



PINE BOUGH

Pine Grove Middle School



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Website- <https://pinegrovems.bcps.org>

*"Where being **P**erformance-Driven and **G**oal-Oriented **M**oves us toward **S**uccess!"*

FEBRUARY/ MARCH EDITION 2017

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE
MS. TINA NELSON

Greetings Pine Grove Middle School Community.

It is hard to believe that we are almost mid-way through the third quarter, especially since the weather has not made it truly feel like winter. We hope that the start to your 2017 has been healthy and happy, and that it remains so.

Please take a moment to provide your feedback on Pine Grove Middle School and on Baltimore County Public Schools in general by completing the Stakeholders Survey. The survey, available at <http://www.bcps.org/teamBCPS/stakeholder/>, takes approximately ten minutes and provides PGMS and BCPS valuable information as to how we can continuously improve.

We encourage you to use BCPS One (bcpsone.bcps.org/) to stay informed about your child's performance. If you have not yet activated your account, or are having difficulty, please contact the school and we will provide assistance. You can reinforce your child's academic progress by encouraging vocabulary development, reviewing math facts, and engaging in other educational activities. BCPS Parent University (www.bcps.org/parentu/) is a resource for staying active in your child's education.

Our vision at Pine Grove remains to empower our students to develop the 21st century content knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable them to reach their maximum potential as responsible, life-long learners and globally competitive citizens. We continue to focus on instruction that centers on the learner and on providing meaningful feedback that drives student achievement.

Thank you for your support of Pine Grove Middle School. We look forward to an excellent spring semester!



Math and Reading Night

PGMS' Annual Math and Reading Night will take place on March 15th from 6-8 P.M. A flyer will be distributed during the last week in February, and you will have the opportunity to sign up for two of many important sessions. Topics covered will include: math and reading games to expand vocabulary and strengthen arithmetic skills, how to support reading and math at home, and how to talk to your child about their homework. The evening will also include snacks, door prizes, and TRACS! Join us for a fun and informative evening!

<p>PGMS Administration</p> <p>Tina Nelson, Principal, tnelson@bcps.org</p> <p>John Bowman, Assistant Principal jb Bowman3@bcps.org</p> <p>Nathan Davis, Assistant Principal ndavis3@bcps.org</p>

A LOOK AHEAD

February 6 – 10	School Counseling Week
Friday, February 10	Palooza, Grade 8, 7:00 – 10:30 p.m.
Thursday, February 16	Interims distributed
Friday, February 17	Professional Development for Teachers Schools close 3 hours early (11:40AM)
Monday, February 20	Presidents' Day, Schools Closed
Wednesday, February 22	Conference Night 3:00- 6:00 p.m.
Thursday, March 2	PTSA Meeting in library 7:00 p.m.
March 13-16	Science MSA Testing
Wednesday, March 15	Math & Reading Night 6:00-8:00PM
Thursday, March 17	7 th Grade Field Trip- Medieval Times
Tuesday, March 21	Spring Picture Day
Friday, March 24	Cougar Activity Night, 7:00 – 9:00 PM
Friday, March 31	3 rd Quarter Ends, Schools close 3 hours early (11:40AM)
Friday, March 31	PGMS/Oakleigh combined PTSA Family Bingo Night at PGMS 6:00 – 8:30PM
Looking into Spring...	
April 10-17	Spring Break, schools closed
April 24-June 5	PARCC Testing Window



PARCC TEST TAKING STRATEGIES & INFORMATION

THE 2017 PARCC TESTING WINDOW IS FROM April 24 THROUGH JUNE 5

Every year we are faced with the question, “How can we adequately prepare our students for the state assessment?” In Baltimore County and at Pine Grove Middle, we have a balanced literacy program which already addresses many of the demands of the Common Core State Standards. “A language-rich classroom, where students engage in regular guided and independent reading, is the ideal context for developing the skills needed to perform well on standardized tests.”

