

Pontiac Jr. High School Newsletter

Message from the Principal

The second quarter of the 2009-2010 school year is off to a great start! We currently have 397 students enrolled at PJHS. We thank you for being our partners in your student's education because you play a critical role in your student's success.

Thank you so much for showing your student how important school is by attending a conference! It is always great to have so many families in the school for conferences. If you were unable to attend conferences you may contact the school and we will be happy to set up an appointment for you to meet with teachers.

Thank you to the PTO members who provided a delicious meal for the staff during conferences! We all really appreciated so many parents contributing to the meal. If you would like to help with any PTO activity and have not been contacted please call the office or email me and we will add your name to the list.

Congratulations to the Music students who were selected for the IMEA Music Festival at ISU on November 21. Band students who were selected are: Kassi Adkins, Ashley Fitzsimmons, Molly Kipfer, Grace Lyons, Chloe Mayback, Grace Spires, Rachel

True and Kennedy Vilt. Chorus students who were selected are: Courtney Amm, Austin Bristow, Roberto Calero, John Leverton and Baylee Ritter. We are extremely proud of these students who will be representing PJHS. This is the largest group of PJHS students to be selected in the past 10 years.

Providing a safe school setting for our students is a top priority. Therefore if you wish to help in any way at school by working with students, supervising field trips, dances, or the Lock In, please be sure that you have completed a background check. This does not need to be repeated yearly, only once through our district. If you still need to have a background check completed, you can pick up a fingerprint card at any school office and have it completed at the police station or you can call our office and set up an appointment with Officer Gilliam and she can complete it at PJHS.

We are in the first year of implementing PBIS in our district. Students are very excited about earning prizes and verbal recognition for their positive behaviors.



November 2009

Mr. De Long, the PBIS teacher committee and many other teachers worked very hard to prepare for the first quarter celebration which was held on Friday, October 30. Although the celebration activities had to be moved inside due to the weather, it was a great success and students who earned the celebration had a great time!

PTO and the staff of PJHS will sponsor our 6th annual **Lock In** on Saturday, April 10 from 1 PM – 9:00 PM. More information will be sent home with students including a registration and permission form closer to the event.

I hope that you all have an opportunity to celebrate Thanksgiving with your family. This is a perfect time of year for all of us to count our blessings and I truly count all the PJHS students, staff and families among my blessings.

Mrs. Judy Donze

Upcoming November Dates

- **Nov. 4th**- Sports Booster Mtg. 6 pm in Jr High Commons
- **Nov. 16-20** American Education Week
- **Nov. 17th**- PTO Family Reading Night- 6 pm at Central School
- **Nov. 21st**- All District Music Festival at ISU
- **Nov. 25th**- 2:15 Early Dismissal
- **Nov. 25th**- Progress Reports Go Home
- **Nov. 26th**- No School Happy Thanksgiving
- **Nov. 27th**- No School

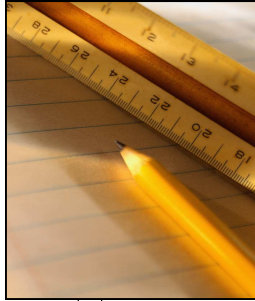
We want to thank our Media Assistant, Mrs. Kim Spafford, for all her work to provide our families with the Scholastic Book Fair during Conferences! Profits from the Book Fair will be used to purchase books for our Library.

6th Grade Science News

Our 6th grade scientists have completed studying the metric system. For a long time people have been saying: "Someday the Metric System of measurement will be used everywhere. All of us will need to get to know this system". Unfortunately, the U.S. has still not adopted this system as the main system of measuring. This has made it harder for our students to learn two different systems, but they have worked hard on this unit and hopefully will retain the basic facts that we will be using this year in science.

We are beginning a unit on Earth Science. The students will learn

about the different branches of Earth Science and careers available in Earth Science. We will continue to use the Scientific Method, the metric system and models in our explorations.



I want to thank the parents and PTO for providing funds that allow us to be able to purchase materials to do more hands on experiments this year. Students really enjoy the labs and working with a partner.

Mrs. VanHovel

Science Humor

Question: What is the laziest mountain in the world?

