

# Pontiac Jr. High School Newsletter

March 2009

## Message from the Principal

The big news in March for all public schools in Illinois is the ISAT testing! On March 3-13 all of our students are taking the ISAT tests in Reading and Math. Our 7<sup>th</sup> grade students take the ISAT test in Science. The 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students take the ISAT test in Writing.

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual PJHS LOCK IN will be held on Saturday, April 4 from 1:00 PM – 9:00 PM. Some of the activities will include: 3 on 3 basketball Tournament, volleyball tournament, video game room, Survi-

vor Challenge, dance, and Astronomy Observation. Pizza will be served around 5:00.

March is also the month for report cards and spring Parent Teacher Conferences. Report cards will be sent home on Wednesday, March 18. Parent Teacher Conferences will be held on Thursday, March 19 from 1:00-7:00 and Friday, March 20 from 9:00-12:00. These conferences will be held for students based on teacher or parent re-



quest. Not all students will have conferences but all students will receive report cards.

Students will be dismissed from school at 11:15 AM on Thursday, March 19 and there is no student attendance on Friday, March 20. Our district Spring Break will be on March 23-27. We will return to school on Monday, March 31.

Enjoy your spring break with your students!  
*Mrs. Judy Donze*

## PTO...

The next meeting of the PJHS PTO will be held on Wednesday, March 18 at 5:00 PM. We will finalize Lock In plans. We will also discuss reorganization of PTO for the 2009-2010 school year due to the reorganization of the elementary

## Upcoming Dates

- [Mar 2– No School](#)
- [Mar 3-13 ISAT testing](#)
- [Mar 13– End of 3rd nine weeks](#)
- [Mar 17-Solo & Ensemble Contests](#)
- [Mar 18-19– Parent & Teacher Conferences](#)
- [Mar 20– No School](#)
- [Mar 23-27– Spring Break](#)
- [Mar 30– School Resumes](#)

## Illinois Principal Association Student Recognition Lunch...

On March 17 I will have the pleasure of taking two 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to the Illinois Principal's Association Student Recognition Lunch at Baby Bull's Fine Dining Restaurant. Each principal in the IPA region is invited to select two students from the highest grade level in their school to attend.

Students are selected for their contribution to the school, their achievement, dedication to class and school, and positive character traits.

Congratulations to Charles Spencer and Katelynn Propes for being selected for this recognition.

## Pontiac Area Chamber of Commerce Student Recognition...

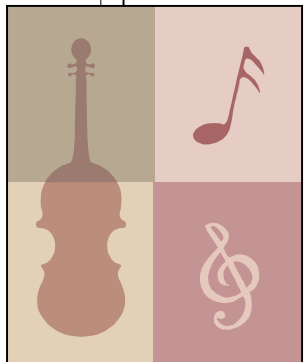
We are proud to announce the following 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will be honored at the Annual Chamber of Commerce Banquet on March 12, 2009: Eric DeMattia and Kip Kuster.

These students were selected based on their scholastic achievement, involvement in clubs, sports, and volunteer efforts.

These students and their parents will be recognized during the banquet at the Elks on March 12<sup>th</sup>. Congratulations students and parents!!!

## Music Contest at PJHS on March 17th

The PJHS music department will be hosting its own solo and ensemble contest this year on Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>. The evening will begin with a clinic for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade chorus at 5:00pm. A clinician will work with the chorus students and give suggestions for improvement to help prepare them for the organizational contest in May. Then two sixth grade choirs, a 7<sup>th</sup> grade choir and an 8<sup>th</sup> grade choir will perform and be judged. Smaller ensembles and vocal solos



will begin following all of the choirs. The instrumental events will begin at 6:00pm and finish around 8:45pm. Schedules will be coming out soon. Music students are all working hard along with their accompanists to prepare for the big event.

Mrs. Ramseyer & Mrs. Hornstein



### Character Counts

***Pillars to live by:***  
**CARING**  
**RESPECT**  
**FAIRNESS**  
**CITIZENSHIP**  
**RESPONSIBILITY**  
**TRUSTWORTHINESS**

## READY,SET,GO ISAT!!

The sixth grade students have been practicing for the ISAT tests and they are ready. They will be tested in reading, math and writing March 3-12. During the ISAT tests, students in social studies will be researching and reporting on famous Black Americans. Doing experiments, and researching climate

change and ways to make our homes more "green" will be studied in science.