What are three surefire strategies for reading comprehension that especially come in handy at test time?

1. Encourage Purposeful Reading; 2. Cover All Kinds of Questions; 3. Teach Text Structure.

We encourage our students to read purposefully. Our students realize that there is always a purpose for reading, and they must tailor their reading strategies accordingly. They realize that we are teaching them that they must know as much as possible about the types of questions they will be facing on the PARCC assessment in the narrative and informational reading passages.

In terms of covering all kinds of questions, we teach our students the kinds of items they will be seeing on the test. We expose them to many different types of questions on a daily basis—literal, inferential, textual, and so on. It is vital that students respond to the prompt and stay focused on the questions being asked when writing a response.

Finally, we teach reading strategies and reading skills such as text structure, story organization, compare and contrast, and cause and effect, and claim/evidences to help our students know where to find the answers in the passages they are reading.

Other strategies we have used to ensure student efficiency with the test is:

- Utilized “Test” vocabulary (the words encountered in testing questions)
- Reviewed the correct and incorrect answers to practice tests
- Utilized ‘common’ test-taking strategies (process of elimination, pacing, marking the test booklet, highlighting, and “proper” guessing)
- Had student create their own organizers before their writing activities
- Utilized close reading strategies for vocabulary and main idea
- Utilized the PARCC rubric to ensure understanding of scoring of assessment

If you’d like more information or to review the practice tests your child uses during class, log onto <http://parcconline.org/> and explore.

Student Service Learning Awards

Attention 8th Grade Parents: The county bases its 8th grade student's service learning award on the total number of hours entered into the system by the end of third quarter. All service learning forms must be submitted to Ms. Curtis no later than March 24th so that they can be entered in time to be considered for this award. Please note, incomplete or partial paperwork will not be approved.

From the English and Reading Departments

The common-core standards for speaking and listening pay equal weight to listening or interactive conversation and to straightforward public speaking. There is an emphasis on listening and being able to evaluate the reasoning and evidence of other people's points of view, while at the same time being able to articulate one's own position keeping those criteria in mind. The standards want students to acquire the needed skills to make a good presentation, utilize technology appropriately to support their message, and develop good judgment about when it is appropriate and when it might not be necessary to use formal English. Some ideas for how parents can help their children meet those standards are found below...

Becoming a Better Listener By: Greg Smalley

Carl Smith, Director, ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, gives the following advice for helping you and your child become better listeners.

• Why Are Parents Important in Building Children's Communication Skills?

Parents play an essential role in building children's communication skills because children spend more time with their parents than with any other adult. Children also have a deeper involvement with their parents than with any other adult, and the family as a unit has lifelong contact with its members. Parents control many of the contacts a child has with society as well as society's contacts with the child.

Adults, parents, and teachers set a powerful example of good or poor communication. Communication skills are influenced by the examples children see and hear. Parents and teachers who listen to their children with interest, attention, and patience set a good example.

- ***Be interested and attentive.*** Children can tell whether they have a parent's interest and attention by the way the parent replies or does not reply. Forget about the telephone and other distractions. Maintain eye contact to show that you really are with the child.
- ***Encourage talking.*** Some children need an invitation to start talking. Children are more likely to share their ideas and feelings when others think them important.
- ***Listen patiently.*** People think faster than they speak. Children often take longer than adults to find the right word. Listen as though you have plenty of time.
- ***Hear children out.*** Avoid cutting children off before they have finished speaking. It is easy to form an opinion or reject children's views before they finish what they have to say. It may be difficult to listen respectfully and not correct misconceptions, but respect their right to have and express their opinions.
- ***Listen to nonverbal messages.*** Many messages children send are communicated nonverbally by their tone of voice, their facial expressions, their energy level, their posture, or changes in their behavior patterns. You can often tell more from the way a child says something than from what is said. When a child comes in obviously upset, be sure to find a quiet time then or sometime later.

