

The PATRIOT PRESS

Patriot Oaks Academy Newsletter

October 23, 2015



Principal's Post

We have had an exciting first quarter and I can't believe it has flown by SO fast! The kindergarteners celebrated our 50th day of school this week with fun learning activities and a 50's themed sock hop complete with rootbeer floats! Our volleyball teams are enjoying a very successful season and we couldn't be more proud about their efforts and the improvement they have shown this year. Likewise, our hallways are coming alive with door decorations to celebrate healthy lifestyles!

Many thanks to our PTO for organizing Chargerthon. This will be a new tradition that we can build upon yearly, knowing that each year will be more successful than the last. I am so pleased that our school reached its goal. Thank you to ALL who helped in its success.

Thank you also to the volunteers who were on hand the last two days for individual pictures. I really think our families will enjoy this new format. If you didn't order pictures this week, you can still go online and order. For those who are looking for the traditional portrait photo, we will continue to offer this option in the spring.

Now that the second quarter is upon us, it is a great time to reflect on the beginning of the year. One of the challenges we have been working through this year has been the growth in enrollment. When a school experiences the type of growth we have, challenges arise in multiple areas. From furniture to logistics, these challenges have been met with sound planning and problem-solving. Another challenge is to make sure that all of our new faculty and staff are well-versed on the culture we have established. Last year, we spent the entire year working on developing a positive, collaborative culture. We must always remember to bring our new teachers and staff into this conversation and build upon the foundation we have started.

With that said, one of the conversations we have held since opening our school has centered on our grading practices. No one "grading policy" is ever perfect. However, we feel that starting off the second nine weeks with the updated policy outlined in this newsletter will help us set clearer expectations for our teachers, students and parents. We will also include in our communications general dates for when new grades should be entered in HAC. We always want to be as clear as possible on our expectations and this updated policy definitely places us on a solid path toward that end.

I am looking forward to seeing learning to take root this quarter, as well as looking forward to the upcoming week of spirit!

I hope you find much joy throughout the coming weeks!

Your Lead Learner,

Mrs. Harrison

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PATRIOT OAKS ACADEMY



A Roadmap to Understanding Your Child's Grades

WHAT IS STANDARDS-BASED GRADING?

Standards-based grading measures your child's mastery of the grade-level standards for a course, or how well your child understands the material in class. The class grade will be based on all of the evidence the teacher collects demonstrating mastery of essential standards taught and assessed throughout a unit of instruction.

A focus on learning: The goal of this approach is to provide the teacher, your child, and you as a parent with a true picture of the knowledge and skills mastered, and to encourage a dialogue about what instruction your child needs next. Teachers will assess your child's learning using a variety of formative and summative assessments, tools such as traditional paper-and-pencil tests, written papers, lab reports, or projects, but also informal assessments such as classroom discussions or teacher observations. Essentially, everything your child does in a standards-based classroom will provide teachers with evidence of his/her learning.

WHAT ARE POA'S GRADING PRACTICES?

POA teachers report grades that are accurate, consistent, meaningful, and supportive of learning. As you sit with your child to review class progress using Home Access Center (HAC), here are some things to keep in mind:

- Teachers' gradebooks are developed to place emphasis on summative assessments (the results of all the hard work your child puts in to mastering course material throughout each quarter) over general assignments (the homework, class activities, and assignments that allow your child to practice and deepen new knowledge). As such, 80% of your child's grade will consist of summative assessments, while class assignments will make up the remaining 20%. Homework is generally not graded, though feedback should always be present.
- Teachers continually plan to assign coursework and assessments to gather data they use to make instructional decisions based on your child's learning and growth. They update gradebooks in eSchool Plus on a regular basis to provide both students and parents with timely feedback through HAC.
- A standards-based grading approach recognizes that because learning is a process that takes place over time, students should—and will—be allowed to retake assessments. If the new assessment scores show a higher level of mastery, the original grades will be replaced with the new grade. Teachers will communicate when assessments are not available for a retake. Teachers may have specific requirements before allowing a retake as well.
- Scores of zero (displayed as "IN0") are only used by POA teachers to indicate a student has not completed a test or assignment. This means the student has not taken advantage of the opportunity to demonstrate what level of mastery he/she is currently performing in regard to the standards assessed. Once a student has attempted the test/assignment, the lowest possible grade that could be assigned is a 50%. While a score of 50% is a failing grade, this score will not penalize a student's course grade in the way a much lower grade (of a 0%) would.

