

Pella Middle School

Developing Stronger Relationships

January 2016



Dates to Remember:

- 1/20 & 1/27 Early Dismiss – Staff PD
- 1/14 End 1st Semester / 2nd Qtr
- 1/18 School Improvement Advisory Council Meeting @ 5:30
- 1/19 8th Grade Party Planning @ 6:30
- 1/21 Grades Published - 1st Semester
- 1/22 2nd Quarter Reward Day
- 2/3 Early Dismiss – Staff PD
- 2/8 Iowa Assessments
- 2/9 Iowa Assessments
- 2/10 Early Dismiss – Staff PD
- 2/11 Iowa Assessments
- 8th Grade HS Orientation
- 2/15 Parent Teacher Conf @ 3:30
- 90-Minute Early Dismissal
- 8th Parent Mtg. @ 7:00 Pella HS
- 2/18 90-Minute Early Dismissal
- 2/19 No Classes
- 2/24 Early Dismiss – Staff PD

Teenagers Are Complicated

The middle school team regularly thanks our parents and community for their unmatched support of what we are trying to get our learners to accomplish. Remember you are the biggest variable in ensuring your son or daughter is successful in school and in life because their minds, bodies, and spirits are growing and continually changing. Your kids are watching your every move, and they are modeling the way you respond to celebrations as well as trials and tribulations. You can support your students by listening when they want you to listen. Instead of thinking about what you want to say next, first validate what your child is saying and how he or she feels.

Your child's thoughts and feelings might often seem irrational. When I speak with middle school students, I continually remind myself that their brains are not fully developed, and we cannot hold that against them! Talk to any middle school teacher, and I can guarantee they have had someone ask them how they can handle working with this age group. But I will tell you this – for our staff, it is a labor of love. We love this age group and see any complicated, irrational moment as opportunities to teach kids how to communicate, how to socialize, and simply how to be.

What a blessing it is to join them and you in this endeavor of helping kids develop into great people!

Maximizing Life's Opportunities for Every Child

All Students

Family Consumer Science Community Service Project

Students continue to give back. In Mrs. Megan Ferguson's Nutrition &



Wellness FCS class, students spent several days learning about hunger during their *Food Issues* unit. As a service-learning project, they prepared a variety of quick breads to donate to the Food Shelf of Pella. Students really enjoyed learning more about food preparation while making a difference in their community.

No Significant Learning Occurs without a Significant Relationship

All Students

Family Consumer Science Community Service Project



Cell Phones

*Please help us help your student(s) honor our technology usage expectations.
If they need to communicate home, we will let them do so from the office.*

Cell Phones & Electronic Devices (from the Pella MS student/parent handbook)

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 personal electronic devices to school. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items. 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
- listening to music
- surfing the web

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

- text messaging, facebooking, social networking, emailing, snapchatting, tweeting, etc.
- phone calls
- taking photos of classmates, teachers, or staff without permission
- utilizing personal devices or phones in restrooms, locker rooms, changing rooms, etc.

Steps for dealing with technological devices misuse:

- 1st incident: Staff will confiscate, give to the office, and it will be given back after final bell by the office.
2nd incident: Student will pick-up the item from the principal, dean, or counselor.
3rd 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 or is serious enough in nature (i.e. cyberbullying or taking or sharing photos without permission).

**Detention may be issued if deemed necessary.

Tough Times Never Last, Tough People DO!

All Students

8th Grade Students Read to Elementary Students

By Ashley Hundt, Class of 2020

The 8th grade students of Pella Middle School were assigned a project to write children's books. When their books were finished, they would read them to Kindergarten-3rd grade students. First, the 8th graders were put into groups of 3-4. Then they were to make a story plot with their group so they could have a plan for their children's stories. When the 8th grader's story plots were approved by their teachers, they could start on their rough drafts of their books. They didn't have to worry about making the rough drafts neat - just have a good outlook of their final drafts.



