

Cougar Campus News



Important Dates:

March 24	Parent/Teacher Conferences (4:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m.)
March 25	½ Day of Student Attendance
March 26	Parent/Teacher Conferences (8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.) No Student Attendance
March 26	Last Day before Spring Break
April 5	Classes Resume following Spring Break
April 24	Prom (Bobak's Signature Events)
April 28/29	Prairie State Achievement Exam (Grade 11)

From the Desk of Dan Goggins:

- ❖ Two weeks ago I received a letter from the state superintendent recognizing Plainfield South High School for an Academic Improvement Award for 2009. Academic Improvement Awards are given to schools across the state that have made substantial gains in performance on state assessments over the last several years. Only forty five high schools in Illinois received this recognition. Additionally, I received communication last week that we received Special Recognition for being one of the Top Ten Most Improved High Schools. You can view all recognized schools at the following website: <http://www.ilhonorroll.niu.edu/index.asp>. Certainly we are excited to receive these honors. However, positive results on the PSAE (Prairie State Achievement Exam), which is a combination of the ACT (American College Test) and Illinois Work Keys assessments, is only one indicator of success for our school, there are many others. We gather quantitative and qualitative data in a number of different areas in order to gain a clear picture of our successes and weaknesses as a school. I am proud to report that much like the positive trends we are seeing on standardized tests, we see similar trends in attendance and graduation rates, Advanced Placement scores, grade point average, discipline, and parental involvement. In his book *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*, Jim Collins describes the need to rigorously assemble and track progress on output variables and to drive for even higher levels of performance in order to make a distinctive impact over a long period of time. We aspire to do the same. Did you know the cougar is in the top ten (just like PSHS) of most popular school mascots? In case you haven't heard, It's good to be a cougar!

Foreign Language Department:

- ❖ Deutsche Klassische Musik
German 3 students did a project about classical music and German composers. They wrote a biography about a German composer and gave an oral presentation in German. They also shared a piece of music from their composer, which was a great opportunity to listen to and share the rich and varied tradition of classical music in Germany, and to learn about the lives of such famous composers as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig von Beethoven, and Richard Wagner, to name a few.
- ❖ On Friday, January 29th, the PSHS Spanish Club, in conjunction with ESL students, sponsored a Baile Latino (Latin dance). This event was the first of its kind and was a huge success! The music was graciously provided by DJ Fiestas Varela and music was played in Spanish and English. Close to 100 students (and chaperones!) had fun dancing all night to cumbia, bachata, merengue, and salsa. Highlights included a choreographed dance performance, a bachata dance lesson, and a dance contest with prizes. Spanish Club was also able to raise \$67.31 for Haiti relief by donating \$.50 of every ticket sold and collecting other donations from students.
- ❖ Mr. Fox's Spanish 4 classes are currently studying the Mexican custom of Day of the Dead. Celebrated the first and second of November, Day of the Dead is the combination of indigenous, pagan practices with the Roman Catholic practice of All Saints Day. The students will be creating and displaying an "ofrenda" honoring the life of a past loved one. These "ofrendas" include sugar skulls, paper flowers, and "papel picado"(made and decorated by students). They may be seen in the Media Center during Foreign Language Week, March 1 through 5.

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Foreign Language Week “Spread Your Wings, Learn a New Language”

- ❖ The World Language Department at Plainfield South High School sponsored its annual Foreign Language Week from March 1st –5th. The theme this year was “Spread Your Wings, Learn a New Language”, and the focus of the week’s events was on the foreign languages taught at PSHS: French, German, and Spanish.
- ❖ Leading up to and during Foreign Language Week, students enrolled in foreign language classes participated in a variety of activities promoting the study of foreign language. Before Foreign Language Week officially began, students began preparation by creating posters in their classes for a contest with the theme “Spread Your Wings, Learn a New Language”. Posters adorned the hallways of the school throughout the week and winners of the contest received a prize. There were also signs in French, German, and Spanish labeling common areas of our school building. Students made locker signs identifying themselves as foreign language students. In addition, the display case by the main office exhibited flags, realia, art, and other items from many different countries.
- ❖ One event that was sure to be a highlight of the week was the Foreign Language assembly which was presented on Wednesday, March 3rd by the French, German, and Spanish Clubs. All foreign language students were invited to watch a performance of bedtime stories in the various languages along with an English narration. Members of the French, German, and Spanish Clubs also promoted participation in foreign language clubs by handing out prizes to students in foreign language classes.
- ❖ Each language was specially promoted on a specific day (Tuesday – German, Thursday – French, Friday – Spanish). Music in the language of the day was played before school and during the passing periods. Students learned short phrases in the language of the day as well as other interesting cultural tidbits.

Student Services:

- ❖ Student Services will once again be home to CAREER ROUNDTABLE 2010, March 15-19. The theme is Bridge to a Brighter Future: Empowering Cougars in Career Choices. Over twenty-five business professionals have volunteered to meet with a group of interested students in the College Career Center, second hour through sixth hour in a roundtable format. This event is highlighted each year for all sophomores, juniors and seniors with an emphasis on education to careers. Registration forms are available in Student Services.

