

# Pella Middle School

*Developing Stronger Relationships*

February & March 2016



## Dates to Remember:

- 3/18 End 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter  
2<sup>nd</sup> Semester Midterm
- 3/21-3/25 Spring Break
- 3/28 School Board Meeting
- 3/31 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Grades Posted  
The Road Less Traveled – ISU
- 4/6 90-Minute Early Dismissal
- 4/11 Pella Middle School Blood  
Drive 12:00 – 6:00 PM  
School Board Meeting
- 4/13 90-Minute Early Dismissal
- 4/16 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Party  
6:30 – 10:00
- 4/18 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Orientation  
6:00 – 7:00 PM
- 4/20 90-Minute Early Dismissal
- 4/25 School Board Meeting
- 4/27 90-Minute Early Dismissal

## The Teenage Mind

From my office window, I can see our students heading outside for “recess” after lunch. Some of them saunter out, chatting with their friends. But many of them sprint out – ready and excited to play. It makes me smile; I love seeing them sprint out there. Their energy and excitement reminds me that they are still young. You should see some of them run around outside. They have energy to burn, and they still have that need for play.

As big and as independent as they want to be sometimes, they are still kids. If you notice your own child wavering between maturity and immaturity, remember that is a natural process at this age. We want to embrace their youth while guiding them into teenagedom. What a precious time this is for them as they figure out who they are and who they want to be!

*Maximizing Life's Opportunities for Every Child*

# All Students

## SCHEDULES for 2016-2017

### Current 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Prepare for Next Year

Believe it or not, we are preparing for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade registration and will begin the scheduling process next month after 7<sup>th</sup> grade orientation. We work very hard to provide students the middle school exploratory experience in order to set the stage for their high school experience, and we want to keep you informed along the way. If ever you have questions, and your student is unable to answer them for you, please do not hesitate to call, email, or make an appointment, so we are able to clear up any confusion.

Math, Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, Physical Education, and Health are our mandatory courses, and we will have a variety of exploratory options. Oftentimes, the confusing part of middle school is the math placements. The outline below should help clear up some of the confusion.

#### Criteria considered for recommended math placement:

- Previous year(s) Iowa Assessment Scores
- Previous year's STAR Math Scores
- Previous year's classroom performance
- Teacher recommendations

*\*Possible progressions for your students moving from 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade.*

	<u>Traditional Math Progression</u>	<u>Accelerated Math Progression</u>	<u>Plan C</u>
7 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math	7/8 Compacted Math	May vary based on need.
8 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math	Math 1	
9 <sup>th</sup>	Core or Math 1 – 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Math 2	
10 <sup>th</sup>	Core or Math 2 – 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Math 3	
11 <sup>th</sup>	Core or Math 3 – 11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Pre-Calc	
12 <sup>th</sup>	Pre-Calc – 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Calculus or Discrete/Stats	

*No Significant Learning Occurs without a Significant Relationship*

There is a detailed letter on page nine for the **8<sup>th</sup> grade party** scheduled for **April 16<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 – 10:00 PM**. All 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are welcome, so please encourage your son or daughter to attend.

# All Students

## Don't be Left in the Dark – Your 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Student is Preparing for High School!

Talk with your students, and encourage them to talk with us about how we can assist them with this transition.

Eighth grade students traveled to Pella High School on Thursday, February 11, to learn more about where they are heading next year. The high school administrators, counselors, and students prepared an afternoon full of information and experiences for them. Our students now have a deeper understanding about what is to come in the very near future. The athletic director shared information about extra curricular opportunities, and he continued to encourage all students to get involved. There are more clubs, fine arts, and athletic experiences at Pella High School than there are here, and we want all students to be a part of a successful team/group.

Mrs. Pentico worked with the high school counselors, Mrs. Teresa Thompson and Mrs. Jessica Manning, to assist the students in registering for their freshman classes. The registration window for our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students closes, Friday, March 11. This is an exciting time; however, it can also be an anxious time, so keep communicating and asking questions!

## Tough Times Never Last, Tough People DO!

### Jefferson Intermediate

#### Parking Lot

Please do not drop off students in the Jefferson Intermediate lot after 7:30 AM. We know many of you drop off kids here for morning music rehearsals, but if you are coming after 7:30 it gets a bit tougher with cars in the bus traffic here.

### Sound System Fundraiser Update

To date, we have raised nearly \$700 as a result of apparel sales and generous donations for a much-needed sound system improvement in our gymnasium. One-third of the proceeds will go to the student council to give back in some way of their choice, and the other two-thirds of the proceeds will go to the sound system upgrade fund. This may take a year, and it may take two or three years. We will continue to be creative in order to raise the money for this upgrade that will benefit all middle school students as well as our high school students that use the gym for games and practices.