WHAT DOES THIS LOOKS LIKE IN HAC?

Here are some guidelines for interpreting the grading practices above when looking at your child's performance in HAC:

Retest:

A student who has taken a test again to demonstrate growth from the first assessment will receive a new score. To help differentiate a 75% on a retest from an original lower score of 56%, check to see if there is a decimal after the score. The number after the decimal indicates your child's score on the original assessment.

For instance, if you see a score of "**75.56**", your child scored a **56%** the first time the assessment was given.

Teachers may also type "notes" into HAC to provide additional details.

49.99% vs. 50% vs. 0% vs. "IN0":

Scores of zero are only assigned if a student needs to make up a test/assignment. This score is used by the teacher when the student has not completed the necessary assessments/assignments to be given a grade for a standard due to absences or other factors. This will not display as "**0**" in HAC, however. You will see "**IN0**" (for "Incomplete") next to the assignment name where a score should be.

In this case, the score is calculated as a zero in the student's grade to show the effect of not completing the assessment/assignment, and will significantly impact the class grade until an attempt to demonstrate mastery by completing the work is made. Once your child has completed the test/assignment, the 0% ("IN0") is replaced by the score actually earned. Any zeros ("IN0s") left in your child's grades at the end of the quarter will be replaced with scores of **49.99%** (indicating no attempt to complete the necessary assessments/assignments was made).

If your child scores below a 50% on any test/assignment, check to see if there is a decimal after the score. The number after the decimal indicates your child's actual performance score.

For instance, if you see a score of "**50.21**", your child's actual performance score (demonstrating mastery of the standard(s) targeted) is a **21%**. This indicates your child is struggling in this area and will receive specialized support from the teacher.

WHY THIS DECIMAL SYSTEM?

Although it may seem confusing, when consistently applied across all POA classrooms, this grading system helps POA teachers, administrators, parents, and most importantly, students, easily compare their progress over time when checking course grades. Teachers are also better able to make instructional decisions to meet the needs of individual students in preparation for upcoming assessments in which students may encounter standards/concepts they struggled with previously.

WHY IS 49.99% THE LOWEST POSSIBLE GRADE?

POA teachers are your child's advocate in the classroom in support of learning and knowledge gained over time. Our teachers believe what students do not know at the beginning of a course or unit should not be held against them at a later point in time. In our 100-point grading scale, a much larger range exists for failing grades (0-59—F) than for other grade categories (60-69—D; 70-79—C; 80-89—B; 90-100—A) if we were to allow for the recording of grades below a 49.99%. Our teachers and students recognize this system would make it much more difficult for a student to "recover" from a low grade. Much research on this practice notes that the use of zeros (and lower "F" grades) demotivates students rather than instilling responsibility (as many believe). As such, 49.99% will be the lowest possible grade students will be assigned for an assessment/assignment in any class.

The question that arises with this type of shift in grading practices is one of fairness and equity. Often, parents feel assigning 49.99% (or half credit) for work not completed or raising a lower failing grade to a 50% sends the wrong message about work ethic and lowers the performance range between many children who work hard in their classes to earn grades based on actual performance.

Let's examine the grading scenarios below as we consider fairness in grading practices and the impact of lower "F" grades on student performance:

Main Idea Quiz	Supporting Details Quiz	Unit Test: Main Idea/Details	Summarization Quiz	Qtr. 1 Summative Assessment	AVG.
90	75.56	80	IN0 <small>(calculated as "0" in this grading system)</small>	95	68.11

VS.