Answer:
Mount Ever-rest!

BUILDERS CLUB NEWS

Builders Club members are starting to get involved with activities that are helpful to others. Eighteen members gathered together one evening last week to help the residents at Asta Care play an exciting hour of BINGO. Our members are starting to bond with their nursing home friends and we look forward to returning on the third Wednesday of each month to assist these new friends.

We also have plans to go to Asta Care on Halloween night to help the residents with their distribution of candy to the hundreds of trick-or-

treaters that will walk down their hallways. It will be a great time to get to know one another and have some fun in the process.

During the first few days of November, a letter will come home with all students explaining our upcoming "Wall of Stars." We want to commemorate and thank our loved ones and friends who have served our country. Please plan to take part in this activity and help us cover the entire wall in the commons with stars.

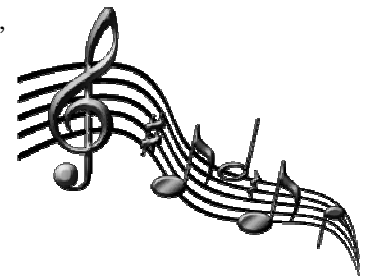
Mrs. Dunlap and Mrs. Vitzthum, sponsors



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PJHS Music Students to Participate at IMEA

Thirteen PJHS music students will be attending the Illinois Music Educators Association Music Festival at ISU on November 21st. Band and chorus students will rehearse in the morning and perform in Bone Student Center in the afternoon. Students from 42 different Junior High Schools auditioned on October 12 hoping to be chosen for the festival. PJHS band students attending the festival will be Ashley Fitzsimmons, Grace Lyons, Grace Spires, Kennedy Vilt, Rachael True, Molly Kipfer, Kassi Adkins and Chloe Mayback. PJHS chorus students attending will be Courtney Amm, Austin Bristow, Roberto Calero, John Leverton, and Baylee Ritter. Congratulations to all of these talented musicians!



8th Grade News

Thank you to all of the parents that attended our Parent/Teacher Conferences.

We enjoyed meeting with you and discussing your child's goals and successes. Please continue to contact us with any questions, comments, or concerns.

In English, we have been working on Verbs. We are currently retaking the Verb test so that your child can have a better understanding of verbs and incorporate that knowledge into his/her writing. We will begin studying Adjectives, Study Skills, and writing introductions and extended metaphors.

In Science we will be studying the human body. We are finishing up chapter 5 in Math – numbers, equations, and expressions. Please continue to turn in homework and keep track of your math notes. Social Studies classes are studying the War of 1812. We are also continuing to strengthen our writing skills by writing summaries of newspaper articles. In Literature, we are studying chronological order, setting, and tone. We also visit the Library each Thursday so please remember to bring your library books to school on Thursday!

We appreciate all of the students who participated in the Homecoming Spirit Week activities and the Red Ribbon Week activities. Also, please look for more information to come home about the 8th grade sponsored school dance on Friday, November 13th and the Canned Food Drive in November. Lastly, please continue to participate in the fundraising in order to raise money for the Great America Trip in May. It will be here before you know it!!

Health Class

Welcome to Health. My name is Mrs. Hanson and I will have your child sometime this school year in health class. We cover a variety of health topics in health class. I am very excited this nine weeks to have Champion Fitness presenting a program on Fitness and Nutrition. It will be presented to all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade classes. We also do a program called Life Skills, presented by Mrs. Trachsel from IHR. This will be an exciting 9 weeks.



Character Counts

Pillars to live by:

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

Tower Crushing- Huge Success

The first quarter of the 2009-10 resulted in the best overall group of towers to be crushed in Synergy so far. Dylana R. from 6th grade is our new second place builder. Her tower held 368 pounds per square inch. We also have a new third place finisher. Kennedy V. built a tower which held 344 psi. 9th hour sixth graders did themselves proud. Towers built by Megan, Keliane, Dylana, Jordan, TJ, and Matt averaged out at 280 psi. No one this nine weeks built a tower that held less than 100 psi. Great job, all of you!

Student Council Tidbits!