# All Students

## Middle School Science Bowl

Science Bowl - Pella students participated in the Ames Lab/ISU Middle School Science Bowl, which is one of 50 regional competitions held across the nation. It is a fast-paced question-and-answer contest where students answer questions about Life



Science, Physical

Science, Earth and Space Science, Energy, Mathematics, and General Science. Our students had a great time participating and spending the day at ISU.

Bottom left from left to right: Jack Stratton, Will Rasmussen, Geordie Laidlaw, Tony Schmitz, and Zoi Faro

***You can be the Best, You can do the Best, or you can give it your Best Shot.***



# All Students

## Mr. (Josh) McCollam selected for National Master Teacher Program



Congratulations to Mr. Josh McCollam on being named a Master Teacher for Project Lead the Way (PLTW). There are currently 565 PLTW Master Teachers in the U.S., and Mr. McCollam joins Susan Lyons and Bethany Tangen of the Pella Community Schools as the third teacher to achieve this status.

PLTW is a nonprofit organization that provides transformational learning experiences to K-12 students and teachers across the U.S., through K-12 pathways in computer science, engineering, and biomedical science. Mr. McCollam is serving in his first year as a PLTW teacher for Pella Middle School's Gateway to Technology program while continuing his previous role as a high school and middle school math teacher.

PLTW's Master Teachers are a talented and passionate cohort of PLTW teachers who play a vital role in preparing PLTW classroom teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to lead PLTW's engaging learning experiences for K-12 students.

*A big part of being successful  
is being prepared.*

# All Students

## Mrs. (Susan) Lyons selected for National Science Teacher Association Conference

[Teaching Channel \(Tch\)](#) is a thriving online community where teachers can watch, share, and learn diverse techniques to help every student grow. As a non-profit organization, Tch strives to provide resources, tools, videos, and content that can support teachers across subject areas and grade levels. Tch also partners with schools, districts, and organizations to support implementation of [professional learning with video](#).



In this spirit, with the generous funding from The Carnegie Foundation, Teaching Channel was able to select teachers across the nation to support them with learning and implementing the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Our very own Susan Lyons was selected to participate in the highly sought after [Tch Next Gen Science Squad](#). Susan has been engaging with educators and leaders across the nation and will have the opportunity to attend the NSTA Conference to convene with her fellow "Squadster". Keep an eye out for what's happening at the conference and how Susan is both learning and supporting learning around the NGSS!

Congratulations, Susan!

*If there is no struggle, there is no success.*

# All Students

BE AWARE.

BE INFORMED.

BE HOPEFUL.

*Saturday, April 16th*

*8:30 am - 1:30 pm*

*Central College Maytag Student Center*

*401 Broadway St., Pella, Iowa*

You are invited to a **FREE** event to **raise awareness for eating disorders**. Education and resources will be provided by professionals as well as those who have been directly impacted by eating disorders.

This event is open to the public and all are encouraged to attend. CEU's for nurses, dietitians, and mental health professionals will be available at an additional cost. Complimentary continental breakfast and \$5 lunch provided on site.



**Nobody knows what they are capable of until they push themselves hard enough to find out.**

# All Students

## EDCI Continued

**Thursday, April 14:** EDCI will be presenting information to students in [Pella middle and high schools](#)

**Saturday, April 16:** EDCI will host an event at [Central College, Maytag Student Center](#)

Presentation titles for Saturday are as follows:

- Recognizing Eating Disorders in Schools and Strategies for Educators
- Developing a Healthy Relationship with Food
- Words Matter

They will close out the day with a panel for Q and A and personal stories.

*Regional Co-Coordinates for the event :*

*Tiffany Van Zante and Jill Pfitzenmaier*

*Opportunity is missed by most because it is dressed in overalls and it looks like work.*



*Don't wish for anything more than you're willing to work for.*

## **Pella High Girls' Basketball Game**

Even though not all students were able to attend, we were able to simulate the sites, sounds, and smells in our middle school learning street. We had popcorn, loud cheering, and a big screen, and we only had to shorten our class five minutes per period in order to observe the game. Congratulations to Coach Jerod Garland and his terrific team and staff on an outstanding season. Go Dutch!