Main Idea Quiz	Supporting Details Quiz	Unit Test: Main Idea/Details	Summarization Quiz	Qtr. 1 Summative Assessment	AVG.
90	75.56	80	49.99	95	78.11

Note that in the scenario above, assigning a score of "0" for one assessment vs. a 49.99% equates to a ten percentage point difference in the student's average. Assigning a "0" for the missing assessment actually lowers a student (who was performing at a mid-B level on graded tasks) to a high-D. The bottom set of scores allows for a course average closer to the individual scores earned. In that scenario, the student's overall grade better indicates the level of knowledge possessed.

On the "Summarization Quiz" in question above, the "49.99%" indicates this student essentially did not earn any credit because he/she did not attempt the assessment during the quarter. Please keep in mind our teachers understand how critical it is to continually monitor and assess student learning to provide timely feedback for student growth. Rarely will a student actually be in a position in which an opportunity to remediate/reassess a missing test/assignment is not taken advantage of before the end of a quarter. Remember too, the "75.56" score indicates this student was allowed to remediate/reassess the "Supporting Details Quiz" after receiving an original score of 56%. Such a low original score indicates the student's teacher provided valuable and strategic intervention to address the learning gap.

WHAT CAN STUDENTS DO TO RAISE THEIR GRADES IN A STANDARDS-BASED CLASS?

The goal in a standards-based class is ensuring that students master the essential standards for the class, so any efforts to raise your child's grade will have the same goal. Your child should meet with the teacher to determine which standards need improvement and work together to develop a plan on how to relearn the material and when to retest. If your child demonstrates a higher level of mastery on the reassessment, then the grade for that standard will be increased and his/her grade will increase.

HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MY CHILD'S GRADE OR ABOUT STANDARDS-BASED GRADING?

Teachers should always be the first point of contact should you have questions or concerns regarding your child's performance in a class. POA teachers strive to keep you regularly informed of your child's progress through a variety of communication methods and will provide information about such methods when your child enrolls in their classes.

Patriot Oaks Academy

Research-based Grading Practices

In order to best serve our school community, support our implementation of the Florida Standards, align with other county schools, and most importantly, benefit student learning, these are a summary of Patriot Oaks Academy's grading practices. We believe consistency within grade levels, departments and along vertical alignments are keys to student success.

All graded work

- Must reflect a learning standard.
- Weights for standards-based grades across curriculum in grades 3-8 equal:
 - 80% for assessments;
 - 20% for assignments and projects done in class; and
 - 0% for homework, which is considered independent practice.

All homework must have a purpose and receive feedback.

We have a "no opt-out" policy.

Example weights for grades 3-5

Cold reads 40%

Readings skills 40%

Spelling 10%

Vocabulary 10%

Progress reports for primary (K-2) will follow this scale:

85-100	Mastering
70-85	Progressing
0-69	Needs improvement

Earned Zeros

- The definition of an earned zero is that all questions are wrong.
- Incomplete and late work can be marked with an incomplete. But when work is turned in prior to the summative assessment, credit is given with minimal deductions for assignments.
- The expectation is that incomplete work is unacceptable and that students will do their work, with regular reinforcement of this policy by the teachers.

Test/Quiz retakes

- New tests/quizzes allowed to demonstrate mastery for all students who request it. Remediation is to be established by the teacher. The new assessment format is also up to the teacher. Reassessment may occur until mastery is accomplished, discretion at end of marking period.
- Assignments given in advance with communication that a retake is not available may be used at a teacher's discretion.
- To meet retake requirements, students must complete all assignments (including test review); make all test corrections; plus other remediation required by individual professional educator.
- The new replaces the old grade.

Extra credit

Due to the availability students will have to retake tests and recover from low grades, extra credit is not necessary.

Late work

- Late work is accepted, with minimal deduction, until a summative assessment.
- Projects may have up to a 20% deduction for late work; expectations must be communicated clearly in rubric.

Projects

- Grading at intervals (classwork). Not one final grade at the end.
- Group projects should not be graded as a group. Individual demonstration of learning should be recorded.
- Projects should be completed in class if assigned a class grade(s) and demonstrate mastery of standards.
- It should be expected that parents COULD assist with projects that are assigned for home. Knowing this, make this a consideration in the communication home, provide guidance and ways that parents COULD be a part of the assignment... in other words, embrace the parental guidance rather than it being punitive. Make suggestions for what students should be able to complete on their own and how parents could assist.