Please remind your students to get plenty of sleep and eat well

balanced meals during the testing. We want our students to be as successful as possible and we can accomplish this if we all work together.

Sixth Grade Teachers

## BUILDERS CLUB NEWS

Builders Club members were busy during the past month creating all kinds of "lovely" homemade Valentines for our Asta Care friends. In all, 81 Valentines were made - one for each of the residents there. We have some very creative students! In March, Builders Club will be helping collect for the March of

Dimes in our annual schoolwide March of Pennies campaign. Dates have not been finalized yet, so listen to announcements so you will know when to bring in all those pennies that have accumulated throughout the year. Help us be successful at this very worthy service project. Our next monthly meeting will

be Thursday, March 12th and our next BINGO will be Wednesday, March 18th. Hope to see you at both!

Mrs. Dunlap and Mrs. Vitzthum, sponsors



# 7th Grade Greetings



*\*Never Miss Another Homework Assignment!\**

**You can now view all 7th grade daily assignments on our school website.**

Each day the assignments for the 7th grade classes will be posted on the school website. This is a great way for students (and parents) to double check to see what the homework was. This site will also be used for important updates or announcements for 7th graders.

Just use the following steps in order to find this information.

- Go to [www.pontiac429.org](http://www.pontiac429.org)
- Click on **"Junior High"** in the column on the left hand side
- Find the button marked **"7th Grade"** and then click where it says **"Ms. Uphoff"**
- Then you will see a list of the homework assignments for the week.
- To view a particular day you can click on **"Homework"** or **"read more"**.
- Be sure to bookmark this website and check it often!**



## Social Studies:

We are in the middle of our unit of North-western Europe. We have been studying the countries of France, Germany, Benelux countries and Alpine Countries. At this time, the students are creating a poster based on a European country that was involved in World War II. This poster project is due Tuesday, March 3rd. The posters will be on display in the 7th grade hallway after that date. Our test on Chapter 11 (NW Europe) will be on Wednesday, March 18th!

## Mrs. Bammann's Language Arts:

During a recent unit on letter writing the students practiced their skills by writing to service men and women who are currently serving with the armed forces in Iraq. The students very much enjoyed this writing experience and are hoping to hear back from some of them soon!

## From the desk of Miss Rapp:

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade language arts we just finished our personal narratives. Now we will be practicing extended responses questions for ISAT. In English we are in the Mechanics Unit. During ISAT there will be no spelling units but we will be working on poems, diagramming, and we will also be writing a letter.

I would like to send out a great job to all of the students who participated in our school's Spelling Bee. Rachael True was our first place winner. Satya Yerrabolu got second place and Grace Lyons got 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Rachael participated in the Livingston County Spelling Bee on February 20 at the high school. She went all the way and was the champion speller! She will now continue on and compete in the Grand Champion Spelling Bee on March 7<sup>th</sup> in Bloomington.

## Attention 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Algebra Parents...

Students wanting to move on to Geometry in High School MUST take the Algebra Proficiency Exam. Successful completion of this exam helps assure that you are ready for mathematics at PTHS and are well prepared to succeed in Geometry and in classes beyond Geometry. The test will be administered twice this spring:

\*\*Wednesday, March 11, 2009 at 4:00PM

\*\*Saturday, March 14, 2009, at 10:30AM

The exam will be given in Room 304 at PTHS and will take less than an hour. Bring a few pencils and a calculator (scientific or graphing calculator okay).

**YOU MUST TAKE THE PROFICIENCY EXAM IN ORDER TO**

**TAKE GEOMETRY IN 9<sup>TH</sup> GRADE!**

Section by Section Quizzes and Chapter Tests are available to practice problems at the following website:

[www.classzone.com/books/algebra\\_1/oltp\\_welcome\\_il.cfm](http://www.classzone.com/books/algebra_1/oltp_welcome_il.cfm)

More practice can be found by searching the Internet with the team "Algebra Proficiency Exam" and using materials that are consistent with the following chapters in your Algebra book: Chapter 1-7 and Chapter 10.

