

Principal's Message December 2016

COLLABORATE.CHALLENGE.CREATE.

It is hard to believe December is here and we are almost completed with a semester of learning! Thank you for your continued involvement and commitment to your child's academic, social, and emotional growth this semester! It is certainly great to be a Python! All of our winter activities are under way which makes things around Parkside busy during the school day and after!

We continue to encourage all of our families to check our web page on a regular basis for information about academics, athletics, upcoming activities, teacher contact information, and volunteer opportunities. The PJHS web site can be accessed at <http://www.unit5.org/Domain/27>



facebook

Parkside Junior High School is now on Facebook and Twitter! Click [here](#) to see where the links to our Facebook and Twitter sites can be found on the PJHS webpage! Find out what is going at Parkside each day...from exciting and engaging activities in our classrooms to the events that take place after school with our many clubs, music concerts, and athletic events!



Freshmen Orientation at NCHS & NCWHS

Both Normal Community High School and Normal Community West High Schools will be having their freshmen orientation on Wednesday, December 7, 2016 from 6:30 P.M. to 8:15 P.M. You will learn a variety of information about your high school including choosing classes and co-curricular activities for next year. We believe attending this orientation is a great way to start your high school career. This would only apply to current 8th grade



families.

Also... believe it or not, it is time to get started with the very important process of helping our 8th grade students begin the transition to their freshman year! Our Guidance Office at Parkside leads with the planning and preparation for this transition and would like to share with you some valuable resources related to the transition to high school. Click [here](#) to access resources that students, parents, and families need to be aware of related to high school registration.

If there are any questions please contact the Guidance Office at Parkside Junior High School at 309-557-4790.

5Essentials Survey

5Essentials By now you should have received a Skyward email from the Unit Office and from Parkside indicating that you could begin taking the 5Essentials Survey for your child's school. This survey is designed to generate a detailed picture of the inner workings of your child's school. As a parent, this opportunity will allow you to share your thoughts on the important elements of school effectiveness in a survey about your child's school.

If at least 20% of Parkside Jr. High School parents complete this survey, a parent supplement will also be generated. The parent data will not be reported on the State Report Card. Your participation in the parent portion of the survey will help us understand the conditions at Parkside and guide improvement. Your identity and survey responses will be kept completely confidential and will never be connected to you or your child. The PJHS Administrative Team and Staff looked very closely at the data from last year in determining building wide improvement goals for this school year!

The parent portion of the survey will be open until January 16th. To take the survey please visit <https://survey.5-essentials.org/Illinois/> and select the appropriate survey to begin. You can take this on your smart phone or tablet device as well! One person per household should take the survey. Please take a separate survey for each school where you have a child enrolled.

Students at Parkside Junior High School will also be taking this survey. Please be aware that under the Protection of Pupil Rights Act. 20 U.S.C. Section 1232(c) (1) (A), you have the right to review a copy of the questions asked of your student(s). Survey questions can be found on the Illinois 5Essentials website (<https://Illinois.5-essentials.org>).

If you do not want your son or daughter to participate, please contact the school and they will be excused from the survey.



MAP Testing

MAP (Measures of Academic Proficiency) testing begins the week of December 5th and will conclude on Friday, January 20th. Students will take their MAP tests in the areas of Math and Reading using their laptops while in their classrooms. Teachers will use the results of the winter MAP test to review progress goals for the school year and inform what students' areas of strength and improvement continue to be. Please contact your son/daughter's team teachers for information regarding their winter testing schedule.



School Report Card

The 2015-2016 School Report Card for Parkside Junior High School is now available via the District web site. Click [here](#) to access the District web page and view Parkside's 2015-2016 School Report Card. Parents can also select to view Parkside's Report Card through the Interactive School Report Card site that is also linked on the District web site. The Interactive School Report Card features a more complete picture of school climate and students' progress toward college and career readiness.