PTO MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Our membership drive runs through the end of October. If you would like to join, please go to www.patriotoakspto.org/membership.

Join before Nov 1 to receive your Spirit Stick!!!

QUESTIONS ON FSA (Florida Standard Assessment) **OR EOC's** (End of Course Exams)?

Upcoming parent meetings where you can have your questions answered:

10/27 Sebastian MS (6th, 7th, 8th)

Mill Creek ES (3rd, 4th, 5th)

10/29 Timberlin Creek ES (3rd, 4th, 5th)

11/3 St. Augustine HS (6th, 7th, 8th)

11/5 Patriot Oaks Academy (3rd, 4th, 5th)

See flyers at end of newsletter for details.

HAC ACCOUNTS

IF YOU STILL NEED YOUR HOME ACCESS CENTER ACCOUNT ESTABLISHED,
PLEASE CONTACT JESSICA GRINER AT [JESSICA.GRINER@STJOHNS.K12.FL.US](mailto:jessica.griner@stjohns.k12.fl.us)

Red Ribbon Week...October 26-30, 2015 **Spirit Dress-up Days:**

Monday, October 26...Get RED-dy, set, go! (Wear Red)

Tuesday, October 27...HATS off to those who make healthy choices! (Wear Hat)

Wednesday, October 28...You can't HIDE great character! (Wear camouflage)

Thursday, October 29... Keep your dreams in FOCUS! (Wear sunglasses or silly glasses)

Friday, October 30...Get WILD about exercising! (Wear an animal print or a shirt with an animal on it)

*On Friday, some kindergarten-second grade classes may be dressing up as storybook characters. Please check with your child's teacher for verification!





**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR
PATRIOT OAKS ACADEMY
VOLUNTEERS OF THE YEAR**

**Outstanding Student Volunteer: Erin Wagner
Outstanding Volunteer: Meredith Connell
Outstanding Senior Volunteer: Debbie Ouchi**

**Thank you for all you do for our
school and community!**



**REPORT CARDS ISSUED
MONDAY, OCTOBER 26**



PROCTORS NEEDED
in late November and early December for
K Discovery Education testing.

Go to:

[http://www.signupgenius.com/
go/10c0a4daaa92ca31-kindergarten](http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0a4daaa92ca31-kindergarten)
to sign up.

No K parents please!

Contact Jessica Griner with any questions at
jessica.griner@stjohns.k12.fl.us

**DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME
ENDS NOVEMBER 1st.**



**REMEMBER TO
“FALL BACK”
ONE HOUR!**

**Third Grade News from
Ms. Sutton's and Ms. Lee's Classes!**

A player from the Armada visited our
class for an innovation project about
soccer and professional soccer players.





Career Academies of St. Johns
Experience. The Difference.

Infor-

mation

on High School Academies 2015-2016

Timeline

January 7-19	Middle School Blitz held at Each Middle School
January 21	High School Showcase at World Golf Village Convention Center - 3:30 - 7:00 p.m. only!!!
January 21	Online Application OPENS for newly applying 8th and 9th grade students
Jan. 25- Feb. 4	Proposed Academy Nights (see schedule below)
February 5	St. Johns County Center for the Arts AUDITIONS at SAHS - You must bring your printed application form.
February 8	Registration Deadline - Online - Registration will be closed at midnight.
July 1	Last day to appeal

High School Showcase - All parents and students are invited to attend the Annual High School Showcase on Thursday January 21, 2016 at the World Golf Village Convention Center from 3:30 - 7:00 p.m. Learn about the high school academies and meet representatives from each high school.

Academy Nights - Each high school will host an informational 2016 Academy Night. All parents interested in attending one of the academies should make plans to attend these events. Each Academy Night will begin at 6:00 p.m.

February 1 - St. Augustine (6:00 p.m.) ALL St. Johns County Center for the Arts requests must apply by February 4, 2016. (Auditions at SAHS will occur on February 5, 2016)

February 1 - St. Johns Technical (5:30 p.m.)