After the group's rough drafts were tweaked and approved by their teacher, they were given the okay to start writing their final drafts on a blank hardcover book. The final book had to include these things in order: an appealing cover, a copyright page, a title page, their final story (filling every page in between), an author page, and finally a back cover with just a copyright barcode. The 8th grade groups were also graded on how well they were efficient workers and how they stayed on task with their group members.

Finally, the 8th grade class was split apart and taken by bus to go to either Madison Elementary or Lincoln Elementary. There, the groups went from class to class reading to the Kindergarten-3rd grade students. Most elementary classes had lines that the 8th grade readers had to wait to read to those classes. Overall this experience was fun and went well for the middle school students.



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

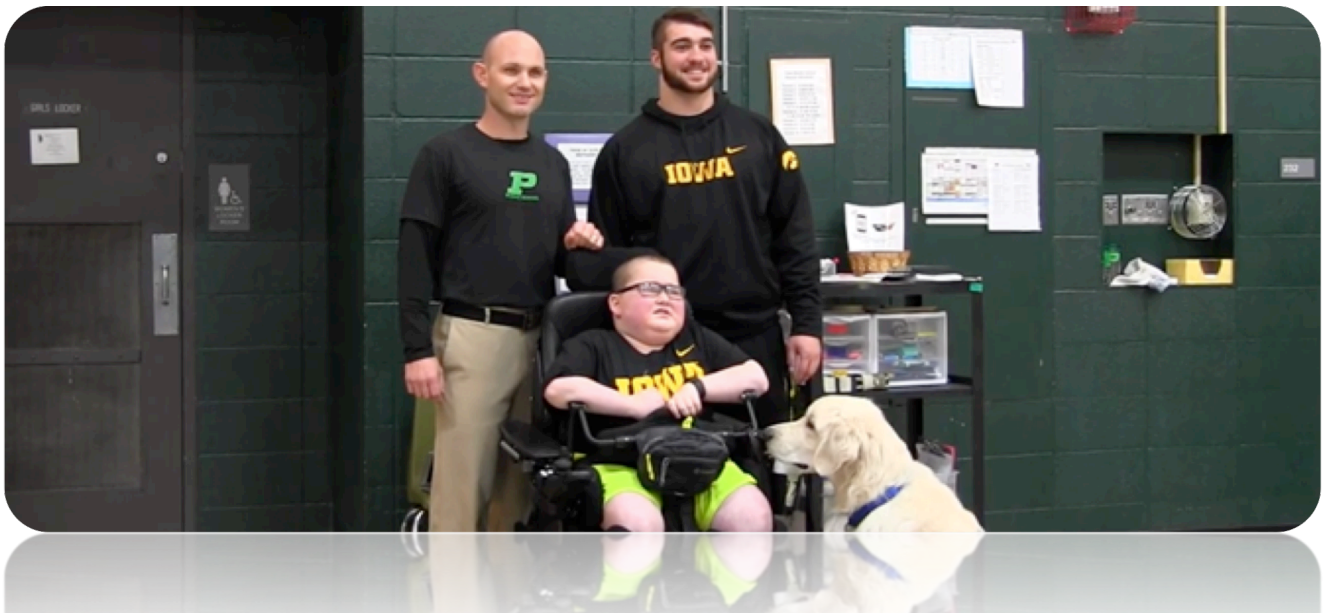
All Students

Harley, the Service Dog, adds new Responsibility

Harley has been a great addition, and our students once again have risen to the occasion to successfully welcome our newest member to Pella Middle School. Harley is transitioning well, and Nick is benefitting greatly from having Harley here to support him in this endeavor to rebuild his independence and confidence. As expected, the students are following the plan and being responsible in honoring the protocol to make this a successful experience for everyone. A special thanks to Garret Jansen, class of 2015 and current Iowa Hawkeye, for coming to reinforce the level of responsibility it takes to be successful in high school and college.

Presentation Link:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/10aGuyEejFI02jbnmdD6PyclxYrpU64Whc>



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

All Students

Public Service Announcements

Written by Grace Cottington and Cameron Johnson.



