



PEARL PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT **PPSD Strategic News**

ISSUE 1 ► JANUARY 2009

The MISSION of Pearl Public School District is to prepare each student to become a lifelong learner, achieve individual goals, and positively impact a global society.

► **Transportation Department**

The Transportation Department has implemented a positive behavior program on our buses to impact a global society. Each week on Friday, an elementary and a secondary student is rewarded for his/her exemplary behavior on the bus. Drivers have initiated a silent reading program in the afternoon on the buses to accentuate lifelong learning. The department is constructively working on other ways to reinforce the school district's mission statement.



► **PPSD Partners Luncheon**

Pearl Public School District honored its school and community partners with a Christmas luncheon on December 8, 2008, at Pearl High School. There were over 150 guests in attendance. Entertainment was provided by the Northside Singers under the direction of Mrs. Peggy Gates and the Pearl High School Chamber Singers under the direction of Mrs. Donna McCommon. Special speakers included Madison Brown, Pearl Upper School 6-8 student body president; Bailey LaFontaine, 4th grade student; Ray Morgigno, high school principal; Dr. John Ladner, superintendent; Marlon Gullette, school board president; Linda Ward, assistant superintendent and Dr. Tammy Wilkinson, district administrator.



Message from the Board of Trustees

The PPSD Board of Trustees is the voice of the children. We make decisions that are in the best interest of all the students that attend our schools. Our responsibility is to preserve our rich heritage, cater to the current needs, and secure a brighter future for generations to come. These tasks are not taken lightly, and the Board has tried to use every resource available to do a good job. Please take time to read this current newsletter and stand with us in support of our children.

PEARL LOWER ELEMENTARY



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1. The Book Fair was a SUCCESS! The students loved the book fair. This was also a time for the parents to come in and purchase books for their kids. Parents' Night was great. Mrs. Long and Mrs. Stapleton sold over \$1000 worth of books.

2. Students enjoyed wearing their pajamas to remind them to snuggle up with their parents before bed every night to read a book.

3. The First Grade Singers from the school year 2007-2008 and music teacher Karen Floyd were recognized at the first annual "Keep Pearl Beautiful" awards reception. The choir presented a

"Being Green" program to the Keep Pearl Beautiful committee and the MS Urban Forestry Council on Earth Day in 2008. Pearl Lower was awarded a \$500 grant for the purchase of new library books.

4. Sabrina Morgan, Sharley Mills, and Lauren Allen volunteered to support our local Pearl Education Foundation by volunteering at the Mississippi State Fair.

5. Parents were welcomed to Pearl Lower for our annual Thanksgiving Feast.

NORTHSIDE ELEMENTARY

The students at Northside Elementary are on a mission to achieve individual goals. Part of that process includes setting reading goals in Accelerated Reader. With teacher guidance, each student determines the total number of points he/she will attain by the end of the nine weeks. These goals are based on students' reading levels and prior successes. Teachers also meet with students on a regular basis to determine other goals that may include academics,



behavior, or personal goals. For the second nine weeks, all students have been challenged to attain one of three specific goals: perfect attendance, honor roll, or improving one subject by a letter grade. Anyone achieving one of these three will be rewarded with popcorn and a movie sponsored by the Northside Parent Teacher/Student Organization (PTSO). The students at Northside are well on their way to accomplishing their mission!