January 28 - Allen D. Nease

January 27 - Pedro Menendez

February 2 - Creekside

January 26 - Bartram Trail

January 25 - Ponte Vedra

For more information on St. Johns County High School Academy Programs go to: <http://academies.stjohns.k12.fl.us/>

It's SOCKTOBER!



What: NEW socks drive for men, women, and children

When: Donations will be collected by your child's homeroom teacher **October 20th-30th**

Why: Socks will be delivered to the SJC St. Francis House and Betty Griffin House in preparation for the cooler months.

Inspired by Kid President: <http://soulpancake.com/socktober/>

"Make the world more awesome!"

Contact Mrs. Schwartz or Mrs. Christofoli with questions.

This collection is part of a student-led service-learning project related to homelessness.



BEST OF LUCK TO COACH AMIE BEASLEY!

She will be participating in the Ironman Competition held in Panama City Beach, FL on November 7th!

This race includes a 2.4 mile swim in the Gulf of Mexico, a 112 mile bike ride and a 26.2 mile run.

You can do it Coach Beasley!

We are so proud of you ~ Go Chargers!

Discount Cards Now Available

Help support local establishments and the Band program!

Email Margaret.vance@stjohns.k12.fl.us or find a band student today.

It's THE Premium savings pass!

HOW IT WORKS:

- 1 Show the PASS at one of the featured merchants on this card!
- 2 Receive the discount from that merchant as they honor the PASS!
- 3 Register online to see National Offers.

ONLY \$20

PASS BENEFITS:

Every PASS sold raises money for the group. Your PASS can be used everyday until it expires. Save money Every Time you use the PASS. Access National Offers online.

Savings Products
A Division of United American
800-881-5273 | gaSavingsPass.com



BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY PHOTO SESSION!

Back by Popular Demand...

Sign up now for POA PTO's Holiday Photo Sessions. See the sign up below for more information.

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0a4daaa92ea64-patriot1>

CHARGERTHON

Chargerthon's inaugural year was a success! We exceeded our goal at \$31,595.48! Wow!! Thank you to everyone for your contributions and support!

A special thank you to our school's Administration and Staff. Without your continuous promotion and support, we couldn't have done it!

Thank you to all who gave their time to getting this fundraiser off the ground – Ms. Harrison, Mr. Stoddard, Jenny Dupree, PTO Board, Committee Chairs Kim Albers and Mandy Yates; and Jeremy Pinkney (Chargerman); Susan Rodriguez (logo design); and Robyn Lilac.

A HUGE thank you to Joy Orthodontics for sponsoring our fundraiser and Hero's Eatery for providing over 100 coupons to top 5 classes (to be delivered next week)! Our Community Contributors who allowed us to video Chargerman in their place of business, thank you! And to all of the businesses who donated items for drawings: Rebounderz, Marineland, Pirate Museum, Ripley's, Harry's, V's Pizza, Old City Helicopter Tours, Adventure Landing, Jacksonville Zoo, MOSH, Chef Matt, The Durbin Cakery, Sweet Pete's, Gather 2 Game, the Edge Rock Gym, IMAX, Sonic, Alligator Farm, Skate Station and Tommy's Pumpkin Patch.

If you received a t-shirt order form, please make sure to return it by October 23rd. Bookplates will be handled by Mr. Greco late next week.

PTO is grateful for such a wonderfully supportive school community! Thank you again!



Unity Day 2015

Together against bullying — united for kindness, acceptance and inclusion.

A big thank you to everyone that displayed great citizenship and respect by participating in Unity Day 2015. By wearing orange students and staff at Patriot Oaks Academy showed that they are united to send a message of support and hope and are united for kindness and acceptance.



Congratulations!



Congratulation to Amirah Ghany for representing Patriot Oaks Academy at the Annual Character Counts Breakfast as our student of character! Amirah displays the pillars of character and serves as a role model to her fellow classmates!
Great Job Amirah!





Dream of Going to College? We Can Help.