The eighth graders at Pella Middle School recently made their own Public Service Announcements or PSAs. Our PSAs had topics that ranged from world hunger to texting and driving. Each student did a little research on their topic, and then planned out their PSA. Some PSAs included statistics, pictures, videos, music, and a call for action. Some students had video footage that they filmed in their PSA, but others just had pictures or text. Other students had footage from the Internet.

Deciding our topics was one of the most difficult parts of our PSAs. Once our topics were decided, we had to make a T-chart that described what we heard and saw. Then we used that T-chart to develop our storyboards. Then with those storyboards we filmed our footage, or chose pictures, and then put them into an iMovie. When we were finished, we put our PSAs onto our teachers' flash drives, so that we can share our message with our classmates.

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

#Team Keeps

Cecilia Masek, 7th grade, sold Team Keeps shirts for her "Go Make A Difference Project" in support of the Mrs. Susan Lyons's, 7th Grade Science Teacher, son Keegan Lyons. He was diagnosed with Autism last spring, and the 7th grade students came together to honor him and show Mrs. Lyons there is a team behind every child.



All Students

2nd Quarter Celebration for Students with Minimal or No Late Work

We are celebrating the 2nd Quarter with students who were not on the Late List. In order to celebrate with us for the 2nd quarter:

- Students needed all work completed and turned in by Thursday, January 14.
- Students needed to be completely caught up by the end of 2nd quarter. (They were allowed one late assignment per class starting November 9. The plan was announced on November 9th, and all students started with a clean slate then.)

January 22nd we will have dodge ball in our gym and movies and games in the Third Church basement to celebrate with those demonstrating responsibility to get their tasks completed on time.

- We will have similar celebrations 3rd and 4th quarter.

8th Grade Party (8GP)

***8GP planning meeting #2 was:**
Tuesday, January 19, from 6:30-8:00
in the middle school cafeteria.

***Planning meetings** will be held in the middle school commons or learning street if there are middle school activities going on in the gym.

***If you are unable to attend and would like to contribute, please feel free to contact the 8th grade party facilitator **Stephanie DeJong**:**

dejongms@iowatelecom.net

****2016 8GP Date****

**Saturday, April 16, from 6:30-10:00 PM at
the Pella Middle School**

*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.

8th Grade Students Prepare for High School

High School Orientation – February 11, 2016

Eighth grade students will travel to Pella High School on Thursday, February 11, from 12:00 – 3:00 to learn more about where they are heading next year. The high school administrators, counselors, and students will prepare an afternoon full of information and experiences for our students, so they have a deeper understanding about what is to come in the very near future. The athletic director will also share with them about extra curricular opportunities, and he will continue 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. Please be watching for this day, and ask your son/daughter about their experience. A week or two later, Mrs. Pentico will work with the high school counselors to assist the students in registering for their classes for next year. This is an exciting time; however, it can also be an anxious time. Talk with your students, and encourage them to talk with us about how we can assist them with this transition.

Iowa Assessments ~ February 8, 9, & 11

Students will take their final Iowa Assessments of their educational careers because a new state level test will be administered next year. The Iowa Assessments are a series of tests given annually to measure students' achievement in areas such as reading, math, science, vocabulary, and social studies.

These assessments are important as they allow each student, parent, teacher and administrator to assess individual, as well as grade-level and building-level, academic progress. The test results also enable us to evaluate how our students fare compared to students from across the state and nation. In addition, scores from these tests are considered when students are selected for special programs such as gifted and talented, higher/lower level core classes, intervention courses, and special education.

Federal law requires states administer annual exams to measure student achievement. This legislation requires schools demonstrate significant growth, and sanctions are administered by the federal government if schools fail to meet yearly progress goals. While the goals and timeline established by the federal government are lofty, by working together, we can meet and exceed their expectations.