School Is A Learning Game...Not A Grading Game

Teachers across all four of our middle schools in the District are continuing to engage in reviewing and discussing topics related to grading and assessment practices. A couple of topics recently reviewed and discussed included; no reducing grades for work submitted late and not punishing academic dishonesty with reduced grades. Grades are broken when they do not accurately communicate achievement. Our goal is to make grades as pure a measure as possible of student achievement; that is to make them reflect only student performance in mastering established learning standards. The grading and assessment topics teachers will continue to review and discuss this year will get them ready for Standards Based Learning and Grading and are considered best practice. Middle schools in the District are slated to begin piloting Standards Based Grading on a in certain subjects starting with the second semester this year. Click [here](#) to read more about Standards Based Grading and to find resources and examples to frequently asked questions.



Report Cards

Report cards will be posted on Skyward Family Access on the following dates:

Quarter 2/Semester 1 – January 12, 2017

Quarter 3 – March 21, 2017

Quarter 4/Semester 2 – TBD



Yearbooks

This school year, Parkside Junior High School will be again using the Jostens Direct Solutions Program for the sale of our yearbooks. Parents/families can now go ahead and order a yearbook - here is the link you will need to go to: <http://www.jostensyearbooks.com/>

CHRISTMAS
SHOPPING
AT THE MALL



Barnes & Noble Book Fair

Why not avoid the crowds, get some shopping done at Barnes and Noble instead and support your IMC at the same time? Come on out Saturday, December 10th to Barnes and Noble and mention Unit 5 Middle Schools when you check out so that all four buildings benefit from your purchases! Why not try out the U5 Middle School's signature drink from the cafe or stop by the cupcake decorating station? Food counts towards our fair, too. You can even get your gifts wrapped that day!!!



Volunteer Opportunities

As young adolescents enter middle school parents often wonder how they can be an active part of the school. What can they do to contribute? Every parent has some skill, talent, or knowledge to share with students or teachers. Click [here](#) to access the Volunteer Renewal Form. Click [here](#) to access the New Volunteer Form.



School Closings

Please remember now that winter weather is here, it is important to think about how to find out if school has been canceled. Please check the Unit 5 website (www.unit5.org) the PJHS website (<http://www.unit5.org/Domain/27>) or WJBC 1230 AM for cancellations. A School Messenger call will also be sent out from the District in the event of school closings occur.



Winter Athletic Events

Our winter athletic teams have started their season. We appreciate and encourage students to attend these events and support their PJHS athletic teams. Our home games start at either 4:30 P.M. or 5:30 P.M. and doors open to the gym at 4:00 P.M. We ask that students NOT stay after school for the doors to open for games starting at 5:30 P.M., but rather go home and then come back to Parkside for the start of the event. This is due to not having any Parkside staff members available to supervise students who stay after school waiting for the gym doors to open.



Athletic Passes

Click [here](#) to access the Unit 5 Family and Friend Athletic Pass Application form. If you plan on attending athletic events here at PJHS or at either of the high schools, this may interest you. You can purchase this pass in the main office or you can pay on-line through Fee Management which is found in Family Access.



Upcoming Events

P.T.O. Meeting: Thursday, December 1st (6:00 P.M. in IMC)

Club/Activity Picture Day: Friday, December 2nd

Late Start: Wednesday, December 14th

Winter Break: Friday, December 22nd – Monday, January 9th

Teacher Institute: Monday, January 9th

Points of Pride

Holiday **FOOD DRIVE**

Thank you to the P.J.H.S. Student Council for sponsoring our Holiday Food Drive again! Parkside students donated 1,900 items for this year's food drive!

State Bound!



Congratulations to the 7th Grade Girls Basketball Team! They are I.E.S.A. Sectional Champions and are state bound! The Pythons take on Effingham on Saturday, December 3rd at the I.E.S.A. 74A State Tournament. The tournament is hosted by Parkside Junior High School and runs throughout the day on December 3rd. The Pythons play starting at 2:30! Go Pythons!