Suggestions for Improving Communication with Children

- ***Avoid dead-end questions.*** Ask children the kinds of questions that will extend interaction rather than cut it off. Questions that require a yes or no or right answer lead a conversation to a dead end. Questions that ask children to describe, explain, or share ideas extend the conversation.
- ***Extend conversation.*** Try to pick up a piece of your child's conversation. Respond to his or her statements by asking a question that restates or uses some of the same words your child used. When you use children's own phrasing or terms, you strengthen their confidence in their conversational and verbal skills and reassure them that their ideas are being listened to and valued.
- ***Share your thoughts.*** Share what you are thinking with your child. For instance, if you are puzzling over how to rearrange your furniture, get your child involved with questions such as, "I'm not sure where to put this shelf. Where do you think would be a good place?"
- ***Observe signs.*** Watch the child for signs that it is time to end a conversation. When a child begins to stare into space, give silly responses, or ask you to repeat several of your comments, it is probably time to stop the exchange.
- ***Reflect feelings.*** One of the most important skills good listeners have is the ability to put themselves in the shoes of others or empathize with the speaker by attempting to understand his or her thoughts and feelings. As a parent, try to mirror your children's feelings by repeating them. You might reflect a child's feelings by commenting, "It sounds as if you're angry at your math teacher." Restating or rephrasing what children have said is useful when they are experiencing powerful emotions that they may not be fully aware of.
- ***Help clarify and relate experiences.*** As you listen, try to make your child's feelings clear by stating them in your own words. Your wider vocabulary can help children express themselves as accurately and clearly as possible and give them a deeper understanding of words and inner thoughts.

The greatest audience children can have is an adult who is important to them and interested in them.

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PBIS Committee News

The PBIS Committee continues to deliver quality lessons during our weekly character education program. Our most recent topic was "PEACE" in light of the Dr. Martin Luther King holiday. Please ask your child about our character education lessons that take place on Tuesday mornings. Our next topic will be goal setting. As always, the school store is open for business! Please encourage your child to use his/her TRACS at the school store or to enter the drawing for special prizes. Our previous drawings included the following prizes: NBA 2k17 for gaming, Oriole gift basket, Alex and Ani bracelets as well as Lokai bracelets.



Health News from the Nurse

A few reminders about whether or not to send your child to school.

Students must wait at least 24 hours after a fever - temperature greater than 100°F without any medication, to return to school.

The department of health recommends that students stay home from school for 48 hours after the last episode of vomiting and or diarrhea.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Remember the BEST way to stop the spread of infectious disease is to WASH YOUR HANDS ☺

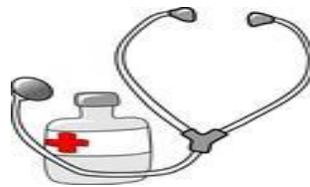
Changes in Immunization Requirements

All 7th grade students in 2017-18 (next school year) will be required to provide proof of having received a dose of meningococcal vaccine (also called Menactra) and a booster dose of Tdap (also called Boostrix and Adacel.) These vaccines are in addition to the vaccines required for kindergarten. Most children receive these vaccines at age 10 or 11.

Parents of current 6th graders are urged to

- Check with their child's health care provider to see if the child has received these vaccines.
- Schedule an appointment for the child to receive these vaccines BEFORE September 5, 2017.
- Provide verification of the immunizations to the school nurse.

More information about these vaccines is available at the Office of Health Services website <http://www.bcps.org/offices/sss/health/>.



The SADD club and PGMS are celebrating Random Acts of Kindness.

This year we will be remembering the victims of Sandy Hook Elementary School with the Pine Gove Middle Random Acts of Kindness Challenge. (RAK Challenge) The Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting occurred on December 14, 2012, in Newtown, Connecticut, where 26 children and adult staff members lost their lives to gun violence.

The RAK Challenge, called the 26 Random Acts of Kindness, was formed in response to the tragedy. SADD would like to encourage every student at Pine Grove Middle School to practice Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) throughout the month of February.

