

Pontiac Jr. High School Newsletter

Message from the Principal

September 2008

Welcome to Pontiac Junior High School for the 2008-2009 school year! We currently have 390 students enrolled at PJHS. We have about 60 staff members which includes Assistants, Cooks, Custodians, Dean of Students, Nurse, School Resource Officer, Secretaries, Social Worker, Special Needs Coordinator and Teachers. We are off to a great start to our school year! This will be my 4th year as principal at PJHS, my 11th year as a principal and my 30th year in education.

I am very excited about the year ahead! For the first time in 5 years our school made Adequate Yearly Progress based on the ISAT test scores! I am extremely proud of the hard work of all the teachers and students who made this happen. We have made many changes over the past three years to achieve this goal and the increase this year in student achievement was amazing!

We have greatly increased the number of Co-taught classes at PJHS as an intervention to improve student suc-

cess. Your student may be in a class this year with two teachers or a teacher and an assistant. Our goal is to include students with an IEP in the regular classroom with the support of a Special Needs teacher or Assistant for as many classes as possible. We have found that **all** students benefit from this teaching model. We believe this increase in co-teaching played a great role in the success of our students on the ISAT tests. You will be receiving individual student test results as soon as the school district receives them. Currently we have access to scores on the State Board of Education web site. We have set a high bar for student achievement and our goal is to maintain or surpass our scores when we take the 2009 ISAT tests in March.

We had many building improvements over the summer. Many classrooms and hallways were painted, and tiled. We now have Smart Boards in our Literature and Math classrooms.

Officer Shawna Gilliam will be working in all the District #429 schools again this year. She will be involved in our Anti Bullying Program, assisting with attendance and discipline issues as well as general supervision. Her presence in our schools has made a great positive impact. Discipline referrals have decreased. She has provided great assistance supporting students and families through difficult situations.

Our new Dean of Students is Mr. Josh DeLong. He taught at Dwight Elementary School and has completed his Masters Degree in Administration. He will work with attendance issues, discipline, classroom visits, and supervision. He is also our Boys Baseball Coach.

Please note that your student received a blue and white assignment notebook one of the first days of school. We encourage your student to use the assignment book at school for all subjects. Students also received the PJHS Handbook one of the first days of school.

The handbook was reviewed in the Literature classes. Students were directed to take the handbook home to their parents. The handbook will also be posted on our web page.

To keep informed about school events and important information, please visit our District website at

www.pontiac429.org.

On the left there is a button for the Junior High. At the top on the left there is a place to **SIGN UP FOR NEWS UPDATES**. If you would like to receive notices from school on your email please sign up there.

We encourage your participation in your student's education at PJHS. Parents are a child's first and most important teacher. Please feel free to contact us about any questions or concerns at 842-4343. Email is a great way to stay in touch with school. My email is donzejud@p429.k12.il.us. I look forward to working with you and your student at PJHS this school year!

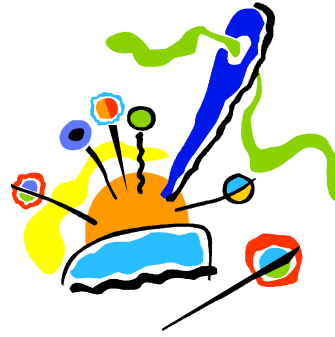
Mrs. Judy Donze

Welcome to Synergy!

The Synergy class is a hands on, practical skills, computer class. 6th grade students have started Orientation. 7th and 8th grade students have reviewed the skills taught in Orientation and will be starting their first rotation on August 25th. 6th graders will start their first Module rotation on September 4th.

Parent Briefings/Extra Credit - Each rotation, including Orientation, has a Parent Briefing that summarizes what is covered dur-

ing the seven sessions. Students who want to earn extra credit points may get them by taking the Parent Briefing home and getting the signature of a parent/guardian. Students must bring the briefing back to school and place it in the Extra Credit bin. The points will not be given



if a student calls home to have it brought to school. Employers want responsible workers and this is one way for students to become good potential employees by practicing responsibility. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact Mrs. Loudon.

BUILDERS CLUB NEWS

Builders Club is an organization that is open to all 6th, 7th and 8th grade students. The goal of our club is to develop leadership qualities in young people through experiences in voluntary community service. We do lots of fun activities like playing BINGO every month at Asta Care, organizing the

March of Pennies, helping distribute candy at Halloween at a nursing home, working with the high school Key Club at a carwash to raise money for the Children's Advocacy Center, helping with the fall food drive, plus lots of



other activities. Meetings will take place once a month after school. Listen to upcoming announcements for details about our first meeting.

