

In science we are starting our new chapter on Heredity. During this chapter we will be discussing how genetic traits are passed on from parents to offspring through DNA. Students will discover the difference between dominant and recessive traits and be able to apply it to the traits which they possess, such as hair and eye color, and even tongue rolling! Talk with your student about traits that have been present in generations past, so they can better understand where they got their traits!



Mrs. Wasson, Mrs. Hatch and Mrs. Bammann's 7th grade math classes have been practicing hands on equations. For more practice students can go to www.aaamath.com. Happy Equating!!

Geography Bee:

The 7th graders participated in a Geography Bee during Social Studies class. The following 7th graders will represent the 7th grade in the school-wide Geography Bee in January.

Congrats to all!

**Mashaya Tharp
Sabrina France
Alex Brown
Alyssa Nestor
Brett Dunlap
Zac Wilson
Jesse McBeath
Stephanie Richardson
Austin Bristow
Alex Sandoval**



From the desk of Miss. Rapp:

All of my language arts students did a great job performing their choral readings to a few Washington and Junior High classrooms. We are now back to working on our Modifier Unit in English. We will also continue to do a spelling unit each week. Along with this we are going to learn how to diagram complex sentences. It's important that the students take notes each day. I am looking forward to a great start to 2009.

Happy New Year!

Social Studies News:

The 7th graders just finished a unit on Canada. During our unit of study we learned that Canada is the 2nd largest country in land area (3,849,674 square miles). We also learned that Canada has 6 major physical regions based on landforms. Some of its major landforms are: Mt. Logan, Rocky Mountains, Appalachian Highlands, St. Lawrence Seaway, and the Great Lakes. Each student also completed a 7 line poem about one of Canada's provinces. After winter break, we will be studying Mexico.

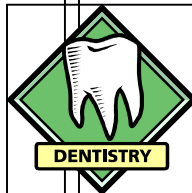
SMILE ILLINOIS MOBILE DENTISTRY

Coming in May, "Smile Illinois" will be at Pontiac Junior High School. They are a mobile dental unit, consisting of a dentist and two dental hygienists. They will provide preventative services including exams, cleanings, fluoride treatments, sealants, and free toothbrushes for the students, Pre-K through 8th grade.

In 2005, a dental law became effective that requires all children in kindergarten, second and sixth grades to have an oral health examination. Proof of the examination by a dentist needs to be presented to the school before May 15th, 2009. An examination by dentists at "Smile Mobile Dentistry" meets the requirements for this new law.

"Smile Illinois" accepts Medicaid, Kidcare, and most Illinois insurances as payment. If you do not have

any insurance, your child may still be seen. You may pay their fee (\$67) or apply for grant money as payment. No child is turned away because they are not able to pay..



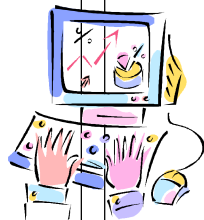
You can learn more about Mobile Dentists/Smile Program by going to its website:

www.mobiledentists.com and watch the short video about the preventative dental care program.

Applications may be picked up in the office. Once completed, please return to school. For questions, please see the school nurse, Rachel Lee.

Computer/Technology Education News

Congratulations to 5 more 8th grade students who completed the typing program AND met the 30 words per minute goal with 1 error or less. **WAY TO GO TO: Alex Friedman, Anna Persico, Emily Roberts, Morgan Verdun, and Satya Yerabolu.** Everyone did a great job this quarter, espe-



cially with your PowerPoint presentations! Can't wait for all the "fun" stuff we will do next year!

Have a Happy Holiday, relax a little, and enjoy the time off with your family.

-Mrs. Chiodo



Character Counts

Pillars to live by:

- CARING
- RESPECT
- FAIRNESS
- CITIZENSHIP
- RESPONSIBILITY
- TRUSTWORTHINESS

BUILDERS CLUB NEWS

Builders Club members have finished up 2008 with some fun activities. In October, we helped the residents of Asta Care distribute candy on Halloween night to many young trick-or-treaters. We helped with the school-wide Fall Food Drive in November which was very successful. Now in December we have made Christmas cards for some of our BINGO buddies. We always have a great turnout at our monthly BINGO games and the students seem to be enjoying their time visiting there as much as the residents like us being their guests. We even have some students practicing up a few Christmas carols to share with our Asta Care friends in December.

Our club meets the second Thursday of each month and BINGO is the third Wednesday of the month.

Happy Holidays to all!
Mrs. Dunlap and Mrs. Vitzthum, sponsors

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8th Grade News

When we return after the holidays, we will be half way through the school year. Our Great America Trip will go into full planning mode. The students will have several letters that will need to be completed by their parents or guardians. Please keep an eye open for these letters and return as soon as possible.



The Constitution! The national test has been completed.



The Illinois constitution test will be taken before we leave for the Christmas holidays. Thanks for your support!!!!

Science We will finish the Earth Science book after winter break and spend the rest of the year on Physics and Chemistry. Please talk with your students to find out what we are currently covering.

