



T-BIRD TALK



A Few Words from Mr. R —

Dear Thunderbird Community,

As we approach the end of January I am still trying to grasp that over half of the school year is behind us. While there are many important tasks that remain before us, the Thunderbird community can celebrate that Pinellas Park Middle has moved from an under-chosen school to an over-selected school. We actually have a waitlist of student living outside of our zone wanting to transfer in. Student achievement scores have started to move in a positive direction following the hard work and dedication from our faculty and staff as well as our students, their parents and guardians. Truly we are witnessing what can be accomplished when a community pulls together.

At the same time, there are several areas still needing improvement. While I hold no doubts that every family only wants what is best for their child, I realize that the link between the school and home needs to be strengthened. Study after study reinforces that the one single factor that has the greatest impact on a student’s progress is the level of parental and guardianship involvement. You will find the Thunderbird faculty and staff working hard to keep you informed, to keep you connected with what is happening at your child’s school.

This very newsletter is an example of our efforts to improve and raise our level of communicating with you. In-between publications a great deal of information can be found on our website [<http://www.pcsb.org/pp-ms>]. Upcoming events include State and district required test, field trips, Title I events, parent informational sessions sponsored by Parent, Teacher, Student Association (PTSA) and School Advisory Committee (SAC). Already this year presentations have covered Internet and Social Media Safety for the family and an over view of the Magnet and Academy Choices available to eighth graders here in Pinellas. Scheduled for February is a review of the Social Studies coursework required before moving on to high school and fielding many questions about the new testing requirements, we will be providing a wealth of information during our FSA versus the FCAT Night.

The requirements for your children - our students - are changing rapidly. Stay informed so that your decision in the future will give your child the best opportunity for success. Join our PTA, refer back to our website often and read our newsletters. Remember, the best way for you to improve your child’s likelihood for success is to become involved.

Florida Standards

Assessments (FSA)

Practice Tests

Parents and students use the link below to find information and login as “guest” to access practice assessments:

https://login4.cloud1.tds.airast.org/student/V71/Pages/LoginShell.aspx?c=Florida_PT
Answer keys are located

here:

<http://fsassessments.org/training-tests>

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I  READING WEEK

Keeping up with our newest tradition, we continue our celebration of *I Love Reading Week* the week of February 9th through the 13th. We invite you and your family to be part of this joyous experience. The calendar of events include the following DAILY activities and would love for you to join us as a *registered volunteer during school hours:

Classroom door decorating and prizes for best decorations
Favorite character or book dress up theme for teachers, parents, and staff

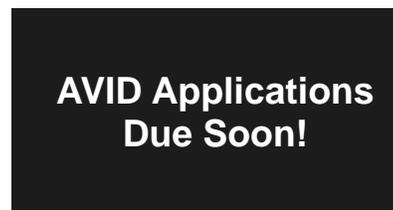
Registered school volunteers read their favorite books and how these impacted their lives

*If you're already a registered volunteer, simply come by the front office or call Ms. Carolyn Bystrycki, PPMS Community Liaison at 727-545-6400 to alert her of your participation that week. If you have the time and desire to participate during school hours, but you are not registered with our school as a volunteer, please contact Ms. Bystrycki to start you on the registration process as soon as possible (at least 3 weeks before the event).

FEATURED COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

Parent Info Session & Student Talent Show
Thursday, February 12th, 2015 @ 6:30 p.m.

Experience your child's talents and creativity as we celebrate Literacy!
Info Session: Florida Standards Assessment (the new state examination)



We will be selecting upcoming 6th and 7th grade students to be in AVID next year.

The application process is starting now!

Please contact Ms. Chancey
at
chanceyki@pcsb.org for
more information and/or an
application for enrollment.



Museum of Fine Arts Field Trip

In December, all 6th graders had the opportunity to enrich their study of ancient civilizations by participating in a field trip to the Museum of Fine Arts—St. Petersburg--<http://www.fine-arts.org/>. The purpose of the field trip was to enrich the study of the characteristics of a civilization and analyzing artifacts. Your student should be able to tell you what the 7 characteristics of a civilization are and examples of each of them. The 6th graders toured the museum, completed an activity, and enjoyed a picnic lunch at the neighboring park.

You might be one of them!

AVID is an elective class for students who need a little extra support in middle school to get ready for high school and college. If you need a little help with your study skills or your organizational skills, this could be the class for you.

Update Your Contact Information

Families—if you have new phone numbers or email addresses, please send your student to their grade level house for a new clinic card. Update and return the clinic card as soon as possible. If you have moved since the beginning of the year and have not yet informed the school of your new address, a change of address must be completed. Two forms of proof of address will be required to update your records. This may be utility bills or copy of signed lease agreement. Please see Ms. Ray to change your address or determine if other documentation is necessary.

