

Pella High School

Principal Newsletter

The mission of the Pella Community Schools is to maximize life's opportunities for every child.



The Pella Community High School staff and administration welcome all students and parents to the 2015-16 school year. We are looking forward to an exciting and productive year.

Eric Nelson, *Principal*

Jon Muller, *Assistant Principal*

Wade VanVark, *Dean of Students*

Teresa Thompson, *Guidance Counselor*

Jessie Manning, *Guidance Counselor*

Registration

Registration for the 2015-16 school year is available on www.pellaschools.org. Kiosks will be made available in each building if you do not have a computer at home.

Registration fees and lunch payments will be made available through your Infinite Campus parent portal.

Calendar

- August 20** Freshman & New Student Open House
7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- August 24** First Day of School
- August 26** 90 Minute Early Dismissal
- Sept. 2** 90 Minute Early Dismissal
- Sept. 7** No School – Labor Day
- Sept. 10** Parent Information Night
- Sept. 23** No school - District Professional Dev.



Student Schedules

Student's schedules were distributed to students back in May. Students will be able to view their schedule on their Infinite Campus Portal after July 1. Have your son/daughter review their schedule and make sure these things are in place: 1) the required core classes needed in both semesters and 2) check for the elective(s) you prefer. August will be the time to make any changes to these schedules by adding (if class sizes allow) and/or dropping courses. Students will NOT be able to move classes to have a specific lunch, study hall or teacher. **Counselors will be available: August 13, 14, 17 & 18 from 9:00-12:00 & 1:00-3:00.**

i-Study Center

The focus of this open period will be promoting students taking ownership for their own education. The i-Study Center supervisor will monitor frequent grade/attendance checks with students, teaching study skills, time management, communication skills, assist students in scheduling time to see teachers for additional support/assistance, tutoring students, frequent parental contacts to address issues, collaborate with teachers to understand what is going on with class work, projects, etc.

Freshmen & New Student Open House, August 20

The high school will have an open house for all ninth graders, new students, and their parents/guardian on August 20 from 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. The building will be open for all to walk through to assist in finding classrooms and becoming familiar with the building before the first day of school. The guidance counselors and administrators will be available to answer questions. Group presentation will be given from 7:00 p.m. – 7:15 p.m. for new students. All ninth grade students were given extensive guided tour and orientation of the high school last February.

2015-2016 Laptop Rollout

Returning students rollout plan:

Who: Any 9-12 student who was issued a laptop last year

When: Thursday, August 20 & Friday, August 21 from 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Where: High school, room 118

New high school students rollout plan:

Who: Any high school student that did not attend Pella schools last year

When: Thursday, August 20th 6:15 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Where: High school media center

The parent or guardian that signed the policy sheet last years is still financially responsible for any damages to the computer. If parent or guardianship has changed please notify the high school office immediately.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

September 10 – Parent Information Night--Parent Follow Student Schedule

- 5:30 - 6:00 Open time for parents
- 5:45 - Parents provided student schedules
- 6:00 - HS meeting in Auditorium
- 6:20 - 7:40 Visit Classrooms - Follow son/daughter's schedule for periods 1 - 8
 - 10 minutes per class
- 7:40 - 8:30 Open time for parents/Open House for Career Academy of Pella

This parent-teacher conference is designed to provide parents an overview of their son/daughter's course. Each teacher will provide the parent with information of the course such as Big Ideas/Essential Questions, class expectations, communications lines, office hours, etc.

October 8 -- Parent/Teacher Conference -- Open Forum

- 4:30 - 8:00 High School--All staff will be in either the cafeteria or west gym.

November 9 -- Parent/Teacher Conference — Individual Conference in Teacher's Room & Career & College Planning

- 4:30 - 6:30 High School -- All staff will be in their classroom.
- 6:30 - 8:00 Career & College Planning Meeting

February 15 -- Parent/Teacher Conferences -- Excellence in Electives (HS)

- 5:30 - 8:30 High School -- Excellence in Electives
 - Excellence in Electives from 5:30 - 7:30.
 - Individual conferences in classrooms for those teachers not involved with Excellence in Electives.

All teachers will be available in their classroom from 8:00 – 8:30.

Distinguished Service Program

Pella High School Distinguished Service Program is a new opportunity for students in our school. The program encourages students to volunteer in our community and school. Participation is not required. Those who choose to partake and who serve 100 hours or more throughout their four years at Pella High School will receive a Distinguished Service Award and a special cord to wear at graduation to denote their volunteerism.

Students will need to complete an "Hours Log" (including a supervisor's signature) to validate the hours they have served. Hours will be collected at the end of each quarter. Hours logs can be obtained from the High School office or online on the High School website under ["forms & resources"](#)

For the 2015-2016 school year, incoming Juniors and Seniors will not be required to serve the entire 100 hours to receive the award and cord; instead, the following hours will need to be completed by the time of graduation:

*Class of 2016: 50 *Class of 2017: 75 * Class of 2018: 100

Student/Parent Handbook

The student handbook will be located on the student 1:1 laptop this year. Planners will not be distributed to students as they have access to Google calendar for planning purposes. All students are responsible for reading and becoming familiar with these policies. Parents should also review the student handbook. Here is a link to the [2015/16 Student Handbook](#)

Parking

Students in grades 10-12 are eligible to park on the high school campus during school hours. Vehicle information should be entered under the transportation tab when registering students the cost of parking permit is \$5. Permit payments can be made online after July 1 at the time you pay for school fees. All permits may be picked up in the high school office after August 1. We do not have assigned parking areas for each class. All student parking is east of the high school building. Students are not permitted to park in the new parking around the Career Academy.

