

# Pella Middle School

***Acclimating  
For the  
Future***



## Dates to Remember:

- 1/4 Classes Resumed
- 1/12 EverFi Due
- 1/12 End 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter/1<sup>st</sup> Semester
- 1/13 No Classes – Teacher Work Day
- 1/16 Begin 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester
- 1/18 PD – 90 min Early Dismissal
- 1/25 PD – 90 min Early Dismissal
- 2/9 8<sup>th</sup> Grade HS Orientation  
\*8<sup>th</sup> Graders to HS from 12:00 - 3:00
- 2/13 Excellence in Electives @  
Pella HS @ 7:00 PM
- 2/17 No Classes
- 3/13 - 3/17 Spring break

## Winter 2016

**In the midst of learning, we were still able to find time for a little holiday spirit – complete with pajamas, candy canes, ugly sweaters, and Christmas snacks! We spent the last twelve days before break enjoying your children immensely. They have such good hearts and great character, and they know the importance of relationships and being grateful. Several staff members received letters saying, “Thank you,” and it meant a lot to each of us. I hope you were able to spend quality time with your child(ren) over break. They are great kids, and we feel blessed to have the opportunity to learn from and with them daily.**

*Maximizing Life's Opportunities for Every Child*

# Becoming “GREAT” Rubric

The Pella School District is working toward a standards based grading system (SBG), The younger grades have been researching, developing, and implementing a system around this for about four years, and the high school is working on it this year. I want to share our rubric we will be using to give your student feedback at the semester on their human or employability skills. We believe it is important for them to know how they are doing. In the past extra credit was given, and that will no longer be the case. Below are a few highlights around SBG.

**Clear learning targets:** Traditional grades do not clearly inform students what skills he or she has mastered and where he or she is still lacking. The SBG system is intended to build an understanding where strengths lie and what areas need improvement. This form of feedback is key in this system.

**Practice should be practice:** The idea of not grading homework is intended to benefit students by not judging mastery when they are still trying to figure out what they are doing. It is still important to do the practice to reach mastery, but that is not the time when students are being evaluated.

**Mastery is the key:** Students are expected to reach the target fully rather than have incomplete understanding. This is why retakes are allowed. If a student does not yet execute the skill, he/she should keep working until he/she gets it. This may take more than one try and may take additional effort. We believe this mirrors life. While there are circumstances where you only get one chance in life, we also encounter many situations where we are more concerned with doing our best work. This sometimes means we need more than one chance.

## **MS Becoming GREAT Rubric**

Be a GREAT Pella Student

**1 = Beginning 2 = Developing 3 = Secure**

**Gives Effort** - Some examples of how students display effort are working through tasks even when they are difficult, asking questions when they don't understand, and seeking extra help when necessary.

- 3 – Student consistently gives effort toward learning and understanding content.
- 2 – Student is inconsistent with giving effort toward learning and understanding content.
- 1 – Student rarely gives effort toward learning and understanding content.

**Responsible** - A few ways a student displays responsibility are making up missed work in a timely manner, coming to class consistently and on time, and prepared with all the necessary materials.

- 3 – Student consistently comes to class prepared and completes tasks on time and as expected.
- 2 – Student is inconsistent with coming to class prepared and completing tasks on time and as expected.
- 1 – Student rarely comes to class prepared or completes tasks on time and as expected.

**Engages in Learning** - Students engage in learning by taking notes, participating in class discussions, and completing example problems and recommended practices.

- 3 – Student consistently participates and takes an active role in learning.
- 2 – Student reluctantly participates and has a minimal role in learning.
- 1 – Student refuses to participate, is unengaged in class, or shows no care in learning.

**Accountable** - Examples of students being accountable are taking initiative when they have questions or concerns, taking advantage of opportunities to improve understanding, working toward established learning goals, and not making excuses.

- 3 – Student consistently takes necessary steps to succeed and demonstrates ownership of learning.
- 2 – Student is inconsistent with willingness to take necessary steps to succeed and demonstrates ownership of learning.
- 1 – Student rarely shows willingness to take necessary steps to succeed and demonstrates ownership of learning.