Sponsors Mrs. Dunlap and Mrs. Vitzthum

ART

Art classes have begun for students. We are finishing drawing assignments and beginning scratch art paper in sixth grade, painting in the seventh grade and ceramics in the eighth grade. Art club will begin on September 9th after school from 3-4:00. Any stu-

dent may join art club. We do extra art assignments and community service projects for the school such as making banners to display at school. We have made banners for Red Ribbon Week,

Peace Week and other causes important to junior high students. So check out art club at our meeting September 9th!

ART Club

News from the 6th Grade Team

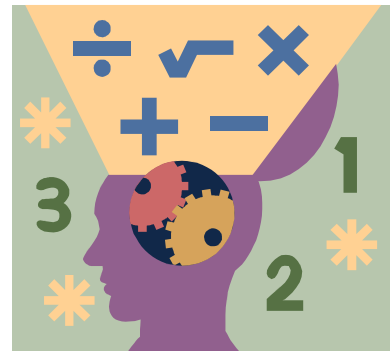
This year we will be highlighting one of the core subject areas each month in the newsletter. This month we welcome you to the world of science. Students are beginning to study life science: plants, animals, bacteria, disease and anything related to living organisms.

Students will find out that science is about asking questions and using the scientific method to find answers and build knowledge.

Using models and tools to investigate questions and share answers will all be a part of science this year. Science will be fun!!!

Brain Food: Albert Einstein said, "Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world." He also said, "logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere."

Lori Dunlap - Language Arts/ Spelling
 Laura Jeziorski - Literature
 Kathy Abry - Math
 Julie Mehlberg - Social Studies
 Lori Wolf - Co-taught science
 Shari Van Hovel - science



From the school nurse...

Welcome back! I hope everyone had an enjoyable summer. **Please Note:** Guidelines have changed for physical requirements this year. **Sixth grade students** are now required to have a physical completed by their physician. (This has changed from the previous year's fifth grade physical requirement). However since this is a new guideline, this year we are allowing our sixth grade students to use physicals that have been done for last year's fifth grade requirement. If your child did not have a physical for fifth

grade (last year), they will need to have one completed for this year's requirement before our **October 15th deadline**. Also, please remember that a physical is required for any student who just moved to Illinois, or any child wishing to participate in sports at school. Immunizations must be current as well. Again, the deadline for this is October 15th according to our state guidelines. I look forward to caring for your child. Please feel free to call me for any medical questions or concerns: 842-4343.
 Rachel Lee RN

Important Dates to remember...

September 1 – No School – Labor Day
September 3 - 6:15 PM Sports Booster Meeting
September 8 – Stanford Testing during Literature and Math Class during the week
September 11 – Judge Bauknecht parent program: "7 Reasons to Leave the Party."
September 12 – PTO Sponsored *Welcome Back to School Dance*
September 15 – 8th grade students attend program "7 Reasons to Leave the Party" at PTHS
September 16 – 6:00 PM IMSA parent/student meeting
September 18 – 7:00 PM Board Meeting
September 24 – Progress Reports go home
September 26 - 1:30 Early Dismissal – PTHS Homecoming

PJHS Welcomes New Staff

Welcome to District #429 and PJHS...

Mrs. Christine Chiodo – 6th, 7th & 8th grade Keyboarding/Computer Applications teacher

Mr. Josh De Long – Dean of Students

Mrs. Marci Hunt – School Social Worker

Mrs. Heidi Kelly – Vision and Screening Secretary

Welcome to PJHS...

Mrs. Carol Arnolts – In School Suspension Assistant

Mrs. Shirley Casey – Teacher Assistant

PJHS Staff Reassignment at PJHS...

Mrs. Lisa Jennings – Teacher Assistant

Welcome Student Teachers...

Mr. Tim Dillow – Band

Mr. Brian Johnson – PE

Mr. Dan Wessler – Chorus



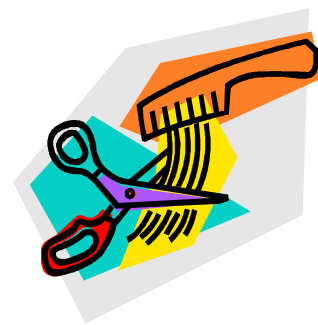
10 Ways to Increase Your Child's Internet Safety

1. Set up the computer in a common room of the house, not in your child's room, so it is easier to see what is being viewed on the internet.
2. Have your child show you what he or she knows how to do online, as well as his or her favorite sites.
3. Keep access to your child's e-mail account and randomly check it. Also closely monitor your child's chat-room activity.
4. Get to know your child's online friends. Teach your child to never arrange a face-to-face meeting with someone he or she meets online.
5. Instruct your child to not give out identifying information, such as home address, telephone number, or school name, and to not send personal pictures to people who are strangers.
6. Do an online search for "child-friendly search engines" that your child can use when working on school projects.
7. Install filtering software on your computer to guard against adult content. Consider the "whitelisting" feature that allows children access to only a preapproved list of sites.
8. Teach your child to never respond to threatening or offensive e-mail or chat-room messages.
9. Tell your child to not download anything from the Internet without your approval.
10. So everyone remembers, type up the specific Internet safety instructions you want your child to know and post them near the computer.

