

# Pella Middle School

*Developing  
Stronger  
Relationships*

October 2015



## Dates to Remember:

- 10/30 Quarter 1 grades posted  
Semester 1 midterm posted
- 11/4 90-Minute PD Early Dismissal
- 11/5 Watch the HS Play 12:30-2:30
- 11/9 MS Conferences 3:30-7:00
- 11/9 – 11/13 Vision Screening
- 11/11 90-Minute PD Early Dismissal
- 11/18 90-Minute PD Early Dismissal
- 11/25 90 Minute Early Dismissal
- 11/26 Thanksgiving – No Classes
- 11/27 No Classes

## October 2015 Newsletter

Quarter one and semester one midterm is in the books! We are so proud of the effort our students put into their studies. Many of them are learning how to manage time as they focus on being students and participants in other activities. Fall sports have ended; band, choir, and orchestra concerts have begun, and winter sports are right around the corner. Students continue to excel in their busy lives! Encourage your student to participate and try new things; the middle school years are a great time for them to experience different activities they may not try in high school.

*Maximizing Life's Opportunities for Every Child*

# All Students

## Injuries and Illness

Please communicate with our office staff and/or our nurse, Brenda Versteeg, if your student has an illness or injury that keeps him/her at home or impacts his/her daily participation at school. Also, please note our administration of medicines board policy, and let the office know if your son/daughter is calling or texting you about being ill at school. We will gladly check into their health and well-being. Thank You!

## Medicines Administered to Students (board policy 507.2)

Medication will not be administered without written authorization that is signed and dated from the parent. All medication must be in the original container, which is labeled by the pharmacy or the manufacturer with the name of the child, name of the medication, time of the day it is to be given, the dosage and duration. Only the school nurse, or someone who has successfully completed an administration of medication course reviewed by the Iowa Board of Pharmacy Examiners shall have access to, and be allowed to administer medication. The above policy covers all prescription and other drugs, including aspirin.

**For reference, PE is often a class this impacts. Our middle school PE participation expectations:** Please note any changes in health or medical situations since registration that would impact active physical activity. If it is a condition that will affect his or her everyday performance, we require a note from your doctor with the restrictions listed. This information will be shared with the school nurse and held in confidence. The health and welfare of your son/daughter is our first concern.

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

## Handicap Parking

Please avoid parking, loading, and unloading in the handicap parking spaces in front of the building. We have a larger number of students with special needs, and we need to have those spots left open at all times for those students and their transportation. Thank you for your support with this.



# All Students

## Fall 2015 Parent Teacher Conferences

September 24, 2015

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We welcome and encourage all middle school students and parents to join us for conferences on Thursday, October 8, and **Monday, November 9, from 3:30 PM to 7:00 PM**. Each teacher will personally invite certain students and/or parents via phone, email, or hard copy. Please respond to your invitation at your earliest convenience. If you or your student does not get a personal invite for conferences, please know we welcome and encourage all to attend.

Schedules will be posted on all teachers' doors. You may sign up during the days of conferences on a vacant time slot, or feel free to email any teacher with whom you wish to meet. This is an opportunity to understand and support your student's needs and for teachers to answer questions you might have. We appreciate your participation and partnership in your student's education.

### **Schedule:**

- November 9 - Full school day \*Conferences 3:30 - 7:00 PM

Respectfully,

Josh Manning, Principal

*The first hour of the day is the very best time of the day to teach your child to be responsible.*

# All Students

## Please avoid texting/calling your student's personal phone while in school unless absolutely necessary:

- Students can have messages left in the office for them at any time.
- Every period we are calling students to the office for this reason.
- Students can call or text their parents from the office when they need to communicate with them.
- When students receive texts from parents during the day, they feel obligated to reply, which pressures them to break our school expectations and/or policies.

### Cell Phones & Electronic Devices Handbook Policy

Cell phones should remain OFF except for before school, at lunch, or after the final bell unless cleared through the office or their teacher. Teachers may ask to hold a student's cell phone while a student uses the restroom. Students are encouraged not to bring radios, CD's, iPods, laser lights, games, and other electronic devices, etc. to school. Use of these items is prohibited at school unless cleared through the office or their teacher. Exceptions to this rule include iPods, cell phones, or other similar devices used for classroom learning purposes. Detentions will be issued for repeated offenses, or if these items create a classroom disruption (i.e. cell phones ringing or vibrating in class). The school is not liable for lost, stolen, or damaged electronic devices.

#### Permissible technology use at lunch:

- playing games  
chatting, tweeting, etc.
- listening to music
- surfing the web

#### Nonpermissible technology use at lunch: (not limited to the following)

- text messaging, facebook, social networking, emailing, snap
- phone calls
- taking photos of classmates, teachers, or staff without permission

#### Steps for dealing with technological devices misuse:

- 1<sup>st</sup> incident: Staff will confiscate, give to the office, and it will be given back after final bell by the office.  
2<sup>nd</sup> incident: Student will pick-up the item from the principal, dean, or counselor.  
3<sup>rd</sup> incident: Parents will pick up phone after the third incident from the principal. If the student brings the phone back to school after the third incident, the phone will spend minimally three school days in the principal's office. The student may be asked to leave the phone at home or in the principal's office daily if the problem persists.