A big "Thank You" to all of the students who dressed up and participated in the Homecoming Spirit Week! It is always fun to see students showing so much school spirit. We are now in the midst of Red Ribbon Week and seeing all of the crazy dress-up days. Also, thank you to all of the parents who help their children make it to the 7:40 a.m. meetings – I love seeing the enthusiasm on their faces so early in the morning!

We are making plans to have a 50/50 raffle at one of the home basketball games soon. We would like to use our profits to participate in the 8th grade food drive by buying a meal for a family. We are also making plans to volunteer and help out the Livingston County Humane Society. We will share more details in the future!

Please send me your email address if you would like me to remind you, via email, about our upcoming meetings. My email address is: ker-rinslau@p429.k12.il.us.

Boys Basketball



We are happy to announce the following boys made this years basketball teams.



7th grade team

- Andrew Beckman
- Ben Bier
- Cam Brown
- Kye Comincioli
- Seth Cunningham
- John Leverton
- Kevin Lewis
- Jared Lynn
- Garrett Lyons
- Mac Reynolds
- Adam Shelton
- Darin Trout
- Tre Williams
- Nick Wotton
- Guna Yerrabolu

8th grade team

- Merrick Basham
- Ian Beller
- Brandon Bohm
- Ian Dittmer
- Logan Durham
- Jake Garrels
- Luke Garrels
- Zac Justus
- Alex Kohlmeier
- Hagen LePard
- Justin Lind
- Jesse McBeath
- Eric Raube
- Trent Smith
- Kory Wells



We welcome everyone to come and see a game this year and enjoy the excitement.



6th Grade Language Arts

We are wrapping up our unit on nouns and are about to take on verbs in our English texts. We proved that nouns begin with EVERY letter of the alphabet. Just ask your student to name a few for ANY letter!

Last week we took a break and worked on some poetry. We wrote a couple of 4-line rhyming poems that are called Quatrains. Here is a sample Quatrain written by 6th grader Luke Spafford:

When the Bears take the field, the fans start to scream.
 They all like to cheer for the world's greatest team.
 The Bears like to eat Packers and Vikings for dinner.
 And if they play hard, they'll be Super Bowl winners!

We came up with some very creative poems, especially for a first try. Good job, students!

Mrs. Dunlap

6th Grade Literature



We are beginning Collection 3. Each of the stories in this collection conveys a message to the reader. As we follow the characters – two frogs, a young Chinese immigrant, and a generous old couple – we discover how each learns an important lesson about life. Theme is the message or lesson that holds a story together. Theme is a truth about life and its people, society, or the human condition. Students will also read a nonfiction text. In the nonfiction text students will evaluate evidence and distinguish between fact and opinion.

Mrs. Jeziorski

Computer News:

Wow, one quarter done already! 1st quarter students were very busy with writing business letters, graphing in excel, and trying to persuade me on a topic of their choice through PowerPoint. I also had a few "All Stars" complete the typing program and exceed the typing goals. Those students are:

Way to GO!
Way to GO!

- *Molly Kipfer
- *Kati Rasmussen
- *Hallie Hilsabeck
- *Tiffany Burgess
- *Jessie Finkenbinder



Fall Food Drive



The Fall Food Drive will take place November 2nd through November 20th. Non-perishable food items will be collected from each study hall group. Laundry soap, toilet paper, and any items like this are also in need and will be accepted. We are hoping to collect 5000 items. For the past 3 years, we have surpassed the 5000 item mark. An award for the class with the highest average item per student will receive a pizza party on Tuesday November 24th.

In addition to the food drive, we will also be accepting monetary donations to help purchase Thanksgiving meals from County Market for families in need. We incorporated this into our food drive 3 years ago. It has been very successful. If any staff, parents, or students want to make donations, we have an account set up in the office. It is titled Fall-Holiday Food Drive. Donations can be given to the office, but make sure you tell them to put it in the Fall-Holiday Food Drive account. We plan to have a jar/bucket to collect money around lunchtime. The meal will include turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, green bean casserole, cranberry relish, rolls, pumpkin pie, and whip cream. It will be pre-cooked, but it will be delivered cold. The families will have to heat it up. We were able to purchase about 17 meals last year. We are hoping to be able to purchase that many, if not more this year.