Free Haircut Vouchers

The Mission Committee of the First Presbyterian Church of Pontiac is sponsoring a free haircut program for students. Vouchers are available for haircuts at Unlimited Styles, 101 E. Water

St., Pontiac, IL. We hope to provide a positive self-image for children in Pontiac



schools. If your child needs a free haircut, contact your building principal or social worker. Indicate if the child is 9 years or younger or 10 years or older. All requests will be kept confidential.

Pontiac Jr. High School
600 Morrow St
Pontiac, Illinois 61764
Phone: 815-842-4343
Fax: 815-844-6230



Character Counts

Pillars to live by:

**CARING
RESPECT
FAIRNESS
CITIZENSHIP
RESPONSIBILITY
TRUSTWORTHINESS**

News from the Social Worker



I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and inform you about some of the services I can provide. My name is Marci Hunt, and I am the new Social Worker for Pontiac Junior High School (PJHS). A school social worker wears many hats, but the most important is providing students and families with many different services to promote and support students' academic and social/emotional well being to assist the student in reaching his/her full potential. As a School Social Worker at PJHS, I will be offering school-based services to those students who demonstrate emotional, behavioral, or social problems that negatively impact his/her academic success. I will work as member of the educational team with administrators, teachers, staff members, parents, and area agencies to provide comprehensive services that best meet the needs of each individual student. As part of the educational team, I will be providing: individual counseling, group counseling, crisis intervention, teaching classroom-based prevention programs, consultation with staff, linkage to outside agencies, participation on intervention teams, and participation on various building and district committees. Please feel free to call or email me with any question or concerns you may have regarding your child.

Thank you in advance for the opportunity to assist in your child's educational success-

Marci Hunt

School Social Worker, MA, QMHP, LCPC

815-842-4343

huntmar@p429.k12.il.us

From the desk of your friendly Resource Officer

Welcome back to school. I hope everyone enjoyed their summer break. I just wanted to take a few minutes to share with you some safety tips for getting to school and back home.

Where there's school, there's bound to be school buses. By following these few simple rules, you can stay safe while riding the bus:

- Arrive at the bus stop at least five minutes before your bus is scheduled to pick you up.
- Always stand 4 giant steps back from the curb. When lining up, make your line away from the street.
- Never walk behind the bus.
- If you have to cross the street, take at least six giant steps forward on the sidewalk before turning to cross the street. That way, you and the bus driver can see

each other.

- When you're getting on and off the bus, make sure nothing gets left behind. Watch the straps on your bag - they can get caught in the door.
- If you do drop something near the bus, tell the driver before you pick it up. You want to make sure that the bus driver knows where you are at all times.

Don't take the bus to school? We've got tips for you too:

- Work out a safe route to school with your parents. Choose the quickest way with the fewest street crossings and use intersections with crossing guards. Stay away from parks, vacant lots, fields, and other places where there aren't many people around.
- Whenever you can, walk to and from school with a friend,

neighbor, brother, or sister. Don't go by yourself.

- If you bike or skate to school, wear a helmet. And don't forget to lock up your bike with a sturdy lock wherever you leave it.

Remember we have a few rules that apply to your bicycles, skateboards and scooters. When you get on the school grounds, which includes in front of Washington School, you need to walk. Do not ride in the street due to the amount of traffic. Your skateboards need to be secured in your locker when you arrive at school. If they do not fit in your locker, you may check them in at your first hour class and pick them up at the end of the day. Remember we have rules to keep everyone safe. Have a great school year.

8th Grade Report

Welcome to all the 8th grade parents and students. We want to hear from all of you about any questions you might have. You can contact us at any time, but the best time is from 10:30 to 11:00 or after 3:00. The school's phone number is 815-842-4343.

Your student's teachers are as follows:

Brandon Fenton..... Math & Algebra
Cindy Renzelman.....Language Arts
Lisa Vitzthum.....Literature
Susan Hummel.....Instructional and co-teacher for most subjects
Becky Dunham.....Stars
Tim Misener.....Social Studies
Lori McKinney.....Resource and co-teacher for most subjects
Cheryl Krueger.....Science
Lori Wolf.....Instructional 8th grade
Deanna Stephens.....Instructional 8th grade

We will be sending out information very soon regarding the 8th grade graduation trip to Great America. Please check with your student to make sure you receive this information.