Christmas Party



The 8th grade class celebrated Christmas with Washington's kindergarten, first and second graders on December 12th. The 8th graders brought money to buy the younger students a small gift. Thanks to all the older students that brought cookies, and thanks to all the parents who helped in providing the cookies.



PIHS FOOD DRIVE

Thank you!

Thank you to all of our students that helped to make this year's food drive a success. We gathered over 4,000 food items for our local food banks, and we were able to purchase 20 Thanksgiving meals for families of our students. Thank you also to our parents who support this drive each and every year. The students take great pride in this community service project.

Algebra
Algebra will be starting Chapter 7 when we return from the holidays. We took our semester final on the 17th and 18th of December.

Math
We will start chapter 9 when we return from break.

ATTENTION 8TH GRADE PARENTS AND STUDENTS:

Now is the time to sign up for the PTHS Computer/Keyboarding Fundamentals Proficiency Exam. The purpose of this optional test is for 8th grade students who already are proficient at typing, using Microsoft Word, Excel, and Power-Point to test out of the high school class so they can open up their schedules for other elective classes.



Any student wanting to take

the exam can pick up an application in Mrs. Chiodo's room, the junior high office, or download an application from Mrs. Chiodo's home page (Explore teacher) on the district web site <http://www.pontiac429.org>. Students **MUST** be recommended by a junior high teacher and have the check-list for eligibility filled out to take the test. Applications must be turned into the high school by Wednesday, January 28, 2009.

Feel free to email me with questions at chio-dochr@p429.k12.il.us

Dean's Notes

The passing periods are a time when the hallways become very loud and crowded. Our hallway behavior has been less than desirable this year. A large number of our discipline problems happen in the hallways or stem from something that happened in the halls. We will be implementing a new hallway behavior plan after Winter Break.

We have adopted a school wide approach for dealing with this behavior to ensure orderly hallways and maintain a safe school.

This approach is based on a common vocabulary:

HANDS and FEET reminds students to keep their hands and feet to themselves. This includes keeping hands off other students' binders, books, etc.

QUIET is necessary particularly because some classes are in session while others are in the hall. When students in the halls are noisy, this prevents others from learning

LOCKER refers to the practice some students have of slamming lockers (theirs or someone else's), pounding on lockers, or kicking them

WALK is self-explanatory. Too many students are running in the halls.

There are consequences for misconduct in the halls. Teachers will be using gold slips to keep track of behavior and will turn these reports in to the office. When a student has three reports, he/she will be required to serve a 45 minute detention. These will be served after school with the dean.

After three reports and a detention, each subsequent hallway misconduct will result in an additional detention.

Students who are wearing sagging pants will be sent to the office for a zip tie belt. If the student does not keep the belt on and is sent to the office again, he/she will get a detention. The third time will earn an In School Suspension. This approach will also be taken for any clothing deemed inappropriate.

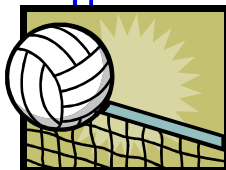
Mr. DeLong
Dean of Students

VOLLEYBALL TEAMS

We just finished with tryouts for the Jr. High 2008-2009 Volleyball teams. We want to congratulate the following students and wish them luck in the upcoming season.

7th grade team

COURTNEY AMM
ALEX BROWN
TIFFANY BURGESS
MADYSON DINARDI
HALEY FAIRFIELD
JESSI FINKENBINDER
ASHLEY FITZSIMMONS
ARIAN HAMILTON
HALEY KOSIK
MADDIE LEE
JAIMI LIND
ASHLEY SPAFFORD
KELSEY WALSBURG
KADI WELLS
JORDYN COMINCIOLI
GRACE LYONS
BAILEY SARTORIS
ALYSSA SCHWEIGERT



8th Grade Team

ALLISON BORREGO
TAYLOR ARAUJO
AMBER SNYDER
JODECI FRANKLIN
SKYLAR ALFORD
JASMYN BRAVO-BYRD
CHLOE PIERCE
BROOKE POWELL
MELISA TROUT
ERICA BROWN
KYLIE CLARDY
TARA ISENBERG
FALLON RODGERS
KATELYNN PROPES

The 7th grade team is coached by Michelle Unthank and 8th is coached by Mary Knaub. Have a great season!



News from the Social Worker

The holidays are quickly approaching, which means we will soon be on winter break. Winter break is often a time when children may be spending more time on the computer... and online. This additional time on the computer may expose them to cyber bullying. Thankfully, we have not had a problem with cyber bullying here at Pontiac Junior High School; however, I would like more parents to be aware of and take action at home to prevent cyber bullying.

Cyber bullying can range from threats, embarrassing or mean rumors, harassment, etc.- these bullies use emails, chat rooms, and websites 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to humiliate peers.

Here are some statistics from i-SAFE regarding cyber bullying:

- 42% of kids have been bullied while online- 1 in 4 have had it happen more than once.
- 58% have not told their parents or an adult about something mean or hurtful that happened to them online (Based on 2004 i-SAFE survey of 1,500 students grades 4-8).