We plan to deliver the food items to the Livingston County Food Pantry, and the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry at St. Mary's.



News from the School Counselor:



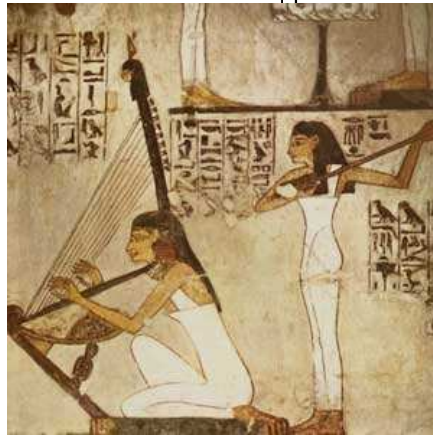
Here at Pontiac Junior High School we are excited about a new program being implemented this year called **PBIS** – **P**ositive **B**ehavior **I**nterventions & **S**upports. We are having our first *BIG* celebration on Friday, October 30th, 2009, for those students who earned the privilege to attend. The PBIS program is based upon the philosophy of recognizing the positive contributions of students/children. Our goal is to help each child develop self-discipline and engage in positive behaviors. Together, home and school share the responsibility for developing good citizens. However, the most influential role model in any child's life is their parents. Children, from birth, watch every move we make. They are very perceptive. They are learning about the world around them—from *us*. Through these observations, our children are learning and imitating our behaviors. They learn about our beliefs and about our values. Through our modeling – our actions, our words, our behaviors, and our love – we, as parents, have tremendous power! Being the best role model that we can be for our children is essential in teaching them the values they will carry for life. Please don't take this role lightly—be acutely aware and conscientious of our own behaviors that are modeled for our children. As a team, let's continue to support and reward positive behaviors. We look forward to a continuing partnership as we work together to mold our children/students into good citizens.

Marci Hunt
School Counselor, MA, QMHP, LCPC
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Social Studies News from 6th Grade

Upon the completion of Unit 1, the sixth graders should have built a foundation of knowledge about physical and cultural regions of the world and have learned how geographers, historians, archaeologists, and other social scientists work to discover the past and help us to understand the past and present.

As we enter Unit 2, the sixth graders will discover that the first civilizations of the world began in river valleys. The four great river civilizations were in Egypt along the Nile, in ancient Mesopotamia



between the Tigris and Euphrates, in India by the Indus, and in China along the Huang. Each of these cultures developed separate systems of writing that tell us about their laws and customs.

Ancient Egypt will be our first stop. Students will explore this river valley's geography to see why this civilization was able to develop there and then trace the steps in its development. They will also investigate Egyptian major achievements to learn about the legacy they left us.

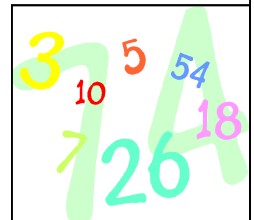
Mrs. Mehlberg

PJHS School Spirit

New items have been added to the 8th grade sponsored School Spirit clothing order forms. These forms are available in the office and there is also one attached to the newsletter. These items make great birthday and Christmas gifts for students! Checks should be made out to PJHS and turned into Mrs. McKinney.

6th Grade Math

6th grade students are working on adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing of fractions and mixed numbers with unlike denominators. Our students are using skills of finding the least common denominator, greatest common factor, and reducing fractions to lowest terms in the next two chapters. When we are finished with chapters 5 and 6 we will switch gears and start geometry. This will include both plane and 3-dimensional geometry, as well as mathematics in art, architecture, and nature. The students always enjoy this topic. For a preview, go to designbyalgorithm.com and check out Scott Burns artwork that was generated using mathematics algorithms. They are amazing!



From the school nurse...

Now that fall has started and the onset of flu season has begun (especially the concern of H1N1- formerly called swine flu), we would like to give some reminders on safe practices:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. [Alcohol-based hand cleaners](#) are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, [CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone](#) except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick.