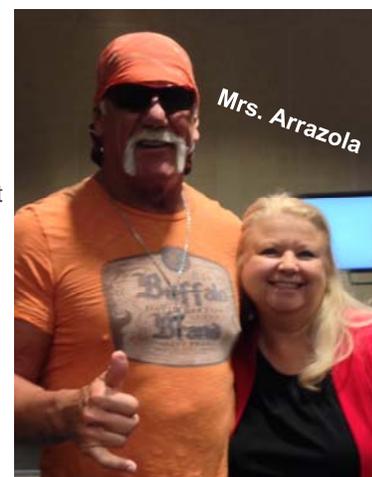
Good-bye to Mrs. Hope and Mrs. Arrazola, Two Special Teachers

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On December 19th we said our fond farewells to Mrs. Hope and Mrs. Arrazola as they retired from teaching. They had both told Mr. Rosenberger that they wanted to keep things quiet regarding their final day of teaching, they didn't want to "make a big deal", choosing to share their news with their classes during the last two days.



Honoring their wishes, Mr. Rosenberger waited to make his announcement to all of the students and faculty via intercom during the last few minutes of school. While that final bell usually signals a flood of students out the door ready to begin their holiday break, this time there were groups of students that returned to Building 3 to say their good-byes to these two wonderful teachers. Tears were shed as many students waited their turn to hug their teachers and wish them well. It was a sentimental ending to their final day at Pinellas Park.



Both of these lovely teachers were part of the Thunderbird team for many years. Mrs. Arrazola taught Language Arts at Pinellas Park Middle School for 36 years. Mrs. Hope taught in both the Math Department and as an elective Spanish teacher totaling 22 years.

Both have plans to spend time with family, friends, as well as travel. It is rare to find teachers that will invest such a long term commitment to one school. We are very grateful that they did! They will both be missed by faculty and students.

Science Club News

The PPMS Science Club held a very successful fund raiser through Nature's Vision before the Winter break. With the profits, the club will be taking a field trip to the Florida State Fair in February. Club members should get and return their permission slip to Mrs. Malstrom by Feb. 10th.

Did you know that February is Box Tops for Education Month at PPMS? While we collect Box tops all year, in February, the Science Club asks that you show some love and turn in those little pink squares found on all sorts of products. Box Tops can be turned in to any Science teacher. The teacher who collects the most during the month of February will win a popsicle party for all of his/her classes!

On February 28th, the PPMS Science Quiz Bowl Team will enter the Regional Middle School Science Quiz Bowl. This competition is held annually in Cocoa, Florida. The team has been practicing since September to get ready for the competition that challenges their knowledge in Science and Math. We wish them the best of luck and a safe journey to the competition!



Schoolyard Archaeological Dig In November, all 6th graders had the opportunity to excavate our schoolyard archaeological dig. The students used spoons, brushes, and other tools to excavate, map, and analyze artifacts. The students enjoyed their time learning how real archaeologists might excavate a dig and then hypothesize about their findings.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies Night

Social studies night is coming! It will be held on Thursday, February 19th, 2015 from 6 pm to 7 pm. Come and see what your student has been working on in their social studies class! It will showcase projects and activities created by students that gave them a hands-on and real life experience!

January is National Mentoring Month and schools across the district are honoring their mentors in a variety of ways, such as with personalized thank you messages and school-based celebrations. Mentors help children build confidence, gain knowledge and develop the strength of character to succeed inside and outside of the classroom.

Pinellas County Schools has 3,012 active mentors who have given 56,777 hours of their time to the district's students. Mentors include parents, teachers, businessmen and women, teachers, coaches and the clergy. A one-hour investment with a Pinellas County Schools student results in a lifetime of returns for both our students and mentors.

"We understand the importance of mentors to student success," said Superintendent Michael A. Grego. "Whether it's reading to a student or a class for 30 minutes or assisting at a school event, mentors give us an added level of support in our mission to prepare each student for college, career and life. Mentors are valuable members of the Pinellas County Schools team."

Studies have shown that students with mentors are less likely to use illegal drugs and alcohol and are less likely to skip school. They have decreased student discipline problems while having increased academic achievement.

"We have concrete evidence to the value of spending time mentoring with our students and in our schools," said Dr. Valerie Brimm, director of the district's Office of Strategic Partnerships. "There are many opportunities in the district to help shape the lives of children and our community."

This district will host mentoring workshops from 8-10 a.m., Wednesday, January 21, at the City of St. Petersburg's Water Resource Building, 1650 Third Ave., N., St. Petersburg. A second workshop will be held from 5-7 p.m. the same day at the Pinellas Education Foundation in the Wells Fargo Room, which is located at 12090 Starkey Road, Largo.

To learn more about Pinellas County Schools mentoring opportunities, contact Michelle Roberge at robergem@pcsb.org or call 727-588-5050.