Any questions contact the PTHS Mathematics Department Chair, Roger Day: 815-844-6113, Ext: 304;

[dayr@pontiac.k12.il.us](mailto:dayr@pontiac.k12.il.us)

## 8th Grade Math

ISAT testing will take place March 3<sup>rd</sup> thru the 13<sup>th</sup>. Please make sure you remind your son or daughter to get a good night sleep. It is also a good idea for them to eat a good breakfast. The students did a fantastic job last year, and we are looking forward to seeing similar results this year. Any help on your part would be appreciated. Remind them to bring their calculators, some #2 pencils, and a book to read if they have down time. There will be 3 different math tests. Test 1 will involve 40 multiple choice questions. Test 2 will involve 30 multiple choice questions and 2 short response questions. Test 3 will involve 2 extended response questions. The students will have up to 55 minutes to complete the test as long as the students are still working on it.

During the ISAT testing, we will be doing some work in class, but we will not have assignments out of class. Additional information can be found by typing in 2009 ISAT Math on [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).

## Into the Land of the Lost Calculators

We are very sorry to inform you of the loss of over 20 calculators this year from Mr. Fenton's Math class. They are currently missed and will be missed into the future! Obviously, the calculators sprouted legs and walked off because NO ONE has one of them. We even did a locker check recently and only found three. Please help us to assist these lost calculators on their journey back to our school. Please look in your student's rooms, book bags, and gym bags to see if you can find a calculator that may belong to the school.



Eighth grade literature students are very busy preparing for ISAT testing. Emphasis is placed on predicting, summarizing, inferring, and connecting. Students have practiced completing multiple choice and extended response questions. Students will need to bring two #2 pencils, eraser, and a library book to read when finished during testing week. A good night's rest, healthy breakfast, and supplies will help students be successful during testing time.

**Mrs. Vitzthum**

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science

Your students started a new textbook recently. We will be spending the rest of this year studying Chemistry and Physics. Our students had a reality check recently when they took their first test. Many of the students did not do as well as they usually do in science. I asked them how many had studied and they over-

whelmingly admitted they had not studied. Please encourage your student to study science for the rest of the year. Ask when they have a test and help them to review for the test. Thank You!

# Dean's Notes

With this dreaded winter coming to an end, and spring finally lurking in the shadows the students are going to be experiencing cabin fever more than ever. We still have more than a full quarter left of school and the infamous ISAT test to get through.

**Attendance:** Please remember to call your child in at (815) 842-4343 each morning if they are ill or cannot make school. *If we do not receive contact they are marked as unexcused, and after four of these we must refer you to the Livingston County Truancy Officer.*

**Tardiness:** Please have your student at school and ready to go before 8:00 a.m each morning. Once a student is tardy five times in one quarter they serve lunch deten-

tions for each subsequent one.

**Gold Slips:** Since implementing our hallway behavior plan at the beginning of the third quarter we have made great strides in our hallway behavior. The hallways are calmer, quieter, safer, and more efficient. Once a student totals three gold slips they serve a 30 minute detention. Each subsequent slip results in a 45 minute detention. We have drawings almost weekly for students who did not receive a gold slip, and random prizes are awarded.

**Bullying:** We have been seeing an increase in bullying the past few weeks. If a student is being bullied they need to report it to an adult. They can come see me anytime, and they can also fill out an anonymous bullying re-

port. We cannot help if we don't know that it is going on. Our goal is to have every student feel comfortable attending PJHS. However, remember the differences between reporting and tattling. *Reporting* is talking to someone, preferably an adult who you can trust. Reporting is helping to keep you or someone else from being hurt or feeling uncomfortable. *Tattling* is telling anybody about the problem, and it is done to get someone else in trouble. Friendship problems usually result in this type of behavior.

Let's look out for each other and have a strong finish to the school year.

**Mr. DeLong, Dean of Students**



## Jump Ball Jamboree

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade boy's basketball team was selected to play in the 2009 Peoria Journal Star Jump Ball Jamboree at the Peoria Civic Center. Satya Yerrabolu wrote an essay about sportsmanship, and we were selected to participate. We will play on Saturday March 21<sup>st</sup> at 1:45 against Pleasant Hill 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade team. The game will be played at the March Madness Experience in the Peoria Civic Center the weekend of the Class 3A and 4A boy's state basketball tournament. Players will get a free ticket to get into the March Madness Experience. Coach Fenton has coupons for buy one, get one free tickets for family and friends. Tickets to get into the Experience are usually \$3 or \$4. These tickets will not get you into the IHSA State Finals games. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> straight year we have been chosen to participate. Thanks to Mary Kindred for donating the money for the bus!!! More details will be coming home soon for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys. Be on the look out.

