

PARENT NEWSLETTER

February 2019

Dear Pinnacle Families,

We are now in the middle of the cold and flu season here at school. Each year about this time schools are inundated with sickness and it takes a toll on everyone – students, faculty and staff, and parents. Hopefully this year will not be as severe as those in the past. At both campuses our custodial staff has been constantly sanitizing the rooms and other areas of the school in an effort to halt the spread of germs. Everyone be safe out there and hopefully we can all keep the worst of the cold and flu season at bay.

Robert W. Brown Jr.

Dates

- February 7 PEAK Meeting at the 3-12 Campus
- February 7 Soccer Tryouts
- February 11 100th Day of School
- February 12 Washington DC Trip, Parent Meeting
- February 14 Valentine's Day
- February 19 Progress Reports
- February 20 ACT Test (11th Grade)
- February 21 Boosterthon Fun Run
- February 21 Open House 5:30-7:00pm – both campuses
- February 22 Parent / Teacher Conferences – no school
- February 22 Student Letters Of Intent Due
- February 26 Outer Banks Trip, Parent Meeting

Code Red / Intruder Drill

The faculty and staff of PCA recently conducted our annual code red or intruder training. At some point in late February or early March we will conduct an actual intruder drill with our staff and students. This is designed to make sure that everyone knows what to do and where to go in case of an actual intruder on campus. Hopefully we never need to implement this training but it reminds of the old saying, “It’s better to have it and not need it than to need it and not have it.”



Enrollment

The school is in the middle of the annual enrollment period. Students that are already enrolled do NOT have to submit an application each year, but they do have to fill out and return a Letter Of Intent. These LOI's have already gone home and are due back to the school by February 22. Siblings that are not currently enrolled at PCA have to submit an Initial Application by March 4 in order to be considered for the Lottery that will be held on March 11 at 6pm in the K-2 Gymnasium. You would be surprised how often this requirement gets overlooked by parents.

- Currently enrolled students = Letter Of Intent, due by February 22.
- Siblings of currently enrolled students = Initial Application, due by March 4.
- Any student not currently enrolled = Initial Application, due by March 4.

Spring is Trying to Spring on us

When the weather warms up so do some of the student issues – and this little warm spell is no exception. We do our absolute best to take care of issues when they happen and head them off before they happen – but sometimes a few slip through. With that being said, our student body is INCREDIBLE. I mean that. Having worked in a few different schools over the years, I can say without reservation or qualification that our students are the best behaved that I have ever seen. However there are times when we have to get them back in line. Most of the time a stern discussion works wonders, and sometimes we have to get a bit more in depth. No matter what we have to do, please know that our goal is always to get improper behaviors to stop and to help students become the best that they can be. If there is ever an issue, please contact the school so we can get it squared away ASAP.

Cold And Flu Season Is Upon Us

With the note above about cold and flu in mind there are a few things that we can do to help combat the spread of germs.

- Make sure that children frequently wash their hands with soap and water. (Hand sanitizer will do in a pinch.)
- Use a tissue, or cough and sneeze into their arm instead of the hand. (I know this is a bit odd but the CDC swears by it.)
- Do not use a tissue more than once.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth – these are easy conduits for viruses and bacteria to transfer.
- Don't share cups, straws, glasses, utensils, etc.

We all need to do what we can to help prevent the spread of sickness and disease as we move into the heart of the cold and flu season.



PCA Spirit Wear

It is a sure sign that the school is growing and maturing when there is a definite need for items such as t-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, etc. with the school logo on them. While these are not appropriate for daily school wear (i.e. they are not an approved part of the uniform) they are perfect for showing school pride, attending sporting events, and wearing during spirit week activities. Please see the following link for the online store. <https://pinnacleclassical.itemorder.com/sale>

iReady

One of the new curriculum and instruction pieces that we have adopted in grades K-8 this year is the iReady Online Instruction program. I have always been reluctant to adopt any curriculum piece simply because it is new, or shiny, or whiz-bang. In over two decades in education I have seen too many of these so-called magic bullets fail to live up to their claims. With iReady the research was there, the success in different schools was there, and now we have seen it in our school. We have spent a tremendous amount of time and energy disaggregating assessment data for the school and have found that iReady Diagnostic tests give a really strong indication of how well students are actually achieving. One of the best ways to help students move forward and achieve their fullest academic potential is to spend the appropriate amount of time on the iReady Online Instruction and work to pass the lessons and quizzes. The lessons are aligned to not only state standards but also to a student's weaknesses. The practice and study involved in each lesson provides concentrated practice and builds the skills necessary to master grade level learning. You will see your child's teacher assigning different lessons, developing classroom challenges, and pushing students to use this online tool in conjunction with their normal classroom learning.

Attendance

It should go without saying that attendance at school is necessary to maximize learning and achievement. In fact it is so important that North Carolina has codified it in law (G.S. § 115C-378). Of course there are instances where students must be out of school, such as when they are sick, etc. but otherwise they need to be in attendance to the greatest extent possible. Current research on school attendance tells us...

- Poor attendance can influence whether children read proficiently by the end of third grade.
- Missing 10 percent of the school, or about 18 days, severely affects a student's academic performance for that year and beyond.
- When students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic performance.
- Missing even a little school has negative effects on performance.
- High absenteeism in early grades has been consistently linked to lower achievement levels in later grades.
- Missing three or more days of school per month can set a student back from one to two full years of learning over time.
- By high school, attendance is a better dropout indicator than test scores.

We have sent out too many attendance letters already this year. We are just now at the halfway point of the second nine-weeks, so having so many attendance issues thus far is concerning.



Inclement Weather

This year seems to have had a lot of unusual weather this school year. We had two hurricanes and black ice, and a significant snow and ice storm before Christmas. If there are any changes to our normal school schedule, several things will take place. One is that the school will send out a One Call to let everyone know. The next is that we will post the message on the Pinnacle Facebook page, then it will be posted on the school website. We also make every effort to inform local news media – but that can be problematic. Please remember that we do NOT make One Call announcements for regular schedule.

England and France 2020

Pinnacle Classical Academy is taking the show on the road! In 2020 the Junior and Senior classes will be eligible to take an 8-day trip to Europe. We have travelled throughout the eastern half of the United States with our students, but the trip to Europe is a first. London! Paris! The Louvre! The Eiffel Tower! What is not to like here? Trip dates are April 3, 2020 – April 10, 2020. Please see the link below or contact Mr. Alex Rowe for more details.

<https://www.explorica.com/my-account/my-tours/tourcenter.aspx?tourCenterCode=PCA-6988>