**The only time success comes before work is in the dictionary.**



**8<sup>th</sup> GRADE PARTY DETAILS | AGENDA OVERVIEW**

**Saturday, April 16 | 6:30 – 10:00P**

**Cost: \$10** {Includes: admission, \*class picture, snacks & T-shirt}

- 6:30P Party starts {Games, Activities, Music & Snacks}
- 7:00P Class picture in the gym
- 10:00P Party ends

**Dear Eighth Grade Parents/Guardians:**

The annual eighth grade party, hosted by parents, will be held on Saturday, April 16, at the Pella Middle School. The planning team has been busy working to make this night a wonderful and fun experience. This is not a formal event.

The theme is Ride the Tide. It’s going to be a fun, surf/beach theme party. We will have a variety of games and activities for students to enjoy, including a dance with DJ. We hope that you will encourage your son or daughter to attend the party as it brings all the 8<sup>th</sup> graders together for one night of special memories.

There is a \$10 admission fee for the party. The fee includes a themed T-shirt, class picture, activities, and snacks. The party is for members of the Pella class of 2020 – students outside of the class are not invited.

The greatest source of funding for this event comes from the parents of our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and local businesses. We hope you consider making a monetary donation and/or volunteer to help with the party. Any gift amount is welcome—gifts of \$10 or more will serve as your student’s admission to the party.

Students will be asked T-shirt size and color preference on March 15 & 16 at school. We will contact you if your child does not know their size.

All of us working together will create a memorable party for our eighth graders before they enter high school. Thank you for your generosity and willingness to help!

8<sup>th</sup> Grade Party Planning Team: **Decorating:** Jamie Kendall & Stephanie DeJong; **Food:** Carol Kime & Sandy Hundt; **Games/Activities:** Cherie Westerkamp & Sandy Blom; **Tickets & T-Shirts:** Alecia Jablonski; **Planning Chair:** Jamie Kendall & Stephanie DeJong

Please **detach and return this form** to the school office **no later than March 18**. Invitations will be distributed March 14 and tickets for the party will be distributed by April 13.

I would like to help with the following (circle below):

- ☆ Donate food
- ☆ Decorating/Setup
- ☆ Friday, April 15 | 4-10P
- ☆ Saturday, April 16 | 8-11A
- ☆ Assist with activities/games during party
- ☆ Clean up after the party
- ☆ Donate decorations/Serving supplies

- ☆ Make a monetary donation\*\*:
- Silver \$25 \_\_\_\_\_
- Gold \$35 \_\_\_\_\_
- Platinum \$50 \_\_\_\_\_
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Donations above \$10 include your student’s ticket fee

**Make checks payable to:** Pella Middle School 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Party

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian’s Name(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Preferred communication (Phone/email)

**We do not want the cost preventing your child from attending the party. Scholarship funds are available. If you are interested in a scholarship, please check here.** \_\_\_\_





## School Nurse, Mrs. (Brenda) Versteeg, Guest Teaches 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Health

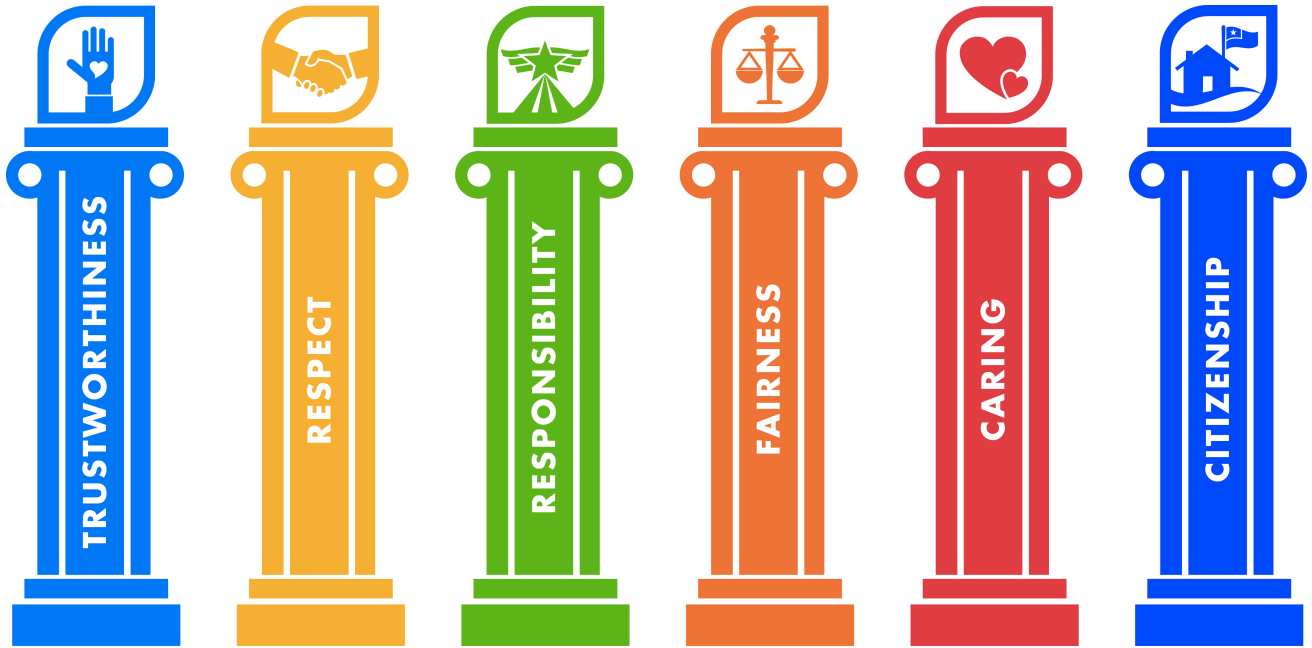
Mrs. Versteeg teaching 8th grade health students basic first aid care for bone and joint injuries. She also explained when Epi-pens are used and why.