\*\*Detention may be issued if deemed necessary.

*Smart Work + Hard Work =  
Achievement*

# What do Teachers do on Wednesday

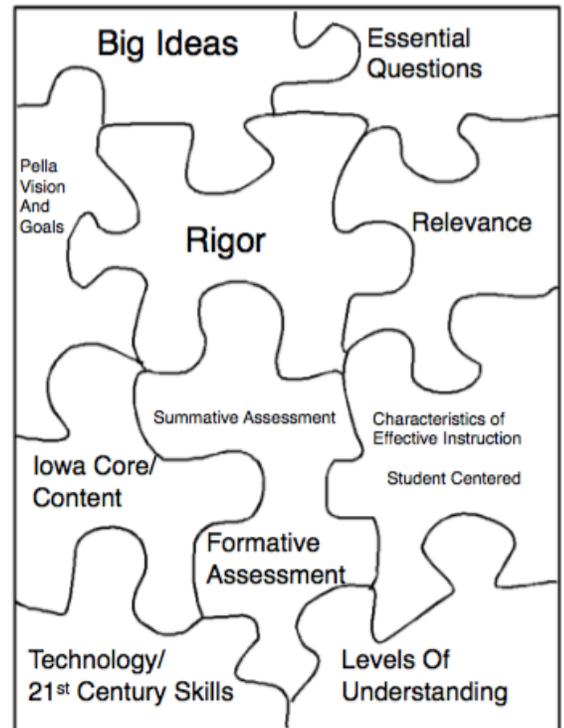
## Early Dismissals?

### Teacher/Staff Professional Development

Some have asked, “*What do teachers do on these weekly early dismissals, and why do some teachers leave their buildings right at the end of the day?*” We do a lot! Below are just a few of the things going on during our 90-minute early dismissals.

- Many rush out of their buildings to travel to other school buildings in order to collaborate with other content/discipline-alike teacher experts.
- We score student assignments, teacher lessons, and teacher instruction in discipline-alike groups as well as interdisciplinary groups, and we use rubrics with clear guidelines in order to have consistent expectations and parameters.
- We work to enhance the construction of knowledge performed by our students. This means we want students to build and construct their own knowledge and understanding rather than telling them what they need to know. Students do not have to think when we simply tell them, and we want to create complex thinkers with the ability to solve problems with unpredictable solutions.
- We also work to add relevance and value beyond school to our lessons, so students can see and better understand the disciplinary processes that professionals in the field outside the school walls may use.
- We are working hard to build conceptual understanding around our content areas as well, so the problem solving and learning for the students can be deeper and more meaningful.
- There are also teacher leaders working with one another in order to stay one year ahead of this learning process. They typically stay once or twice a month beyond the expected 90 minutes of professional development to complete this work and stay ahead of the curve.
- There are 7-12 grade department sessions once every five weeks to ensure we have the appropriate sequences established for learners, and we are aligning the learning expectations and progressions.
- We are aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessments for grades 7-12.

Authentic Intellectual Work -- A.I.W.



These are a few of the things we do, and I would be glad to better explain anything if you are ever wishing to construct your own knowledge around the way we work to better serve your student(s) and create a system of continual improvement. This time is valuable, and we are maximizing our efforts to better serve!

# All Students

## Healthiest State Initiative Walk

Pella Middle School students and staff got outside for a short walk. The walk was in support of Iowa's Healthiest State initiative, and we have participated the past few years. It is fun to get out and enjoy the weather with the students.



## Extra iStudy & Student Support Opportunities

**Need extra help? We have several before, during, and after school iStudy 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 MTRF and Wednesdays 1:45 – 2:30 in the Learning Street (Fish Bowl – room 207)

*\*\*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 iStudy.*

# All Students

## Frisbee Golf

*Students are enjoying the Frisbee golf course during 7<sup>th</sup> grade PE. Jefferson Intermediate and the Middle School were fortunate to have Thomas Gaul, an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student, build a Frisbee golf course for a boy scouts project. He did a terrific job, and many students and community members are now benefitting from this excellent resource.*



*No Significant Learning Occurs without a Significant Relationship*

# Special Recognition



UIChildrensHospital  
@Uichildrens

Follow

#KidCaptain Nick Showman (Pella, IA) joined the #Hawkeyes for his 1st game at #Kinnick Saturday. #GoHawks #Until



Nick Showman, 7<sup>th</sup> grade student at Pella Middle School, had the honor of being the kid captain at the University of Iowa's homecoming. In the picture above left, he was on the sidelines for the national anthem, and he was able to have our former Pella High School student now with the Iowa Hawkeyes, Garrett Jansen, stand next to him for it. In the photo above to the right, Mr. Atwell, Mr. Fynaardt, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Tjeerdsma, Mrs. Pentico, and Mr. Manning grabbed an opportunity to take a picture with Nick after our tailgate party in his honor.