SADD has developed the **RAK Challenge** for students to complete and turn in by Feb. 28. There will be a box in the cafeteria to collect the charts. Several Prize drawings will be held the week of March 1st as an incentive to complete the challenge. Extra RAK challenges will be in the back of the cafeteria on the SADD table and across from staff mailboxes.

WHY PRACTICE RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS?



KINDNESS INCLUDES EVERYONE. Kindness crosses all those distinctions that we sometimes place among ourselves — distinctions of race, religion, culture, gender, age. Students learn that kindness is a language that everyone understands.

Through kindness, we celebrate diversity.

KINDNESS IMPROVES STUDENTS' SELF-ESTEEM AND THE SCHOOL CLIMATE. Whether academically proficient or not, students are given a way to excel through kindness, and excel they do. One teacher said that a few students who appeared to be headed down destructive paths were turned around due to the increased self-esteem and positive involvement that the school's kindness program offered them. Other teachers have said that students are more willing to participate in class when they know that ridicule of their answers will not be tolerated. Thus, the learning environment is enhanced.

KINDNESS IS EMPOWERING. Kindness is one of the most powerful interpersonal tools that we, as human beings, use to connect with one another. When we sense someone's need, we either choose to help in some way... or we choose not to. If we act from empathy, we will offer kindness, and in that moment a surprising, gracious, humanitarian connection is made. This is the positive power that each of us possesses. During difficult times, kindness propels students into action and gives them power when they feel powerless. They can do something to improve the world.

KINDNESS HELPS STUDENTS CONNECT ACTIONS WITH CONSEQUENCES. Students are almost always positively reinforced when they are kind to others. They see the gratitude of the recipient; they hear the "thank you." They know that they made a difference.

KINDNESS IS A VITAL, LIFELONG, INTERPERSONAL SKILL. Students will use kindness daily in their relationships at home and in the community. Kindness is awareness that each of us develops *with practice* and *over time*. Through the kindness we give and receive, we begin to understand that we are intrinsically connected to those around us. We realize that we are part of a human community, in which giving and receiving kindness are vital to our health, harmony, and hope. Our children deserve to learn and experience this life skill of kindness... and so do we all.

Let kindness flow!

Scatter seeds
of kindness
wherever you go

News from the Visual Arts Team
Mr. Gibison, Mrs. Knauer, and Mr. Fains

MARCH is YOUTH ART MONTH and Pine Grove Middle will celebrate its student artists with several exhibits including the Baltimore County Public Library in Parkville/Carney and the Walters Art Museum. More information will be forthcoming.

ADVANCED ART CLASSES (G/T) 2017-18

The nomination process for the gifted and talented art program has begun. Students may approach the process themselves by asking their art teacher for the appropriate forms, or they may be nominated by their current or previous art teachers. A portfolio of student artwork and three nominations are required of all students. Art teachers are available to provide counseling to students in the preparation of work.

A review process will be conducted in April to review portfolios and make recommendations of eligibility for the G/T art program. Students whose portfolios do not meet the eligibility criteria may reapply the following year after further counseling and acting upon recommendations.

Completed nominations and portfolios are due to the art teachers at Pine Grove Middle School on or before April 5, 2017.

Portfolio requirements have been provided to all students. Coach class is available on Wednesday afternoons from 2:45 to 3:45 for assistance in preparing the portfolio. Please contact your child's art teacher for more information.

Box Tops for Education

Don't forget to save the Box Tops coupons that are printed on various grocery items. Each Box Top is worth 10 cents towards supplies for our art program. They can be found on cereal, tissues, snack bars, and other assorted items.

Make sure that your child's name is on the back of the Box Top so that it can be entered into a drawing for a cash prize. Students should bring them to their art teacher. Thanks so much for your support!

Also, please visit www.boxtops4education.com to receive coupons, sign up for contests, and find out about how you can get bonus and eBox Tops for shopping online.