ELECTION PROCESS

In an effort to encourage Pearl Upper students to become lifelong learners, achieve individual goals, and positively impact a global society, fourth and fifth grade students were given the opportunity to become involved in a unit of study on civic responsibility by participating in a simulation of the campaign and election process. With our country in the midst of the 2008 Presidential election, Upper chose to take advantage of a teachable moment, but with a little bit of a different twist. They decided that it was time for a kid to run for president! Knowing that many people in the United States have very little knowledge of the complexities of campaigning for public office, the purpose of this simulation was to give students the experience of working within the political process and to help them understand the many dimensions of that process and what is needed to manage a political campaign. Students were randomly placed on several campaign staffs, and one name was drawn to be each group's presidential nominee. These groups were given guidelines to let them know everything that their staff had to do in order to earn points (instead of votes) towards being elected to the presidency. Each staff had to come up with a name, symbol, and slogan for their political party, and they had to nominate and vote on a famous person or character to be the vice presidential nominee for their party. They were asked to do many of the things that a real campaign staff has to do when running a candidate for public office. Some of these activities included deciding on important issues, creating television commercials, writing newspaper articles, writing and giving speeches, planning fundraising events, and designing bumper stickers, t-shirts and yard signs. Along this path to the presidency, students had the chance to compete individually in two competitions.

EXTREME WHITE HOUSE MAKEOVER

In the *Extreme White House Makeover*, students created their own original version of the White House. In addition, students came up with new names for the residence.

WHITE HOUSE CHINA CONTEST

For the second competition, students designed their own new pattern of presidential china. Students voted on their favorite designs.

VICTORY PARTY

Every campaign staff has a victory party on election night, so the culmination of Upper's election study was a celebration which included watching videos of the commercials and speeches made by the students. Each student was awarded a certificate for completing the unit of study, and winners of several competitions were announced. Certificates were presented by Jordan Downs, a Pearl High School graduate and former Quest student, who recently received a Political Science degree from the University of Mississippi. Jordan spoke to the students about his experiences working on a real campaign staff and encouraged them to become involved in our country's election process at a young age. Parents and friends from the community were invited to attend, and refreshments were served.



PEARL UPPER SCHOOL GRADES 6-8

Pearl Upper School 6-8 is working hard to ensure that their students are adhering to the mission statement and core values. The students are encouraged to participate in schoolwide activities such as the canned food drive, character bandaid drive, and other opportunities to serve their community. The teachers also participate modeling school and community spirit. This affords the students the opportunity to learn the rewards of making a positive impact on our community through personal experience.

SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Students are led to engage in learning activities with other students in small groups. They are taught responsibility for keeping a set of notes and handouts for each unit. The teachers attended the MS Science Teachers' Association Conference this past fall. Teachers participated in workshops that offered the opportunity to experience inquiry-based and hands-on activities from the students' point of view. Teachers returned to the class with a renewed spirit and new ideas to share with students.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Teachers are determined to create and inspire young writers and to foster a genuine love of reading. They do this by creating a safe environment where students are not afraid to take risks. Teachers work together to create writing workshops that focus on the students' strengths while working to correct weaknesses. These activities are creating lifelong learners.

SOCIAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT

Congressman Gregg Harper came to speak to the 8th grade about the orientation he is going through in preparation of taking his seat in the U.S. Congress. The students saw firsthand how lifelong learning is an integral part of personal fulfillment. The students also presented Mr. Harper with a proposal for a bill that they would like to see proposed in the U.S. Congress. The Junior Historical Society's participation in the Pearl Christmas Parade was a way for the students to contribute positively to community. The theme of the float was "Christmas Around The World". Students researched Christmas traditions of various countries around the world and then displayed their findings on the float to share with the community.



SPECIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Students wrote holiday stories (fiction and nonfiction) to share with Pre-K students. Students were excited about their work and believe that their stories brought joy to others. Students are learning daily about role models and how they have impacted society through the "Every-Day Edits" grammar lessons. They have learned about Eleanor Roosevelt, Maya Angelou, Abraham Lincoln, Rosa Parks and many others. This department is declaring to work with each student so that they are "freeing the power" to enrich the community and their individuality.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER



Classes from the Early Childhood Center made pictures for the residents of the Brandon Court Nursing Home. They gave their pictures to the nursing home residents during a "Hello Visit" field trip. Pictured are Mrs. Risha Jones and Joshua.



Parents from the Early Childhood Center attended a parent meeting in November. During the meeting the parents completed two "Make and Take-It" activities.

SPECIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The first semester of the 08/09 school year has been exciting for special services students. Students have participated in class, school-wide, and district-wide events in order to promote lifelong learning, learn how to achieve individual goals and how to positively impact a global society.

► **The Early Childhood Center** – The special services students participated in field trips to the Cox Horse Farm, Pearl Library, Teddy Bear Clinic and Brandon Nursing Home.

► **Lower Elementary**

Students collected Yoplait tops to support Breast Cancer Awareness, dressed up as community helpers one day and as their favorite career choice another day. They also took field trips to the zoo and Agriculture Museum.



► **Northside** Students studied the Wizard of Oz, had a Thanksgiving feast, and decorated the room as a Native American village.

► **Upper 4-5** Students took a virtual field trip through the Everglades, studied wolves and their lives in the tundra, and discovered the life cycle of the butterfly.

► **PPSD Gifted Education Program** (Quest) students have also been busy. Quest students have studied the path to the presidency, pirates, and the election process.

► **Upcoming activities** include building “toothpick bridges”, creating unique chess boards, and participating in a chess tournament.

► **The 4th and 5th grade** Quest students will soon be setting up a “Mini Society”, using a curriculum created by the Kauffman Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership. The curriculum is an experience-based approach to teaching students entrepreneurship and economic concepts through the creation of their own society. It will bring



real-life business and economics into the class, prepare students for earning and using money wisely, and lay a foundation for entrepreneurship. These classes hope to involve community

leaders/parents by having them talk to the students about their jobs.

► **Quest to the Presidency** – The 4th and 5th grades Quest classes appreciate Mr. Jordan Downs, Communications Director for 3rd District Congressman Gregg Harper, for presenting the awards at the “Quest to the Presidency” victory celebration.

► **Upper 6-8** – Mrs. Felder’s class won 2nd place in the Upper (6-8) door decorating contest for Red Ribbon Week and had a doughnut party to celebrate.



► **The PHS Life Skills class** produces monogrammed products such as huggies, key chains, and small handbags to sell throughout the year.



MISSION IMPOSSIBLE?

Not for These PHS Pirates!



PHS students visiting Harvard and Yale over Thanksgiving break, a PHS faculty member teaching her International Business class...from China, students taking a college class (tuition free!) for dual credit on the PHS campus... What may seem like impossible, or at least improbable, missions are happening this year at Pearl High School. Not just content to post the mission statement, the mission of the Pearl Public School District is being lived out every day!

Students in Beijing Jingshan School in China welcomed PHS teacher Sheri Carter and other NCTA educators into their classroom. Carter's journalism students mailed copies of *The Pirate Speaks* newspaper to the class and invited the students to submit articles for future publications.

What will be the next challenge or accomplishment to come out of Pearl High School? The school knows that whatever it is, nothing is "Mission Impossible" for the Pirates!

► **Preparing students to become lifelong learners...** PHS has partnered with Hinds Community College to offer a tuition free college course on the PHS campus. Thirteen seniors in this pilot program will receive 6 hours of tuition free college credit as they complete Early and Modern Western Civilization courses taught by PHS and Hinds faculty member, David Sansing. The outstanding success of this pilot program will hopefully lead to an expansion of dual college credit opportunities for PHS students next year. What better way to ensure students move on to college after high school? Starting that college level course-work right here at home!



International Business students in Sheri Carter's class are creating a video about Pearl High School to send to schools in China and Japan.



Pictured left to right are (standing) Scarlett Hamil, Derek Havard, Kimberlin Harrison, Kerri Bradley, Jessica Ray, (sitting) Sheri Carter, teacher, Andrew Garcia, Tierra Price, Kyle Bynum, and Brandon Brock. Not pictured is Xavier McLin.