Guidance Department

The Pella High School Guidance Department is available to assist students and families in many life circumstances that could affect a students' schooling. The services include academic assistance and planning, career and college planning, and personal or social situations. Students and parents are encouraged to contact the guidance office to assist with situations that arise. It is beneficial to the students when the staff and families can work together as a team. There are also many community resources the guidance staff can suggest for any further assistance needed.

Grades on the Pella High Website

All student grades are posted on the Infinite Campus Portal for parents to access. This information is made available directly from the teacher's grade book.

School Supply List

The high school supply list is a general list for students. Students should have notebooks, folders, #2 pencils, and pens for classes. The math department is recommending each student have a protractor and a TI-84 calculator. Students are also encouraged to have a USB jump drive to save/transport electronic materials. 8 Gig Jump drives will be available for purchase in the Student Help Center (formally the computer lab Room 118). The teacher of each class will provide more specifics of their requirements for the class with their class expectations.

Registration Note!

Freshman & Seniors

Freshman – Dental Screening form must be completed by your dentist and returned to the high school office by August 24, 2015. Click here for [dental screening form](#).

Seniors – Senior Release form included in this newsletter must be completed and turn in to the office by August 24, 2015.



Senior Release

Parents of seniors can elect to have your son/daughter have senior release privileges if they meet the criteria noted on the waiver. Seniors Release is a PRIVILEGE granted to seniors who demonstrate exceptional attendance, academic performance, and character. Seniors who earn this privilege are not required to report to school until they have a scheduled class and may leave school when they are not scheduled for a class.

*A parental waiver was emailed to each parent this summer for you to grant permission for your son/daughter to participate in Senior Release privileges ([click here for Senior Release](#)). If your son or daughter did not meet the criteria for eligibility a letter was sent home in June. All senior parents should complete the waiver regardless of eligibility if you want your son/daughter to have Senior Release privileges, during their Senior year when they become eligible.

**Criteria for determining eligibility for senior release to begin the school year will be based upon the criteria noted on the waiver from the 2nd semester of their junior year.*

Grades on the Pella High Website

All student grades are posted on the Infinite Campus Portal for parents to access. This information is made available directly from the teacher's grade book.

Fundraising

Any and all fundraising should first be cleared through the principal and approved by the Pella CSD Board of Education on an annual basis. A list of approved fundraisers may be requested by the board annually at the beginning of the school year so advanced planning is necessary. Fundraisers should have a purpose and designated goal as to not solicit businesses, citizens, etc. for funds that aren't necessary or already provided through the FABO. Proceeds from fundraisers in the name of, or on behalf of Pella High School Performing Arts shall be deposited in the office.

In Iowa, all funds collected through school activities fund raising must go into a school activity account. The amount fundraised will be allocated equally to all members of the activity involved in the event. The amount credited may not be given to the student or kept track of individually.

District Website

Please use the district's website: www.pella.k12.ia.us to find information concerning:

- Daily Student Announcements
- Weekly teacher lesson plans and daily assignments
- Student Achievement data
- District goals and school improvement plans
- Athletic Website
- Guidance information
- HS Website

Student Attendance

Board Policy(s) 501.9 - 501.10R1

A growing body of research illustrates that missing an excessive number of school days, regardless of reason, can place a child at risk of falling behind his or her peers academically. Additionally, some students may exhibit patterns of absence that foretell future attendance and academic problems. A report by John Hopkins University (Balfanz and Byrnes, 2012) highlights the association of chronic absenteeism (i.e., missing 10 percent or greater of the total number of days enrolled in the school year for any reason, which equates to 18 or more days/yr) to student academic achievement and high school graduation. Chronic absenteeism is also emerging as an early indicator of future academic difficulty. Children who are chronically absent in both kindergarten and first grade are much less likely to read proficiently by the end of third grade (Attendance Works, 2011). If chronic early absence is not addressed at the elementary level, then it may worsen in the higher grades (Chang and Romero, 2008). By sixth grade, chronic absence is a key early indicator of dropout from high school (Baltimore Education Research Consortium, 2011). By ninth grade, attendance may be a better indicator of dropout than eighth-grade test scores (Allensworth and Easton, 2007).