In addition, job shadowing applications are available for students from their counselors.

Math Department:

- ❖ Congratulations to the PSHS Math team for an outstanding performance finishing 2nd place at the ICTM Regional Competition on February 20th. Special recognition goes to the calculator team: Jorge Barrios, Kelly Bishop, Tom Kodron, Moey Mirabelli, and Mike Ciric. The 2 person team of CJ Schei and Eric Vos took 2nd place and Robert Koulakes placed 3rd overall in the individual Algebra I competition. Our state qualifiers are Ray Farias, Jerry Estes, Vince Park, Jack Strand, Ashley Vos, Emily Vondriska, Cac Connor and Robert Koulakes for their first place medals in the eight person team competition and the team of Jon Resler and Brian Amelio, who placed first in the oral presentation competition. Other state qualifiers will be announced after the results from the state competitions have been compiled. This was a great effort by the entire team.
- ❖ Mrs. Singler’s geometry honors classes calculated the height of our common's ceiling using indirect measurements and right triangle trigonometry. They calculated from the groups samples to be on average 16.7 feet.

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Career & Technical Education Department:

❖ **Business Law**

The Business Law students recently completed a mock trial in which they simulated an appeal from the Illinois State Supreme Court to the Supreme Court of the United States. The students took on different roles which included Supreme Court Justices, lawyers, and journalists. Each role prepared for the case in different ways. The justices researched a current justice of their choice and also familiarized themselves with the case to be presented to them. The lawyers for each side prepared arguments and rebuttals to be presented at trial. The journalists previewed the case and interviewed the lawyers and justices involved in the trial and prepared an article based on their findings. The trial went very well. The students were well prepared and analyzed the issue presented very well. The activity gave the students a greater understanding of the process as well as the hard work it takes to prepare for a trial. They did an outstanding job!

❖ **Child Development**

Students in Child Development have just finished learning about the potential risks and concerns relating to teenage pregnancy. To enhance this information students have been given the opportunity to wear the “Empathy Belly” which simulates over 20 symptoms of pregnancy including a 35 pound weight gain. Also, this semester students will have the opportunity to bring home the latest edition of “Real Care Baby,” which is a mechanical baby doll which requires real life care such as feedings, diaper changes and burping. Through these experiences Child Development students are learning firsthand what it would really be like to experience pregnancy and parenthood.

❖ **Slicing, Dicing, and Chopping in Foods I**

To learn knife skills and cooking terms, the Foods I students prepared fresh salsa and tortilla chips. The students were shown how to accurately slice, dice, and chop vegetables to prepare salsa. They then used these skills to prepare the salsa and chips for themselves. The lab helped them practice preparation skills as well as learn common cooking terminology.

❖ **Technology Education – Mr. Hines**

This semester Mr. Hines is teaching Intro to Industrial Technology, (IIT) Game Design, Architecture CAD I, Architecture CAD II and Engineering CAD. He is also running the Engineering club and Tech Crew for the spring musical.

The IIT classes are working through their suites and harbors and are completing a real world exercise on bridge building. The Architecture I class has completed their learning about basic architecture drawing which included creating blocks, floor plans, windows and door schedules. They are currently building a model of a garage. Architecture CAD II is learning how to use Architecture Desktop software. They have drawn simple home plans and built a model of this home. In the next couple of weeks, they will start to design and build their own custom home within the Architecture Desktop software and then build a scale model.

Finally, Engineering CAD students are learning how to design using the AutoCAD software Inventor. Inventor is parametric model software and is used by major universities within their engineering programs.

Chess Club:

- ❖ The state Chess Tournament was held on Friday, February 12th and Saturday, February 13th at the Peoria Civic Center. PSHS chess team member John Freeburg won an IHSA medal for finishing in 9th place out of 130 players at sixth board.

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Art Department:

- ❖ PSHS art students participated in the Scholastic Arts Competition and Art Show at Downers Grove North High School on January 23rd. The students did a terrific job and won 34 awards in all. This is the most successful that Plainfield South has been in the 7 years that we have participating.

The winners and the categories are listed below:

GOLD ART PORTFOLIOS:

Cassie Irizarry
Julie Kitzer
Wade Schemmer

DIGITAL ART:

Gold:
Julie Kitzer (2)
Wade Schemmer
Cassie Irizarry (2)
Silver:
Alex Garcia
Stephanie Knudsen
Julie Kitzer
Cassie Irizarry

DRAWING:

Silver:
Lauren Marquez (2)
Honorable Mention:
Emily Shullaw
Keith Feldman
Marissa Luchek

PHOTOGRAPHY:

Gold:
Lea Perez (4)
Silver:
Lea Perez
Daniel Park
Honorable Mention:
Daniel Park
Michael Santini
Lea Perez

PHOTO PORTFOLIO GOLD:

Lea Perez

PAINTING:

Silver:
Phoenix Harris
Honorable Mention:
Nathalie Herrera

CERAMICS and GLASS:

Honorable Mention:
Tatiana Diaz (*ceramics*)

- ❖ *All GOLD winners advance to National competition in New York.*

Social Studies Department:

- ❖ The Social Studies Department is very proud of one of its own. Mr. Steve Jeretina has obtained a \$5000 grant to pay for registrations for AP students that register to take any of the following AP Tests: Biology, Calculus, Eng. Lang, Eng. Lit, European History, US History, Spanish, and Government. His hard work can potentially save our kids over \$100K in college savings. Great Job Mr. Jeretina!