**Treats Others With Respect** - Students treat others with respect when they are trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring, and practice good citizenship.

- 3 – Student consistently treats others with respect.
- 2 – Student inconsistently treats others with respect.
- 1 – Student hasn't shown willingness to treat others with respect.

*Maximizing Life's Opportunities for Every Child*

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

# Accomplishments

## District Coaching Awards

This Fall, all four Pella High athletic teams finished in the top five in the state, and two of the coaches have been honored for their accomplishments. Catie Brand, one of our 7<sup>th</sup> grade language arts teachers, led the Pella High volleyball team to the school's first ever runner-up finish at the state tournament and has been named the 4-A district coach of the year. Congratulations Coach Brand!



## Tangen Named Middle School Coach of The Year

Bethany Tangen, Jefferson Intermediate 6<sup>th</sup> grade Science teacher and our middle school cross country coach, was named Junior High Coach of the Year for cross Country this fall as well. Congratulations Coach Tangen!



## Garland Selected to

Jerod Garland, our 8<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies teacher and Pella High School girls' basketball coach was named Senior Girls' Basketball All Star game coach. Congratulations Coach Garland on this honor!



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

# Accomplishments

## Coffee for Soccer Balls

Pella Middle School students opened a coffee cart for staff this week to raise money for a good cause. Students set a goal to send 12 soccer balls to Ethiopia through World Vision, so that children have something to play with at recess. After only two days of



sales, the students have already met their goal and are aiming to purchase as many soccer balls as possible! They raised \$288 total, and they were able to purchase more than double their goal of soccer balls. They have now made this a Wednesday weekly business.



### PENCILS NEEDED

Some of your child(ren) seem to go through pencils, so remind them to be responsible for their pencils and maybe send a few more for the rest of the year.

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

# All Students

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students Read to Elementary Students

Annually, our 8th grade students are given an assignment from Mrs. DeHaan, Mrs. Knight, Mrs. Bogaard, and Mrs. Boots to write children's books. It is an excellent learning opportunity for our students, as well as the elementary students. When the books are finished, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students travel to the elementary buildings and read them to Kindergarten-3rd grade students. We appreciate this experience, and I had many elementary teachers express their gratitude to our teachers for allowing the middle school kids to come back to where they were once students.



# All Students



# All Students

## New Cup Stacking Guinness World Record Set

For the 11th year in a row, Pella Schools has played a role in setting a new Guinness world record for "most people sport stacking at multiple locations in one day." On November 17, 622,809 stackers from 2590 schools and 30 countries took part in the record attempt. Many of these students also took part in setting the record for most dancers in wooden shoes uptown a few years ago. Great job 7th grade!



*Attitude determines preparation, preparation determines outcome.*

Mrs. Murphy's 7<sup>th</sup> grade physical education class had some reindeer stop by class during the rollerblading unit.



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

## Gymnasium Sound System Fundraiser

We have raised around **\$8,000** of our **\$14,000** goal for a much needed gymnasium sound system upgrade. We continue to move closer and closer to our goal, and we are excited about the possibility of our upgrade being installed this upcoming summer. We know an improvement will allow us to provide better sound quality for our spectators, students, and athletes.

*There are no victories at discount prices.*

# 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Party (8GP) Facilitator

Thank you, Rhonda Showman, for stepping up and offering to oversee this year's 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Party! This annual tradition will be held April 22<sup>nd</sup>, and it continues to be a success because of such supportive parents. I have also appreciated the efforts to make it an event focusing on the students in a less formal setting. Please consider playing a role this year; I wish to express my appreciation in advance for those willing to assist Rhonda with the planning and preparation of this event. If you would like to support the planning process, please contact Rhonda via email.