Fencing Club

In December, PPMS got its newest club for students: fencing! The Thunderbird Fencers are the first fencing club in the history of Pinellas County Schools. Created in response to student requests, Ms. Clark (who has been fencing for about a year) agreed to be the sponsor, and asked Mr. Richardson (a Social Studies teacher at Pinellas Park High) to be the coach. Mr. Richardson has thirty years of fencing experience, and has been an assistant coach at Tampa Bay Fencers for the past decade.

The club currently has sixteen students participating, who are learning discipline, self-knowledge, and problem-solving skills along with classical fencing techniques. Although based on traditional Western sword fighting, fencing is actually one of the safest sports. The injury rate is far lower than most other activities that students might participate in, such as football or even soccer.

The Thunderbird Fencers meet on Wednesdays from 4:15 pm starting in Ms. Clark's room, Portable 7, then move to the gym until 5:20 pm. In addition to dinner, fencing club members are eligible for our afternoon activity bus.

Hands-On Projects Many students had to turn in their National History Day (NHD) projects in December. NHD projects lead the students to analyze and interpret historical events, people, and places through both primary and secondary sources. This year's theme was "Leadership and Legacy".



PREORDER YOUR THUNDERBIRD 2014-15 YEAR- BOOK!!

\$30.00 EACH

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM AND PAYMENT TO THE
FRONT OFFICE

STUDENT NAME _____

GRADE LEVEL _____

PARENT CONTACT NUMBER _____

CHECK # AND AMOUNT _____ CASH AMOUNT _____

Please make checks payable to PPMS.

Civics News

Civics is moving forward at a very strong pace as we head into the Third 9 weeks. We have successfully tackled multiple units so far and are moving into the curriculum which includes the U.S. Constitution, Florida Constitution, Bill of Rights and their impact, the Evolution of Voting Rights, Types of Laws, Federal and State Courts, and Landmark Supreme Court Cases. We will conclude our curriculum with International Relations following the Spring Progress Monitoring Exams (PME).

Review material for the Civics PME and EOC can be found via <http://www.ecsd-fl.schoolloop.com/civics>. All of the benchmarks, practice questions, vocabulary games, and a practice EOC can be found here. This website was created in partnership with the Florida Joint Center for Civics Education. Another great resource is www.icivics.org. It is packed with Civics games and resources. Check them out!

EOC (End of the Course Exam) Pinellas Park Middle School last year had a passing rate of 97% on the State Mandated Civics EOC. Our goal is 100% Success for all of our students. The results thus far have been favorable for the Park on the District generated PME. Our goal is that we continue to show improvement. We have a window for the 2015 State Civics EOC April 20th to May 22nd. I would anticipate that Pinellas Park Middle will administer the exam around the first week of May. Every decision that is made regarding pacing and curriculum in Civics is geared toward 100% success on the EOC for all students in 7th grade. We appreciate your support as we challenge your student to strive for excellence.

DBQs Civics students are being challenged this Semester to complete multiple DBQs (Document Based Questions) which require in depth reading and analysis on background material in order to prepare the students to write an argumentative essay on the material covered. This is a tough task for high school students. However, we believe our students are up to the challenge to complete these assignments successfully while striving for excellence in writing and analysis. We look forward to much classroom debate and discussion as we dive into the DBQ process.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher via email. We look forward to working with you and your student for their success.

You're Invited!

You are cordially invited to attend our Parent Info Night, Tuesday, February 24th at 6 p.m in the Gym to learn more about the new FLORIDA STANDARDS ASSESSMENTS. Our students will soon begin taking these state examinations. Knowing what they are all about will help you support your child's academic efforts at home. Let's talk over dinner about this important theme, our treat!

Check out the new PPMS
website!

<http://www.pcsb.org/pp-ms>

Safety Cyberbullying At-risk Identity theft Security



Five Tips from the School Resource Deputy to help your child survive middle school.

- Lock or Lose It. A five dollar lock can save a 200 dollar bike.
- Phones should be collected at 9 pm and be in parent's possession. Middle School Students complain that they are tired because they were texting all night.
- No computers in bedrooms. This is like leaving your door unlock so strangers can enter your child's bedroom. (shut off wireless at night)
- Facebook should be monitored and not be a full time activity. About 50 percent of bulling cases start here.
- Spend time with your child. Find an activity that you both can do together.

Home of the Thunderbirds!

Pinellas Park Middle School
6940 70th Avenue North
Pinellas Park, Florida 33781

Contact Us

- Dave Rosenberger, Principal
- Kim Vongsyprasom, 6th grade AP
- Melissa Campbell, 7th grade AP
- Carlmon Jones, 8th grade AP

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Visit us on the web at
www.pcsb.org/pp-ms

PLACE
STAMP
HERE