*adapted from U.S. Centers for Disease Control

The H1N1 vaccine is now available at the health department. Please check the school website or LVCHD website for available clinics. The CDC and Illinois Department of Public Health are recommending that children between 6 months and 18 years of age receive the vaccinations for both seasonal flu and the H1N1 influenza virus. We encourage you to speak with your physician about obtaining this vaccine.

Rachel Lee RN
School Nurse



When calling your child in absent

When your child is absent from school, we ask that you call the school office to notify us your child will not be attending school. When your child is ill, we are also asking you to notify us if your child has fever of 100 degrees F (or over), along with coughing and/or a sore throat. We are doing this as a screen for influenza. This is due to a request from both the CDC and our local health department. Please be aware that one of the nurses employed by Dist 429, may also be calling to check the status of your child.

If your child has been diagnosed with the seasonal or H1N1 flu, please keep your child home for a minimum of 24 hours after the fever has resolved (without the use of Tylenol or Motrin) or as directed by your physician.

When your child goes home from school

If your child has been sent home ill from school, we recommend that they stay home for the remainder of the school day. A check-list for determining if they should return tomorrow morning is:

- your child should be fever-free (without Tylenol or Motrin),
- free of vomiting or diarrhea and is able to tolerate breakfast,
- has completed any doctor or health department recommended home isolation,
- any rash is gone or has been seen by a physician and your child is released to return to school,
- and generally feels like being alert and learning in class.

*As we start into the school year, please prepare now for having your child home. If your child becomes ill with influenza, a probable home stay of 4-5 days will not be unusual. We know that keeping a child (or children) home can be disruptive to work and activity schedules, so thank you for your attention and cooperation in this manner.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov or www.flu.gov



7th Grade Greetings

Livingston County War Museum Field Trip:

The 7th graders will have an opportunity to visit the Livingston County War Museum on Tuesday, November 3rd and Wednesday, November 4th. Your student will be assigned to one 1/2 day to visit the museum. He/She will either be going before or after lunch. This is a walking field trip. As a result, please make sure your student is dressed appropriately for the weather. The field trip is a wonderful introduction to our World War II unit which we will be covering after Winter break. Also, ask your student about any new concepts they learned during this historical experience.

Social Studies News:

The 7th Grade students just began a unit on North America. The country we are studying in North America is the United States. The students will choose one of the 50 states to create a power point project. This project will be worked on in class during the week of November 3rd. The students will have an opportunity to share the information on their state with their Social Studies classes. We have also covered the concepts of the land, the economy and the people of the United States. Please ask your student about any new concepts they have learned as we have studied the United States.

Mrs. Krueger

Science News Update:

We've recently completed our leaf collection posters in science and they are proudly displayed in the Jr. High hallways. Thank you for any help you may have given your student with this project. This brought us to the end of our first textbook, and now we will begin the next book which focuses on Astronomy. Thanks to our upcoming field trip, our students will begin the Astronomy unit with a bang! They will be visiting the Challenger Learning Center in Bloomington, IL and completing a "Mission to Mars." Following their mission, they will have the opportunity to visit the Prairie Aviation Museum and ISU Planetarium. Please be sure to ask them about this awesome experience! In the coming weeks students will be learning more about comets, planets, and many other things in our universe. As it begins to get dark earlier, please encourage them to go outside and take a look at the stars, constellations, and other wonders in the night sky!

Thank you!

Mrs. Hansen



From the desk of Miss Rapp

We have made it through the first 2 units in our English book and are now on the Verb Unit. The students also just finished writing their Veteran's Day essay and we will be working on a persuasive essay towards the end of November. We are continuing to learn how to diagram the different parts of a sentence. In spelling they will be working on lesson 10-13 during the month of November. We will also be starting to practice and perform our choral readings that we perform for the rest of the school right before we let out for Winter Break.



Have a happy November!

~Miss. Rapp

7th Grade Language Arts

Literature

Literature classes are focusing on characterization. Character trait maps, venn diagrams, and other graphic organizers are being developed as students read a variety genres. Students will continue to identify elements of plot and make inferences.

Mrs. Vitzthum