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**Congratulations** to our spelling bee winners. (Left to right) Rachael True-1st place, Satya Yerrabolu-2nd place, Grace Lyons-3rd place

Good luck to Rachael in the Championship Spelling Bee on Saturday, March 7th.

# News from the Social Worker



## ISAT Test Taking Tips



### **WAYS TO HELP YOUR CHILD BE AT HIS/HER BEST FOR TEST TAKING:**

- Insure that your child arrives to school on time.
- Be sure your child wears comfortable clothes to school.
- Be sure your child has a good breakfast before going to school.
- Avoid disagreements and arguments the night before testing and the morning of the test.
- Be sure you remind your child to do his/her best. Learn to take testing seriously.
- Avoid medical and dental appointments on testing days.
- Listen to your child's anxieties and concerns. Reassure him/her and limit your own anxiety about your child's upcoming tests.
- Be sure your child gets a good night's sleep.
- Insure your child has any necessary supplies for testing such as pencils/erasers.
- Offer praise and encouragement. Tell your child that you believe he/she can do well and succeed!

### **TEST TAKING STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS:**

- Relax and stay calm before and during tests.
- Think positively about the test...a positive attitude is a great attitude!
- Realize that no one gets all answers correct on a standardized achievement test—do not become discouraged because of difficult test items.
- Make a commitment to do your best.
- Set your clock to ring a little early to avoid having to rush in the morning.
- Pick out your clothing at night before going to bed to avoid wasting time before going to school. Wear comfortable clothing- something you feel confident wearing.
- If you wear glasses, clean them and don't forget to wear them.
- Try to clear your mind of all worries.
- Eat a good breakfast and lunch; but, don't overeat.
- Listen to all directions **CAREFULLY**. Ask or reread any directions that are not clear the first time.
- Review all answers carefully.
- Make sure marks are recorded correctly on the answer sheet.
- Budget enough time to answer as many questions as possible.
- Eliminate answers which you know are wrong, then check the remaining responses for key words.
- Narrow your choices down as best you can, but if you still cannot decide, make an educated guess.
- Tackle one question at a time; do not focus on the entire test as a whole.
- If you complete your test with time left, be sure to go back and check your work.
- Be sure to erase any dots or stray marks on your answer sheet.

Marci Hunt

School Counselor/ Social Worker, QMHP, MA, LCPC

# Keep Kids Alcohol Free



## Who are we?

**LEAAP**, Livingston Educates for Alcohol Abuse & Prevention, is a coalition of organizations, agencies, families, school personal and concerned citizens coming together to develop and promote strategies for the prevention of underage alcohol use and abuse in Livingston County.

## Why?

Statistics provided by The Illinois Youth Survey conducted in 2008 in Livingston County determined that:

- 61% of our 10<sup>th</sup> graders used alcohol in the past year.
- 77% of our 12<sup>th</sup> graders used alcohol in the past year.
- 45% of parents have not spoken to their children about not using alcohol.

## Upcoming events:

April is Alcohol Awareness month!

On Thursday, April 2, 2009, the Illinois Liquor Control Commission, LEAAP, Operation Snowball, Pontiac Police Dept., and the City of Pontiac will collaborate on a state-wide effort called “**Project Sticker Shock**” to keep alcohol out of the hands of those under 21 years of age.

## Why Sticker Shock?

The vast majority of alcohol consumed by underage drinkers is purchased by those over the legal drinking age. Project Sticker Shock is designed to raise awareness about this issue. Stickers, window decals, posters, and signs have been developed to remind adults that it is illegal to provide alcohol to minors.

## Next Meeting:

March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009 from 12:00-1:00

Livingston County Health Department conference room Please bring a sack lunch.



If you have any questions about LEAAP, please don't hesitate to contact:  
Marci Hunt at [huntmar@p429.k12.il.us](mailto:huntmar@p429.k12.il.us)  
Officer Shawna Gilliam at [gilliamsha@p429.k12.il.us](mailto:gilliamsha@p429.k12.il.us)  
Officer David Leach at [leachdf@pontiac.k12.il.us](mailto:leachdf@pontiac.k12.il.us)

# 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 8<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup>, 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](http://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.