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

8th Grade Party Continued (8GP)

As the 8th grade party planning lurks, it seems like an appropriate time to share general information about what the 8th grade party is, in case you do not know. The 8th grade party is an annual tradition that continues to be a success because of supportive parents. This year, the team will attempt to make it an event that once again focuses on the students in a less formal setting. Please consider being a part of the planning for this year. You, the parents, make nearly all the decisions about the 8th grade party and dictate what type of party it is. I want to express my gratitude in advance for those willing to assist Stephanie DeJong with the planning and preparation of this annual tradition. It will once again be a great success and celebration for our students.

Stephanie DeJong: dejongms@iowatelecom.net

2nd Quarter Ineligibility Window

Friday, January 22 – Thursday, January 28

Any students with a failing end of the quarter or semester one grade will serve their extra – curricular ineligibility period from January 22nd to January 28th. Your student will be communicating home with you on Thursday or Friday of this week if he/she failed any classes and is ineligible as a result.

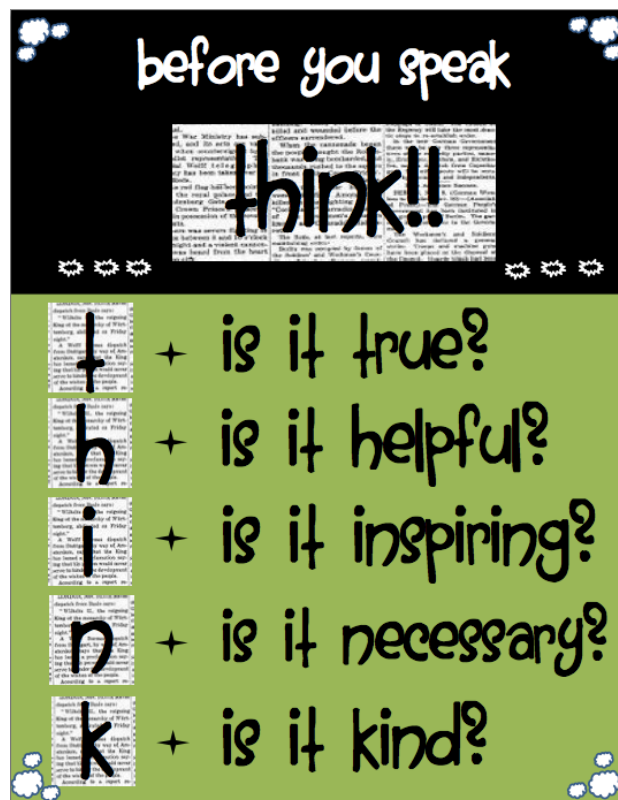
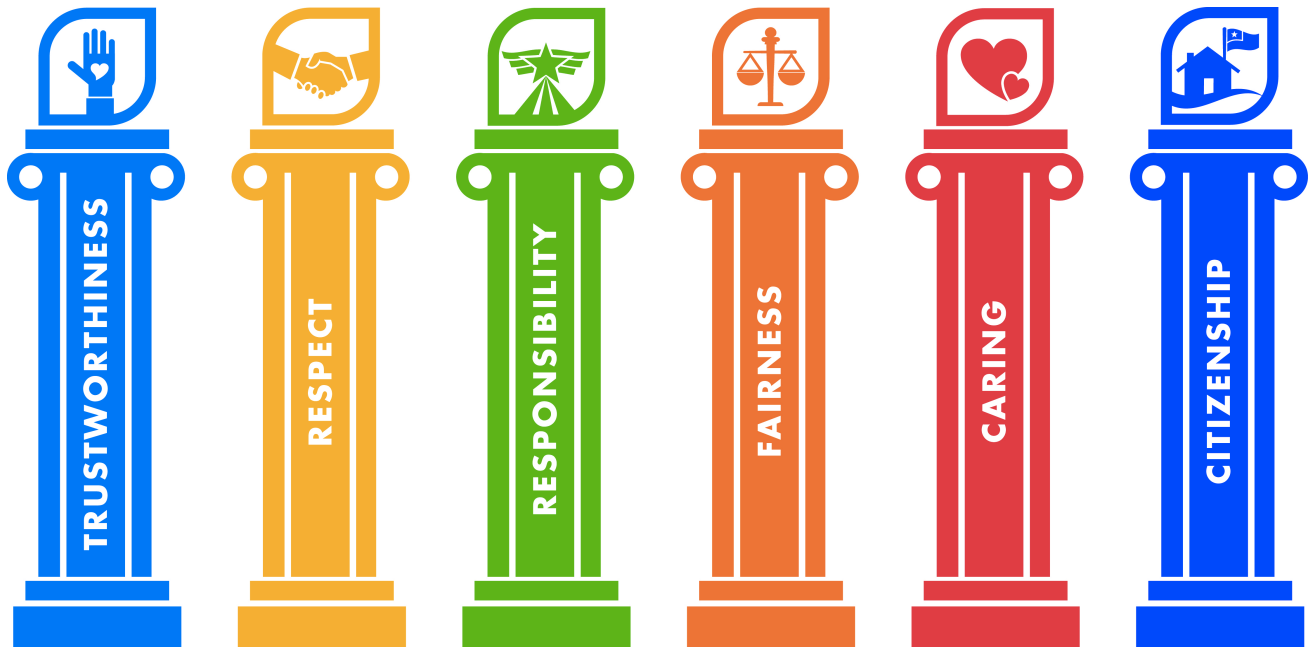
Sound System Upgrade Fundraiser Update