The beginning of the year is difficult to adjust to, and this year is no different. We recognize that many of our student's biological clocks are off because of the necessity of earlier bedtimes. Please make sure your student is getting a full 8 to 10 hours of sleep a night. Research has proven this is an extremely valuable tool for your student's academic success.

Your son or daughter may have told you that there is more than one teacher in his class. As many of you know, we recently achieved AYP for the Jr. High. A key factor to this success is due to the fact that many of our classes are being co-taught. Everyone benefits from the co-teaching experience which gives our students a smaller teacher/student ratio in which to learn.

We look forward to a great year. We are here for you and your students. Please contact us regarding anything in particular we need to know about your student. YOU know your child better than anyone else, so please feel free to share with us.

8th grade team

7th Grade Greetings

Grading Policy

(applies to core classes)

Late Homework will be graded as follows:

Same Day: 5pts off earned grade

Next Day: 10pts off earned grade

Two days: 20pts off earned grade

Up to One Week: 50pts off earned grade

Hello 7th graders and parents/guardians!

I hope you are as excited for the upcoming school year as I am! My name is Mr. Blair and I am the 7th Grade Literature teacher here at the Pontiac Junior High School. In Literature this year, we are going to be reading a wide variety of pieces, ranging from classic short stories and poems, to modern thrillers and magazine articles. We'll even soon begin reading a teleplay from an episode of the very famous television series "The Twilight Zone." The material in this class does require time and attention, though, so this will not be an easy class. However, I hope to make Literature as fun and enjoyable for the students to read as I find it to be. If you ever have a question or any other desire to contact me, please do not hesitate; and, when doing so, Email would probably get the quickest response. I will include my email at the bottom, and it can also be found on the district website. Again, I very much look forward to a fun and exciting 2008-2009 school year in 7th Grade Literature here at PJHS!

Mr. Blair

blairbri@p429.k12.il.us

Science Update:

During this school year the 7th grade students will be covering the following textbooks in science:

- Microorganisms, Fungi and Plants
- Cells, Heredity, and Classification
- Sound and Light
- Astronomy

If you have experience in any of these areas and would like to be a guest speaker please contact me. Also, during the year we will be doing many labs and activities. From time to time, we may need extra materials to supply these labs since we have such a large class. If you would be willing to donate supplies, please let me know. I'm looking forward to a great school year and I hope that the students really enjoy it too. Please take time to talk to your students about what they have learned in science class!

Thank you!

Miss Uphoff uphofflea@p429.k12.il.us

Social Studies News:

We are off to a great start! Seventh Grade Social Studies is based on Geography. We will be focusing on the seven continents and the countries within those continents.

The first unit is based on Geography of the World. In Unit 1, the following topics will be covered: Five Themes of Geography, Planet Earth, and Landforms. The students will create a poster in class based on the Five Themes of Geography -- Location, Place, Human/Environment Interaction, Movement and Region. We will have a quiz on Friday, August 29th on the world map. Students will need to locate the 7 continents, 4 oceans, a sea, a gulf, two rivers, two islands, a rain forest, a mountain range, and a major line of latitude/longitude.

I am looking forward to a great school year. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call the school.

Thanks, Mrs. Krueger

Mrs. Bammann will be co-teaching in Science, Math and Literature this year. Also, **Mrs. Hatch** is co-teaching in Science and Math. We are happy to say that all students in such classes will benefit from having the attention and expertise of two teachers!

From the desk of Miss. Rapp

7th Grade Language Arts

I'm looking forward to this school year. It is my 3rd year at PJHS and I'm looking forward to another great year. This year we are starting out on Unit 1 in both our Spelling and English textbooks. We will have 1 spelling unit a week and there will also be a spelling test at the end of each week. In English there will be worksheets that go along with the daily lessons. I am looking forward to working with all of the students this year. If there are any questions please feel free to contact me at school. My email address is rappmol@p429.k12.il.us.

I hope everyone has a great year at PJHS!

Seventh Grade Math News

In seventh grade math we will have an assignment nightly unless we are testing that day. If your child has a question or needs help with an assignment I will be here at 7:45 am and stay until 3:30 most nights.

This first chapter is on making number connections. We will be doing about 19-22 chapters for this school year. There are about five lessons in each chapter. We will do a review before each test. Your child should be able to use the review as a study guide for the test the next day. I will try hard not to have tests on Monday if at all possible. If you have any questions please feel free to email or call the school.

The seventh grade math will be taking The Stanford Test the week of September 8-12.

Happy counting:)

Mrs. Wasson