

Pella Middle School

*Developing
Stronger
Relationships*

August 2015



Dates to Remember:

- 9/3 Meet the Teacher
5:30-8:30
- 9/7 Labor Day – No Classes
- 9/16 PD – 90 min early dismissal
- 9/23 No Classes
- 9/30 PD – 90 min early dismissal
- 9/23 No Classes
- 10/8 Parent Teacher Conferences
3:30 – 7:00
- 10/16 No Classes
- 10/23 End Quarter 1
- 10/28 Quarter 1 grades posted

August 2015

Wow - Welcome Back!

The classes of 2020 and 2021 are off to a tremendous start. The 8th grade class has started even stronger than they finished, and we are extremely pleased with the level of character and leadership they are demonstrating for this new 7th grade crew. The 7th grade class is doing a great job transitioning to middle school life. Both classes are working very hard, and we could not be more pleased with the start to the 2015 – 2016 school year. Let your students know we are extremely proud of them and their efforts!

Maximizing Life's Opportunities for Every Child

All Students

Who does My Student Work With on a Daily Basis?

Find out Thursday, September 3rd, from 5:30 – 8:30. We would love to have each and every parent join us for this event. The goals of the night are to put a face with a name and to build a bridge between school and home. There will be an opportunity for everyone to see or hear from our entire middle school team.

Schedule for the night below!

New Faces

We have several new faces, as well as familiar faces in new places, at the middle school. We hope you are able to come to our meet the teacher event, and put a face with a name!

Andrew Bentz – 1 period 8th Science

Amber Hermanson – Resource Teacher

Alexis Kraayenbrink – Orchestra Teacher

Danielle Bortscheller – Admin Assistant/Secretary

Charla Dieleman – Teacher Associate

Familiar Faces in New Places:

Gabe Schott – Band Director

Mollie Groenendyke – Teacher Associate

Jessica Larson – Teacher Associate

Amber Lyle – Teacher Associate

Charon DenAdel – Teacher Associate

Susan Lyons – .5 Time 7th Science

Josh McCollam – PLTW

Jeff Siewert – 7-12 G&T Teacher

Meet the Teacher Schedule ~ 5:30-8:30

5:30 - 5:40 Quick Intro	GYM
5:40 - 6:15 Exploratory Teachers Share	GYM
6:20 - 7:00 7th Grade Teachers Share	GYM
8th Grade Teachers Share	Cafeteria
7:05 - 7:40 Fine Arts	Music Area
7:45 - 8:10 Sports/Coaches Meeting	GYM
8:10 - 8:30 GT Overview	Library
Q & A (all teachers available in their rooms)	Classrooms

****When teachers are not sharing, they will be available in their classrooms/offices.**

All Students

Our 2015 - 2016 Building Goal

This school year, staff and students are going to work diligently on relationships. Our goal is to “Develop Stronger Relationships” with everyone, and we have some plans and ideas in order to do so. Big picture, we are going to do some education with students around defining what bullying and harassment are and encourage them to use their voice to help if they witness it. We want all students to know they are valued and part of a winning team and family at Pella Middle School. This will be an ongoing effort throughout the year, and we will see where it takes us!

How will we measure this?

- Baseline data will be cohort student climate survey given at the end of first and third quarter
- Parent Questionnaire (End Qtr 1 & After Spring Break)
- Increase student achievement data
- Late list & failing grades improvements
- Improve Attendance

Steps we will take:

- Use late homework and attendance list to “adopt” minimally one student per staff member - each teacher will take personal responsibility to connect minimally once per month
- Front heavy relationship building - more investment early on
 - (i.e.) If my student has any issues, I will check in with him/her personally.
- Team planning time 1x/month devoted to our building goal - BLT establish the plan
- Bully & Harassment and Self Advocacy Education
- Pilot Leadership Education – two teachers will do this during 10th period

No Significant Learning Occurs without a Significant Relationship

Need extra help? We have several before, during and after school study hall options.

1. Before School: 7:45 – 8:15 in Mr. Anderson’s Room
2. During School: Every Period
3. Lunch Time: Students may stay in the cafeteria during recess.
4. After School: 3:15 – 4:00 M, T, Th, & F and Wednesdays 1:45 – 2:30 in Mr.