To date, we have raised over \$300 as a result of apparel sales and generous donations.

The activities department and student council need your help! Another web store selling Pella apparel will provide funds 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. This web store will be open from February 1 – February 26. Orders will be delivered to the Middle School before Spring Break.

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

Character Counts!



This is an exciting yet busy time for 8th grade students as they prepare to make the transition to high school. There are a number of dates I would like to call to your attention, and I would also like to encourage you to attend the informational parent meeting on Monday, February 15.

****December - February - 4-Year Plans**

Every 8th grade student in the state of Iowa is required to put together a 4-year plan using the I Have a Plan Iowa (IHAPI) website. Students have been completing inventories that assess their personalities, interests, abilities, strengths, and values. Based upon their answers, they have been directed to a variety of career clusters where they can explore programs of study (a.k.a. majors) and careers. In the upcoming weeks, students will utilize this information to develop high school 4-year plans. These plans are intended to get them thinking about options beyond high school and how they can best prepare themselves for those options. I encourage you to have conversations with your children about these topics throughout this process.

****Thursday, February 11 - 8th Grade Orientation**

Eighth grade students will spend the afternoon at the high school touring the building and learning more about elective class offerings.

****Monday, February 15 - 8th Grade Parent Informational Meeting**

A meeting will be held at 7:00pm in the Pella High School Auditorium for parents/guardians of 8th grade students to discuss topics which may include high school registration, course information and options, and graduation requirements, among many other things. Please make plans to attend this informative meeting. Students do not need to attend.

****Monday, February 15 - Excellence in Electives**

Excellence in Electives will be held from 5:30pm - 7:30pm at Pella High School. This is a great opportunity for students to gain more information about electives that are offered at the high school from both teachers as well as current high school students. A variety of extracurricular activities will also be on display. Excellence in Electives is conducted in an "open-house" style so students and parents may come and go as they choose.

****Tuesday, March 1 - Registration**

Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. Manning, Pella High School Counselors, will be at the middle school to demonstrate to 8th grade students the process of registering for high school classes, and students will begin registration. The 4-year planning process is also designed to aid in this process so many of these discussions and decisions will have taken place even before registration begins.

Mrs. Anne Pentico

Anne.pentico@pella.k12.ia.us

Ph: 641.628.4784 Ext. 1508

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

Middle School Specific Site:

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

Middle School Handbook:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lsbdnoekXycEhaCmud0jfVtG3MQLNqjFWv29sFkJik/edit>

Pella 1:1 Handbook: https://docs.google.com/a/pella.k12.ia.us/document/d/1QyO3_S4OmTFuauYwSz6IXl5SsjYh68yh9K8qZ6M5VM/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/>