Rhonda Showman: [showmanrk@gmail.com](mailto:showmanrk@gmail.com)



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

## Smarter Lunchroom Pilot

Pella Middle School has volunteered and is excited about collaborating with the University of Iowa and the Iowa Department of Education to pilot the Smarter Lunchroom's Project in Iowa. The research team is led by Dr. Natoshia Askelson, University of Iowa, College of Public Health and Public Policy Center. We will take the following steps:

1. Analysis of school meals participation, sales, and production data
2. Interviews following the project with food service staff and school administrators
3. An online or paper pre and post test for all middle school students
4. An online or paper pre and post test for all parents of middle school students

## Daily Breakfast Reminder

Breakfast is served daily in our school. If your child misses breakfast at home, remind him/her to get the most important meal of the day in our building's cafeteria.

# Character Counts!



***Character is what you show when no one is watching.***

**2016-2017 Approved District Calendar:**

[http://www.pellaschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/2016-17\\_SchoolCalendar.pdf](http://www.pellaschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/2016-17_SchoolCalendar.pdf)

**Middle School Specific Site:**

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

**Middle School Handbook:**

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

**Middle School Band:**

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

**Pella 1:1 Handbook:**

[https://docs.google.com/a/pella.k12.ia.us/document/d/1QyO3\\_S40mTFuauYwSz6lXI5SsjYh68y-h9K8qZ6M5VM/edit](https://docs.google.com/a/pella.k12.ia.us/document/d/1QyO3_S40mTFuauYwSz6lXI5SsjYh68y-h9K8qZ6M5VM/edit)

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

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

# 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 \$200-350 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 and Eligibility Policy

The faculty and administration of Pella Middle School have developed the following policy for students who are failing classes. A list with any student failing a class will be compiled by the iStudy Supervisor through Infinite Campus software, and the list will be compiled approximately every four weeks. See schedule below. Students failing any class will be placed on the Academic and Ineligibility List. Students not participating in extracurricular activities will be required to stay after school on Wednesdays from 1:45 to 3:15 for two weeks. Students participating in extracurricular activities will be rendered ineligible under this policy to represent Pella Middle School in any public extracurricular performance, as well as be required to stay after school on Wednesdays from 1:45 to 3:15 for two weeks. Once a student is placed on the Academic and Ineligibility List, he/she will not be removed until the end of the second week (i.e. Wednesday morning through Tuesday end of day for two weeks in a row).

- The academic list will be compiled on Monday at 3:15.
- Student on the academic list who is failing a class will call home on Tuesday to communicate his/her grade with parents or guardians.
- The ineligibility period will start Wednesday and will run through the end of the day Tuesday two weeks later.
- Each student on the list will be required to stay after school both Wednesdays during the two weeks in an after school study hall from 1:45 - 3:15. Students may also be required to stay after school at any time during those two weeks in order to receive additional academic support.
- A list of all eligible students will be provided to the athletic director, the principal, and each coach as soon as the list is compiled.
- Extracurricular activities covered by this policy, but are not limited to: football, volleyball, cross-country, wrestling, basketball, track, shooting team, softball, cheerleading, jazz band, and show choir.
- Students will participate in any co-curricular events if it is required as part of a class grade.
- Being on the academic ineligibility list does not prohibit the student from practicing with the team.
- The administration will have the final say if there are any discrepancies.
- This list is confidential and will not be posted or made public.

# Academic and Eligibility Policy Dates

The Academic Policy and Ineligibility dates for the 2016 - 2017 school year are as follows:

ACADEMIC LIST COMPLIED	STUDENTS CALL HOME	INELIGIBILITY DATES	REQUIRED STUDY HALL DATES 1:45 - 3:15
September 19	September 20	September 21 - October 4	September 21 September 28
October 31	November 1	November 2 - November 15	November 2 November 9
November 28	November 29	November 30- December 13	November 30 December 7
January 16	January 17	January 18 - January 31	January 18 January 25
February 20	February 21	February 22 - March 7	February 22 March 1
March 27	March 28	March 29 - April 11	March 29 April 5
April 24	April 25	April 26 - May 9	April 26 May 3 (3:15-4:30)



We Are Pella Community Schools  
 Pursuing Excellence  
 Building Caring Relationships  
 Respecting and Developing Every Child's Potential