You may apply for a tuition only Florida prepaid scholarship paying up to 60 credit hours at a Florida public postsecondary institution of higher learning.



You must:

- Be a current and active 7th or 8th grade student in St. Johns County Schools.
- Be eligible for the free and reduced lunch program, even if you don't take advantage of the program.
- Complete the application.
- Submit information to the TSIC liaison at your school no later than **Friday, October 30, 2015.**

Academic requirements:

- Students accepted into the program will have to maintain a 2.5 GPA with all grades of C or better. Failure to maintain a 2.5 will result in a review by the TSIC committee.

For information or for an application, please contact:

Sandy Watson, Guidance Counselor
Patriot Oaks Academy
Sandy.Watson@stjohns.k12.fl.us

Marci Poston, Educational Programs Director
Marcia.Poston@stjohns.k12.fl.us



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ST. JOHNS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT HALF-CENT SALES TAX REFERENDUM

FACT SHEET

DID YOU KNOW?

-  The St. Johns County School District has been the TOP RATED district in Florida for 6 consecutive years and A-Rated for 10 consecutive years.
-  Top-rated schools help attract businesses and jobs, improving the county's economy and increasing property values.
-  The District has implemented a comprehensive energy management reduction program that has avoided more than \$33 million in costs since 2008.
-  All new revenue generated by the half-cent sales tax will benefit classrooms directly and 25%-40% will be paid for by out-of-county visitors.

What the Referendum Means for Our Schools



New school construction to keep up with the growth of St. Johns County



Reconstruction to ensure that existing schools continue to be well-maintained to serve our students and teachers



Technology upgrades to help prepare our students for jobs of the 21st century



Safety improvements which enhance existing measures to provide for the security of our students

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

**ASAP**

For unregistered voters, voter registration ends on Oct. 5, 2015

09/18/2015

Overseas absentee ballots will be mailed beginning Fri., Sept. 18

10/01/2015

Regular domestic absentee ballots will be mailed beginning Thurs., Oct. 1

10/24/2015

Early voting begins at 9 a.m. on Sat., Oct. 24 and runs daily through Sat., Oct. 31 until 6 p.m.

11/03/2015

Election Day - Last chance to vote



For more information go to: www.stjohns.k12.fl.us

A special thanks goes to Agility Press, Inc. for sponsoring this document. No School District funds or tax dollars were used in its preparation or printing.

Helping Your Child Succeed on Florida Standard Assessments and State EOCs

Plan to attend an informational meeting
for families of middle school and high school students

Thursday, September 29th, Creekside High School
Thursday, October 8th, Ponte Vedra High School
Tuesday, October 13th, Pacetti Bay Middle School
Tuesday, October 27th, Sebastian Middle School
Tuesday, November 3rd, St. Augustine High School
6:30 – 8:00 PM



What is FSA?

**What is on the EOC for Algebra I, Geometry or
Algebra II?**

How can I help my child?

If you've asked any of these questions, please plan on attending an FSA informational presentation. Each evening will begin at 6:30 and conclude by 8:00, and will consist of a writing and ELA session followed by a mathematics portion. Time for questions will be built into the process. For more information call 904-547-7503.



Presented by St. Johns County School District

Helping Your Child Succeed on the Florida Standards Assessment

Plan to attend an informational meeting
for parents of 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students

6:30 – 8:00 PM

Thursday, October 1st, R.B. Hunt Elementary School
Tuesday, October 6th, Valley Ridge Academy
Thursday, October 15th, Osceola Elementary School
Tuesday, October 20th, Ocean Palms Elementary School
Thursday, October 22, South Woods Elementary School
Tuesday, October 27, Mill Creek Elementary School
Thursday, October 29th, Timberlin Creek Elementary School
Thursday, November 5, Patriot Oaks Academy



What is FSA?
Did FCAT Go Away?
How can I help my child?

If you've asked any of these questions, please plan to attend an FSA informational presentation. Each program will begin at 6:30 p.m. and conclude by 8:00 p.m., and will consist of an ELA/writing session followed by a mathematics portion. Time for questions will be built into the process. For more information call 904-547-7503.



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