Acceptable reasons for a student's absence from school are limited to the following:

- Religious observances;
- Illness, extended illness, and/or hospitalization/doctor's care;
- Death in the family or family emergency;
- Court appearance or other legal situation beyond the control of the family.
- Any school-related or school-initiated absence

The following absences are to be avoided

- Vacations or out of town for extended periods of time (It is strongly encouraged that families schedule their extended trips around scheduled vacations/breaks on the school calendar)
- Personal outings (shopping, haircuts, concerts, obtain driver's license, extended lunch breaks etc.)
- Work (students with approved approved release forms may participate)
- Childcare, babysitting siblings/relatives
- Tired or oversleeping
- Missing rides or not making plans for transportation

GENERAL STATEMENTS

1. A parent must call the HS office by 9:00 a.m. each morning your son/daughter will be absent from school.
2. Students are to provide written verification of any appointment attended during the day. (If a student is placed on a restriction to participate in PE/physical activities, a written note from the doctor should include; duration of the restriction AND alternative activities that could be performed during restriction (ex stationary bike, walking, light weight lifting etc.)
3. Students MUST check in/out of the office any time the leave/enter the building once school has started.
4. Three categories of absences are:
 - School related
 - Excused Absence
 - Unexcused Absence
5. Three levels of absenteeism concerns are
 - A. Excessive absenteeism (slight concern) is defined as 6 non-school related absences (excused or unexcused) - A notification letter is sent to parents when a child meets this criteria.
 - B. Academic probation (moderate concern) is defined as 10 non-school related absences (excused or unexcused) - Student meets with administration and teachers to determine actions needing to be taken to remain in good standing in enrolled courses. A notification letter is sent and/or phone call is made to parents when a child meets this criteria.
 - C. Severe concern - Attendance contract is implemented when a student has missed 15 non-school related absences (excused or unexcused). Student/parent meet with administration to discuss terms of contract. Loss of credit may result of contract is not upheld
6. * Refer to the Pella High School Student Handbook for more detailed information regarding school attendance policies.

Attendance Eligibility

In order for a student to participate in an inter-scholastic event he/she must attend all classes and study halls in a normal school day of the event. An approved absence the day of an event must be submitted to the office no later than 9:00 of the day of the event and must be approved by the administration. Failure to comply with this regulation may result in being ineligible for participation in any extra-curricular event/performance on the day they were absent. Any student serving an in-school OR out-of-school suspension will be ineligible to practice or perform in an event for the day(s) they are suspended. A student serving an out-of-school suspension is not allowed on school property or allowed to attend school events, home and away until reinstated by administration.

Academic/Activity Eligibility

A student must be a full time student to participate in interscholastic school-sponsored activities. A full time student is defined as one who is enrolled in at least five (5) courses plus PE (six contacts). Students must be working toward a Pella High School regular diploma and be in grades 9-12 to participate in any High School activity/sport. The exception to this rule is 8th grade students are eligible to participate in High School softball and baseball.

Faculty Office Hours

Office hours are available to all students needing additional support and instruction in their academic classes. Parents are strongly encouraged to know the times of the office hours for your student's teachers and support/encourage them to attend these times if they are needing assistance with their academics. Academic responsibilities take precedence over extra curricular commitments. All office hours can be found on the Pella High School Website under the "staff" tab on the high school main page.



School Property After Hours

Parents are asked to please inform their sons/daughters not to be on school property after dark unless it is associated with a school activity. Any student found to be defacing school property will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Please help the district build pride and respect in our schools, rather than the reverse. Your support is appreciated.

Release of Student Information

Pella Community High School may release the name, address, and other basic information about students to appropriate sources. On occasion, students may be video taped at school. If you request that your child's basic information (including video and photograph) not be released or possibly posted on the districts' website, please notify the school office at 641-628-3870.

Drivers Education

Drivers Education is provided by Teen Driver Inc., a company from Indianola, Iowa. Class sessions are held in Pella during the summer, fall, and spring. For more information go to their website www.teendriverinc.com or call 515-729-3414 or 515-559-4762.

Education Equity Policy Statement

Board Policy 102

It is the policy of the Pella Community School not to discriminate on the basis of, and including but not limited to, age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status in its educational program, activities, or employment policies as required by Title VI and VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments, and Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

It is also the policy of this district the curriculum content and instructional materials utilized reflect the cultural and racial diversity present in the United States and the variety of careers, roles, and opportunities open to women and men in our society. One of the objectives of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to eliminate stereotyping and bias on the basis of, and including but not limited to, age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status. The curriculum should foster respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity found in our country and an awareness of the rights, duties, and responsibilities of each individual as a member of a pluralistic society.

It is also the policy of this agency to provide a fair and supportive work environment for all employees regardless of, and including but not limited to, their age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status. Harassment of a sexual nature or with demeaning intent related to, and including but not limited to, age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status made by one employee to another is a violation of this policy.

Inquiries regarding compliance with Title IX, Title VI, or Section 504 may be directed to Lowell Ernst, 212 E. University Street, Pella, Iowa 641/628-3870, or to the Director of the Region VII Offices of Civil Rights, Department of Education, Kansas City, Missouri.

Updated: 4/1/11

School Calendar

On our district website, there is a school calendar of events for the 2015-16 school year. Events can be sorted by topic and printed. We hope this calendar will be helpful to you and your family. We will not be distributing a traditional hard copy of the school calendar.