► **Achieving individual goals...** Small and large goals are set and achieved each day in PHS classrooms, athletic fields, stages, band halls and chorus rooms. But perhaps some would think it is "Mission Improbable" for two PHS seniors to go on college interviews to Harvard and Yale Universities over the Thanksgiving break. However, that is exactly what senior Super Scholars and National Merit Semi-Finalists Wesley Welch and Dale Shepherd did over their break. A true testament to what hard work and goal setting can do these two young men have wide-open higher education opportunities. They were unafraid to set big goals and do the daily hard work that gets them there!



► **Positively impacting a global society...** Teaching from China, you say? That is exactly what PHS business department chair and newspaper adviser Sheri Carter did this fall. One of eight Mississippi teachers selected to participate in a two-week National Consortium for Teaching about Asia (NCTA) China/Japan study tour, Carter visited schools in both countries and worked to establish a digital connection between her classes and students in China and Japan. While traveling, Carter communicated with her students through a blog site she created.

FINE ARTS DEPARTMENT

Art Department

Vicky Miley, Rebecca Wilkinson and Rebecca Self, district art instructors, chaperoned a group of students in advanced art classes interested in photography to the Mississippi College Art Exhibit "Katrina". They met the artist, Melody Golding, who autographed a book of her show for the PHS National Art Honor Society. Mike Box, former Pearl High School art instructor, and Vicky Miley were featured in a Portico



Magazine article about the art collection by Mississippi artists on display at PHS. All students in the high school art department celebrated international Pinwheels for Peace day. They created over 400 pinwheels and displayed them by the flagpole in front of the school. The observance is recorded on the national website of Pinwheels for Peace. The Ceramics I class visited a pottery demonstration by Mississippi Potter Emmitt Collier. PHS art students created Egyptian masks that were molds of their faces. The masks were placed on exhibit in the Commons of Pearl High School, and the student body and teachers voted on the ones they liked the best.

Drama Department

Drama students at the junior high wrote and performed core value skits. They wrote puppet plays and performed them for students at the Lower Elementary and for the special needs students at the junior high.

Band Department

The Pearl Pirate Band marched in the parade at the Hudspeth Center and Whitfield Hospital. This was an enriching event for the band students as well as clients of the Center.



Choral Department

The choral department has been very active performing for numerous organizations, businesses and churches, especially throughout the Christmas season. First Grade Singers performed at Walmart, McDonalds, Merchant and Farmers Bank and Wisteria Garden Nursing Home. They also had a school-wide sing-a-long. Northside Singers performed for residents of the



Mississippi Veterans Home in Jackson. Students made Christmas cards to give the residents. They also performed at the Partners Appreciation Luncheon sponsored by the district. Members of the Upper Honor Choir also did their part in reaching out to a global society through performances at the Rankin County Tax Collector's Office and McLaurin Heights Methodist Church. These students and the Northside Singers participated in "Mississippi Sings" which is sponsored by

Mississippi Music Educators Association through the national organization Music Educators National Conference. Choirs at the jr. high spread Christmas cheer around the community by performing at local businesses such as the Jackson International Airport and Blue Cross Blue Shield Clinic. During the holiday season, each performing choir filled the hallways of the jr. high with caroling, encouraging each class to take a moment and celebrate the Christmas spirit with them. As is the tradition, Chamber Singers performed for numerous luncheons, banquets, businesses and churches throughout the holiday season. One of the performances was at St. Catherine's Village where they visited with residents after the performance. A concert for senior citizens of Pearl also was a part of this season. At the Pearl Singers Christmas Concert, choirs from each elementary and the junior high performed as special guests.

Dance Department

The Pirate's Crew Dance Team hosted a Youth Dance Clinic for girls ages 3 and above as well as sponsored a "Future Pirate's Crew Team" for girls in grades 4-6. The dance team attended a session with the "Rockettes" in New York, NY, worked with members of the "Rockettes" and learned a dance routine. They went through a mock audition that demonstrated what is involved in pursuing a career in dance.





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VISIT OUR WEBSITE
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*It's a Great Day
To Be a Pirate!*



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