Did you know there are 180 7<sup>th</sup> grade students and 176 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at Pella Middle School?

# Character Counts Education

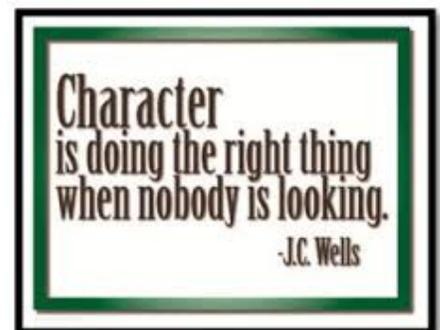
We are taking preventative and proactive measures this year to support our students on a quarterly basis in the area of character development and bully and harassment education beyond our daily teachable moments. Our first assembly focused on the following goals, and the presentation is available for you to view as well.

## Goals:

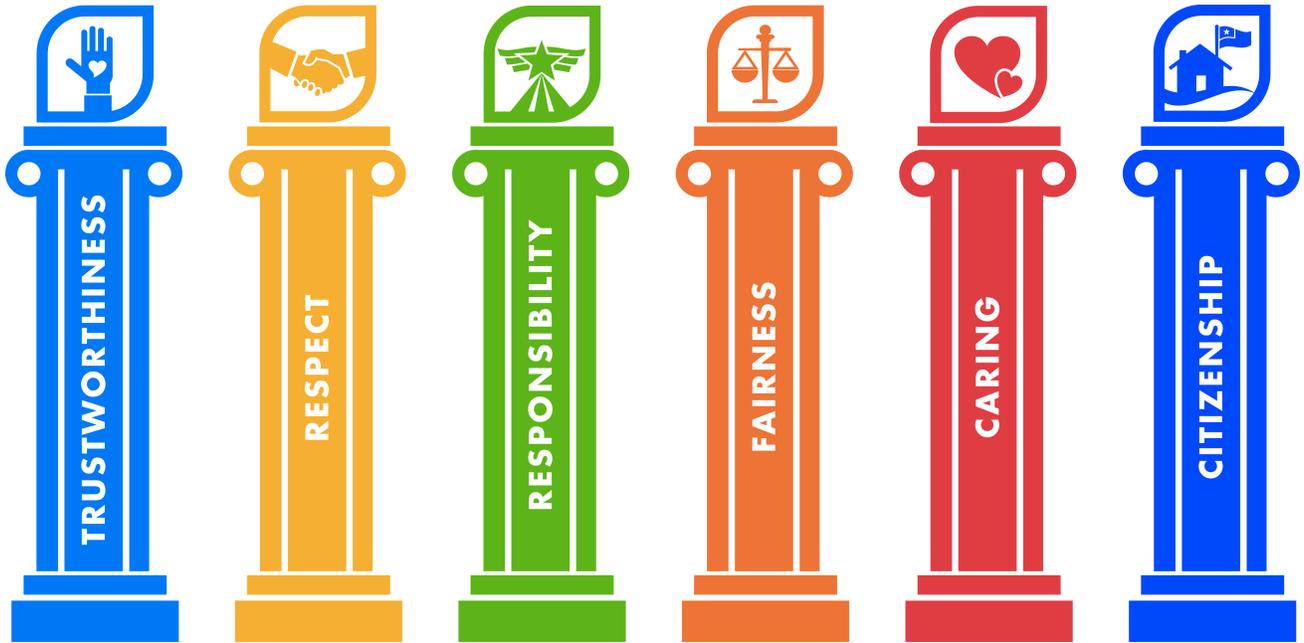
1. Determine what bullying is and raise awareness and understanding of how to respond if it happens.
2. Determine what our next steps are in understanding and responding to bullying and harassment.

## Presentation:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Vvh4Gr7Xd93iEi1ION6vJ5SeiLecB1uhag56wmrXno4/edit>



# 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?

The graphic features a black background with white text and icons. The word 'think!!' is written in a large, bold, white font. Below it, five character traits are listed, each with a small icon and a plus sign. The traits are: 't' (is it true?), 'h' (is it helpful?), 'i' (is it inspiring?), 'n' (is it necessary?), and 'k' (is it kind?). The background is decorated with small white floral icons.

# Final Construction Photos



Office Space



Library



# Final Construction Photos Continued



**Learning Center:  
Math & Science  
Wing**



**PLTW Room: Math  
& Science Wing**



**Classroom**

# Final Construction Photos Continued



**Learning Street: Language Arts & History Wing**



## Counselor's Connection

Mrs. Pentico can be reached by email at [anne.pentico@pella.k12.ia.us](mailto:anne.pentico@pella.k12.ia.us) or by telephone at [641.628.4784](tel:641.628.4784).

Mrs. Anne Pentico

*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](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](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/>