The good news is that you can help your child become cyber-safe.

How Parents Can Help Children Become “Cyber-Safe”

* Talk to your children about internet safety

Children need to be just as careful about opening a “cyber door” as they are about opening the front door to strangers.

They should never:

- Give out personal information online without a parent or guardian’s permission.
- Respond to messages that are suggestive, belligerent, threatening, or make them feel uncomfortable.

Click on any links in an email from someone they do not know.

*Explain cyber bullying and what they can do to prevent it.

Help children understand that mean people on the Internet can hurt them with words, but that they can be safer if they:

- Don’t respond to or forward emails or messages that are mean or spread rumors.
- Don’t open or read emails from someone they know bullies others.
- If bullied through chat or instant messaging, the “bully” can often be blocked.
- Save or print all bullying messages- they may be needed to take action.
- Show the messages to an adult they trust- like a parent or a teacher- and ask for help.

Protect themselves- never arrange to meet someone who is bullying them online.

Remember to talk to your child about cyber bullying and please continue to monitor your child’s usage of the computer. Have a safe and happy holiday season!



Marci Hunt
School Social Worker
MA, LCPC, QMHP

NEWS FROM THE 6TH GRADE

The sixth grade students have spent another busy month learning in all sorts of areas. After completing a unit on the ancient civilizations of Egypt in social studies, our subject areas teamed up to conclude with a fun Egyptian Day. In Mrs. Mehlberg's class, the students finished up their posters and some students even took part in an extra credit project. All kinds of creativeness can be seen on display down the sixth grade hallway with hand-fashioned pyramids, a sarcophagus or two, a sphinx, pottery, pamphlets, and even an ancient Egyptian medallion. What an impressive job the students did! In Mrs. Van Hoveln's class, mummification was covered and explained. Square pyramids were created in Mrs. Abry's math class and Mrs. Jeziorski guided her students in playing the Egyptian game of Senet on the computer. In Mrs. Wolf's class, each student designed a sarcophagus while Mrs. Dunlap's students learned to write using hieroglyphics.

Upcoming activities and areas of concentration will be the focusing on Mesopotamia in social studies, doing geometric art in math, and reading Medusa in literature. In science class, our students will be starting a new book on physical science. They will also begin a new vocabulary book in language arts after doing a little poetry writing. The year may be half over but we still have lots of exciting learning to do!

A special note to all: school supplies are getting very low for some students. Now, with the beginning of a new quarter, please check with your students and help them begin the second half of the year well-prepared and ready to work.

The sixth grade team wishes all our students and their families an enjoyable, safe, and relaxing winter holiday break.

2009 KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION/ PRE-SCHOOL SCREENING FOR AGES 0-6

**Dates: February 24-26, 2009
(Tuesday through Thursday)**

Location: Presbyterian Church, Pontiac

**Appointments will be taken at 844-5448
(Beginning Monday, February 9)**

Birth - 2 ½ year old children:

OSF staff will conduct screenings.
Special Needs Office will take appointments.

2 ½ - 4 year old children (not age-ready for Kindergarten):

District #429 staff and LCSSU teams will conduct play-based screenings while
Public Health screens vision and hearing for children older than 3 years.
Special Needs Office will take appointments.

If your child successfully completed play-based screening last year,
there is no need to have your child screened again unless there is a new concern.

4-5 year old children (age-ready for Kindergarten):

(YOU WILL RECEIVE A REGISTRATION PACKET AT SCREENING!)

We would like to screen your child even if they have been seen by our District's screening team in the past. At Kindergarten screening, you will be given a 2009-10 Kindergarten registration packet. Please bring a copy of your child's birth certificate. Students currently enrolled in our Pre-Kindergarten program and ECSE program do not need to have a screening appointment. They are screened in their classrooms. Kindergarten registration packets will be sent home with the ECSE and Pre-K students at a later time.

GUIDELINES FOR WHEN TO KEEP YOUR ILL CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL

- If a child is sick enough to stay home or goes home ill during the day, please keep your child home the entire day. When a child's immune system is already weakened, sending the child back to school where there are many people and many germs may cause them to be ill much longer or come down with other illnesses.
- A child with diarrhea should be kept home.
- A child with a heavy cold and hacking cough belongs at home even if there is no temperature.
- A fever is a warning that all is not right with the body. Keep your child home if a fever is present and do not allow the child to return to school until the fever has been gone for 24 hours without medications like Tylenol. Medications can mask fevers and other symptoms.
- If your child is vomiting, do not send the child to school until food can be kept down.
- Do not send a child with a rash to school until your doctor says it is safe to do so.
- If your child has a sore throat, fever, and white spots can be seen in the back of the throat, call the doctor and keep the child at home.
- If your child has red, swollen eyes with itching/irritation, or a yellow/green discharge from the eyes, call the doctor and keep the child home.

Please help us provide a healthy environment in our school buildings by keeping your child home when he/she is ill. Also, please encourage good hand washing with your child. This is the #1 way to help prevent the spread of infection!

Sincerely,

Rachel Lee
District #429 School Nurse