Anderson’s Room

STARTS Tuesday, September 8th.

***Mrs. (Carrie) Blommers does a great job in iStudy helping students stay on top of their tasks. This year we are going to have any students with three late assignments in one subject or five late assignments in all subjects stay for after school study hall.*

NEW APP – Please Be Aware!

A new phone app was brought to our attention last week, and we want to heighten parent awareness for students who may have this app on their personal phones. This app is NOT being used on our school 1:1 devices and is primarily a phone app.

The name of the app is "After School". It can be downloaded just like any other app. It is an anonymous posting site that chooses your location to join different message boards. When students download the app, they have to give permission for the app to track the phone's location to get them to the correct message board. Once a student allows this, they can post anything to the message board anonymously, which usually means it is not very kind or appropriate. If a student installs this app then whomever is in charge of the app can track that student's phone anytime anywhere. We advise extreme caution in allowing the use of any app that can track you 24/7 and allow anyone to post anonymously.

Here is how they present it to kids:

Welcome to the new After School app!! After School is an anonymous and private message board for your school. Post confessions, funny experiences, compliments, feelings, and more! New features include:

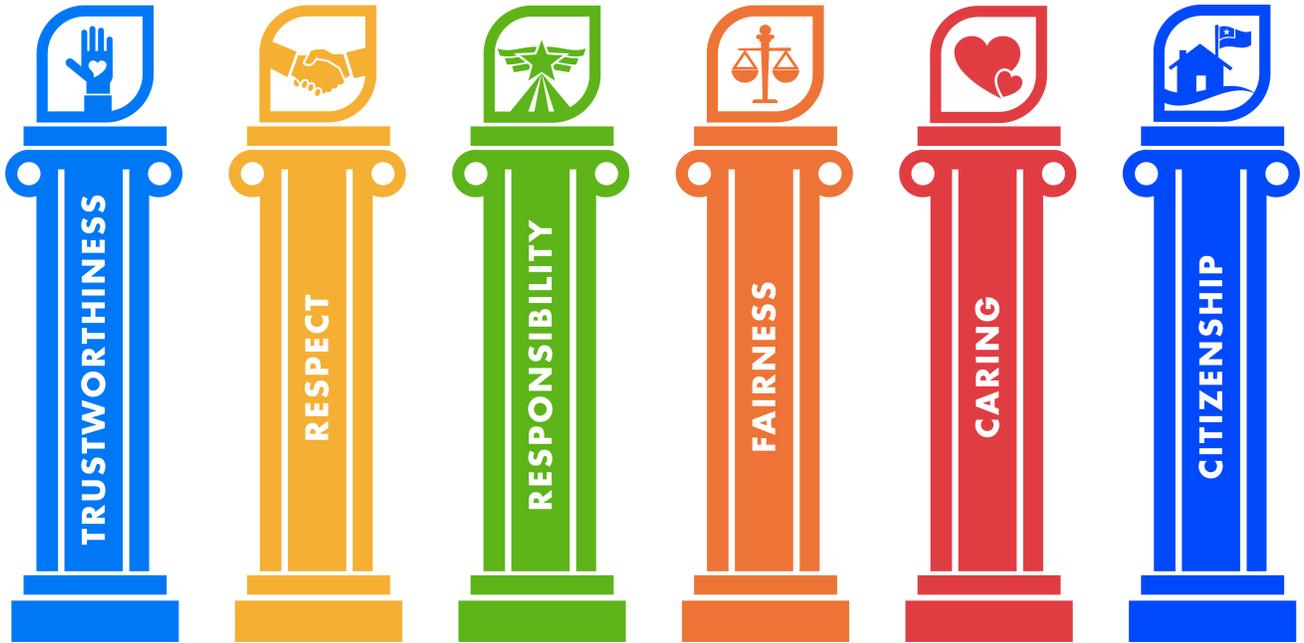
- Personalized content filters*
- Chat with experts on school issues or anything stressing you out*
- Choose a name and a picture to better express your personality in the app*
- Improved reporting*

We have a zero-tolerance policy against cyber-bullying. Please remember to be positive. Feel free to reach out to us directly if you have any questions: support@afterschoolapp.com

The Pella Middle School values digital citizenship and your attention to this matter. There are more apps similar to this, so we ask that you continue to be aware of what your student is on and using.