Trey Wood and Mrs. Versteeg



*Nobody Cares How Much You Know...  
Until They Know How Much You Care.*

# Character Counts!



before you speak

**think!!**

- t + is it true?
- h + is it helpful?
- i + is it inspiring?
- n + is it necessary?
- k + is it kind?



## Got GRIT?? What it is, why it's important, and how to help your child get it.

Kayla Marsten, M.Ed.

Grit is defined as having perseverance and passion for long-term goals and working hard toward challenges, even when failure and adversity present themselves. Grit is a “non-cognitive” skill, similar to self-control, resiliency, and curiosity. Researchers now realize that grit is as important, if not more important, than academic skills! We know that teaching literacy and math skills are important for a student's long-term success. But what happens when the math gets a little tricky? Or when the reading is “boring”? What keeps a student from giving up?

G R I T! That's what!

And, grit can be taught.

### Here's how to help your child develop grit:

#### 1. *Praise the effort, not the grade.*

When you praise the “stick-to-it-ness” of your child's efforts, they will be more determined to continue working hard. Praising your child's hard work will encourage them not to give up.

#### 2. *Let them struggle.*

As hard as it is to see your child struggle, they need to learn how to work through frustration and failure. If you swoop in and save them before they fail, they will never learn how to deal with failure, which is a part of life. While they're struggling, praise their effort!

#### 3. *Create and talk about your own goals.*

If your goal is to clean the basement, repaint the bedroom, or run that half-marathon, talk about it as a family. Share what small steps you are taking along the way to meet your goal, and talk about your own struggles and how you plan to get past them.

#### 4. *Keep and model an open mindset.*

An open mindset is believing that things can change, that we can improve our skills and knowledge, and that we can get past challenges. Instead of saying, “I can't do this!” you can say, “I can't do this....yet.”

#### 5. *Find ways to challenge your child.*

Encourage your child to try new things, even if they aren't sure they're any good at it. Trying new things is how we learn from our mistakes. Give them age-appropriate chores at home. Find new hobbies and involve your child. Praise their effort along the way!

For more information about grit, check out the UPenn website, with work by psychologist, Angela Duckworth.

<https://sites.sas.upenn.edu/duckworth>

## District and Building Level Calendars

### **2015 - 2016 Approved District Calendar:**

<http://www.pellaschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Final-2015-16-Pella-CSD-Calendar.pdf>

### **Activities/School Calendar - has ALL 2015 - 2016 district activities:**

[http://www.littlehawkeyeconference.com/g5-bin/client.cgi?G5genie=206&school\\_id=4](http://www.littlehawkeyeconference.com/g5-bin/client.cgi?G5genie=206&school_id=4)

### **Middle School Specific Site:**

<http://www.pellaschools.org/schools/middle-school/>

### **Middle School Handbook:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/11sbdnoekXycEhaCmud0jfVtG3MQLNqjrFWv29sFkJik/edit>

**Pella 1:1 Handbook:** [https://docs.google.com/a/pella.k12.ia.us/document/d/1QyO3\\_S4OmTFuauYwSz6IX15SsjYh68yh9K8qZ6M5VM/edit](https://docs.google.com/a/pella.k12.ia.us/document/d/1QyO3_S4OmTFuauYwSz6IX15SsjYh68yh9K8qZ6M5VM/edit)

### **Middle School Band:**

<https://sites.google.com/a/pella.k12.ia.us/middle-school-band/>

### **Pella Digital Learning Environment (DLE) Link:**

<http://pcsd-dle.blogspot.com/>