English Department:

- ❖ Congratulations to the PSHS Literary Magazine and Club! *Metamorphic Expressions in Blue and White* received a rating of EXCELLENT from NCTE (the National Council of Teachers of English). “A total of 425 schools entered the 2009 NCTE Program to Recognize Excellence in Student Literary Magazines” (NCTE letter of recognition). Only 17 of the 425 schools received a rating of excellent. Hoorah Literary Cougars! For more information about this recognition program please visit <http://www.ncte.org/awards/student/PRESLM> .

What is *Metamorphic Expressions in Blue and White*? Our magazine contains the artwork, poetry, short stories, essays, and even musical scores written, composed and drawn by our own Cougars. The members of the literary club work to gather and preview any and all submissions. As a group, the submissions are reviewed and then

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submitted to the magazine. The magazine offers a tremendous first opportunity for a young author or musician to be published.

- ❖ Students, staff, and the community are welcome to purchase copies of the magazine each year. The literary club usually maintains some copies from the previous year that are also available for purchase. Please see Ms. Brown or Ms. Kuklinski with any questions or concerns.

Science Department:

- ❖ Congratulations to the Cougar Science competition team, participants in the WYSE (Worldwide Youth in Science and Engineering) Smart Challenge offered by the University of Illinois' School of Engineering, hosted locally by the University of St. Francis On Friday, February 12. Thousands of students from across the nation participate in the multi-disciplinary Smart Challenge annually. The South team competed in English, Biology, Chemistry, Math, Physics, and Computer Science. High scorers from South's team included Tom Kodron, Brian Amelio, Mike Holler, Britany Turner, Hubert Bilan, Jorge Barios, Jon Resler, CJ Schei, Rebecca Piechur, Zach Simmering, Marie Hallberg, Kariana Weis, and Robert Koulakes. Great job Cougar Scientists!

Students of the Month: (January)

- ❖ **English:** Emily Yuill, Amanda Hernandez, Patrick Carlock, Cynthia Varela; **Career & Technical Education:** Nicole Fulton, Ana Barrios, Cynthia Yescas, Ben Deresinski; **World Language/Fine Arts:** Yoseline Huerta, Jonathan Giblin, Mercedes Mick, Danielle Berger; **Math:** Ambar Marin, Qudasha Brooks, Juliano Lodi, Ricardo McCauley; **P.E./Health/Dr. Ed.:** Jose DeJesus, Danielle Ball, Elizabeth Truhlar, Nick Eskeli; **Science:** Tamara Murdock, Tony Overhiser, Jenifer Cancino, Adrian Villegas; **Social Studies:** Allison Portz, Deonte Lang, Emily Kunzendorf, Emily Ezzo; **Student Services:** Alexis Sime

Media Center:

- ❖ **PSHS Media Center Host to Careers Without College**

The Media Center, in collaboration with the CTE Department, sponsored a "Careers Without College" Fest on February 19th. The purpose was to expose our students to career options that are available at Joliet Junior College. The college provided instructors from The Technical Department of JJC to explain and answer student questions as students moved among various booths and exhibits.

Coming later this month to the media center: PI Day Celebration! This celebration will be a collaborative effort with the Math Department at PSHS.

Physical Education Department:

- ❖ BRAIN RESEARCH AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- ❖ August 2001 Study published in the Annuals of Behavioral Medicine
 - EXERCISES increases growth of brain cells in hippocampus (part of the brain involving learning & memory), which slows with stress hormones
 - EXERCISE increases blood circulation (oxygen & glucose) to brain
 - Increases breathing and heart rate = more blood to brain
 - Increases energy production with waste removal
 - IMPROVED MEMORY, LEARNING ABILITY, CONCENTRATION, and ABSTRACT REASONING
 - Increases EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING (planning, organization, ability to multi-task)
- ❖ Research performed by Jon Ratey, Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School
 - EXERCISE increases CEREBRAL BLOOD FLOW, spurring cell growth

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- EXERCISE stimulates the PRODUCTION of a protein called BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor) - "MiracleGro for the brain"
 - Promotes neuroplasticity, which enables brain cells to be trained to a different state and to take in new information
 - Helps prime the brain for learning by helping person stay focused, alert, aroused, and less fidgety
- EXERCISE improves FOCUS & ATTENTION
- EXERCISE decreases STRESS & ANXIETY
- EXERCISE improves MOOD
- EXERCISE improves MEMORY in old age

❖ FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Ratey, Jon. (2008). Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain. Little, Brown, and Co.: NY. www.jonratey.com

Medina, John. (2008). Brain Rules: 12 Principles for Surviving and Thriving at Work, Home, and School. Pear Press: WA. www.brainrules.net