Pella Community Middle School

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?

Laptop Reminders

Tips for Parents - Social Media

- Set parameters on laptop usage at home.
- Avoid having your student use his/her laptop in his/her room.
- Have a “charging station” in the kitchen, so it does not have to go to student’s room for charging.
- When your students are using their devices, have them sit with their backs to you, so you can see their screens.
- Anytime your students create a new account, sit next to them, so you know the usernames, passwords, and abilities of the site.
 - Then check their usage once in a while to hold them accountable.
- Have your students explain the purpose of the site they are using/accessing.

Avoid laptop screen breakage - speak with your student about ways to avoid spending \$349 to replace an LCD projector/screen.

- Avoid leaving the charger tip on the keyboard when shutting the lid.
- Avoid leaving headphones on the keyboard when shutting the lid.
- Avoid leaving pens/pencils on the keyboard when shutting the lid.
- Avoid leaving papers with paper clips or staples on them when shutting the lid.

These simple steps can help students reduce the likelihood of replacing their screens.

Academic Eligibility Policy

The faculty and administration of Pella Middle School have developed the following eligibility policy for students who are failing classes.

Beginning with the fifth week of each semester, names of students failing classes will be compiled by the academic coach through Infinite Campus software. Students failing any class will be placed on the “Ineligible List” and will be ineligible to participate in extracurricular activities for two full weeks. Extracurricular activities covered by this policy include, but are not limited to: football, volleyball, cross-country, wrestling, basketball, track, softball, cheerleading, jazz band, and show choir. Once a student is placed on the ineligible list, he/she will not be removed until the end of the second week. (i.e. Wed - Wed morning two weeks in a row)

- A list of all eligible students will be provided to the athletic director, the principal and each coach/sponsor as soon as the list is compiled on Tuesday morning.
- The academic coach will compile grades each eligible Tuesday morning at 8:15 am (except for holidays). The ineligibility period starts the following day (typically Wednesday) and will run through the end of the day on the second week. The second week Wednesday, they may regain eligibility.
- This list is considered confidential information and should not be posted or made public.
- It is recommended teachers post grading criteria in their classrooms, classroom websites, and/or distribute it to students at the beginning of the school year.
- The administration will have the final say if there are any discrepancies.
- Any student failing a class will call home each week during eligibility periods after week two as a way of communicating with parents.

A student on the ineligible list at the end of each quarter will remain on the ineligibility list for the first two full weeks of the following quarter. Students rendered ineligible under this policy are not permitted to represent Pella Middle School in any public extracurricular performance, but it allows the student to participate in a co-curricular event if it is required as part of their class grade. Being on the ineligible list does not prohibit the student from practicing with the team, and practice is an expectation during ineligibility unless course work takes priority.

Counselor's Connection

Welcome to Pella Middle School! My name is Anne Pentico, and I am the middle school counselor. This is my 5th year as the school counselor in this building, 9th overall. I thoroughly enjoy working with middle schooled-aged people and supporting their ever-changing needs.

As the Pella Middle School counselor, my primary responsibility is to support the academic, career, and personal/social development of every student. I will do this in a number of ways including meeting with students individually and in small groups, but also conducting large group or classrooms lessons throughout the year. I also work with parents, collaborate with teachers and staff, and consult with community services and organizations to meet the needs of Pella Middle School students and their families.

Any student can request to meet with me or can be referred by a teacher, administrator, or parent. I encourage you to reach out if you have concerns about your child, and if you would like your child to meet with me, please contact me directly. I can be reached by email at anne.pentico@pella.k12.ia.us or by telephone at [641.628.4784](tel:641.628.4784).

Thank you, Mrs. Pentico

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

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_S4OmTFuauYwSz6lXl5SsjYh68y-h9K8qZ6M5VM/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/>