



# THE PC LINK

A MONTHLY UPDATE FOR PARENTS OF  
PCHS STUDENTS

**March 2024**

## **Thank You for Serving Our Students**

The transition into March marks the end of the winter season and the beginning of the spring season at PCHS. Many students find spring to be an enjoyable time of year with their involvement in a number of school-related activities. Athletics, fine arts, clay target, FFA, and various other curricular and co-curricular activities provide opportunities for our students to pursue their individual gifts and passions. I'm thankful to be part of a school community that has diverse opportunities for a school of our size. These activities wouldn't be possible without the staff members, coaches, directors, and advisors that invest in each of these opportunities. Thank you for supporting our students by using your gifts to serve others (1 Peter 4:10). Together we are educating and nurturing each student to serve in God's world.

In His Service,  
Mr. Herdegen

## **A Grand Day**

Grandparents and special friends, join us for A Grand Day at Pella Christian High School on Thursday, April 18. The morning will include chapel, classroom visits, student performances and lunch. Please arrive between 8:40 and 8:50am and spend the morning discovering how God's story is unfolding through the students at Pella Christian High School.

## **Society Update**

A Special Meeting of the Pella Christian High School Society was held on February 27, 2024 to consider the merging of Pella Christian Grade School and Pella Christian High School into one district with two campuses. 987 out of 1,088 participants voted in favor of the measure, meeting the 2/3rds majority necessary to approve the proposal. The board would like to thank the high levels of participation from the Society leading up to this vote.

## **Drop Box**

There is a locked drop box located on the outside wall next to the main entrance of the school (next to the keypad used for entrance). If you have envelope sized items to leave at school after hours feel free to use the drop box.

## **Gene Van Wyk Memorial 5k Early Bird and Tshirt Deadline: March 9**

Please join the Gene Van Wyk 5k race on Saturday March 30th and a wonderful hot breakfast after! Walkers welcome!

Register at [genevanwyk.com](http://genevanwyk.com) before spring break to get a tshirt and discount.

### March Board Briefs

On February 26, 2024 the Pella Christian High School Board met in regular session. Jodi De Vries opened the meeting with devotions and prayer. The board approved the hiring of Gabi Allread as a Math/Science Teacher, Cameron Beach as the Social Studies Teacher, and Scott Merrin as the 8-12 Band Teacher for the 24-25 school year. The board discussed final plans for the merger vote. Committee reports were received, and the board approved a re-caulking proposal for the high school. Administrator reports were reviewed. There being no further business, Chad Vink closed the meeting with prayer.

### Athletic Pocket Schedules

Spring sports will be available soon in the office and at Pella area businesses.

### Parents of 8<sup>th</sup> Graders



The state of Iowa requires all 9<sup>th</sup> grade high school students to have a Dental Screening

Certificate on file signed by a dentist. If your 8<sup>th</sup> grader has a dental appointment this spring or summer please take along the Dental Screening Certificate and ask them to fill it out. The form can be accessed on the school website under Eagle Nation, Parents, Forms. For students attending PCHS next fall you may drop off the form anytime at the PCHS office or email [hsoffice@pceagles.org](mailto:hsoffice@pceagles.org).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### March

- 8 No School
- 9 State Individual Speech
- 11-15 Spring Break-No School
- 19 Spiritual Renewal Day
- 20 2:30 Dismissal-PL
- 22-23 Spring Play 'To Kill a Mockingbird'
- 25 All State Individual Events (UNI)
- 27 2:30 Dismissal-PL
- 29 Good Friday-No School
- 30 State Solo and Ensemble Music Festival
- 30 Gene Van Wyk Memorial Run/Walk

### April

- 5 LHC Art Festival at Indianola
- 16 LHC Math Contest at Simpson
- 18 A 'Grand Day'
- 19 Junior Senior Banquet
- 22 Theatre Troupe Parent Night
- 22-26 Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress

## **Junior/Senior Banquet & After Party Registration**

JSB registration information will be sent to all junior and senior parents via email before Spring Break. Parents, please talk with your student about their intentions to attend the banquet and/or after party on April 19 and complete the online registration, even if they do NOT plan to attend. Registration and payment deadline is April 10. Questions can be sent to [pchsjsb@gmail.com](mailto:pchsjsb@gmail.com) or directed to Faye Brand or Lisa Morgan.

## **From the School Counselor:**

Phones and social media are a common topic of conversation in my office because of how they relate to our students' anxiety, social difficulties, difficulty sleeping, and more. Over the last decade, smart devices have become a part of our daily lives, and yet more and more research is showing the negative impacts this technology has on our learning and mental health. As I have talked to students, teachers, and parents - I have seen how this research reflects the experience of our students and families.

Despite the risks associated with smart devices, God's sovereignty encompasses all, and He has given us the ability to discern the purposeful use of His creation. This includes educating ourselves on pertinent research and teaching our children how to establish healthy boundaries in their technology use. We have been reflecting on this research as a school to evaluate ways we are stewarding this well and ways we can improve so we can better glorify God in how we use our smart devices.

-Maria Fynaardt-High School Counselor

## **Kudos:**

**...to the Pella Christian Individual Speech Team for your great work in the District Competition in Montezuma!** Fifteen events are advancing to the State Competition in Cedar Rapids on March 9th! Thank you for representing our Savior and our school well in every performance!

**...to the 18 members of the Yearbook Staff are busily at work creating this year's Yearbook.** We welcome photos of PCHS events from the community! Please email them to [yearbook@pceagles.org](mailto:yearbook@pceagles.org) and include your name so it may be given credit in the Yearbook. Thanks for your continued support!

**... to senior Makenna Six for speaking in Chapel on March 1.** It was an excellent reminder of the power in sharing our stories and the plan and purpose that God has for each of us.



## **Track Meet Helpers Needed**

PCHS is hosting two track meets

this spring. A boy's meet is scheduled for March 26, and our annual Co-ed Invitational is scheduled for April 9. Please contact Mr. Branderhorst at [branderhorstd@pceagles.org](mailto:branderhorstd@pceagles.org) or call 628-4440 if you are willing to assist with field events, hurdles or other duties.

## **FFA Week**

“National FFA Week was from Sunday, February 18 - February 24th this year. Pella Christian FFA participated in a variety of activities during the week. FFA Week provides FFA members great opportunities to learn about all of the different types of facets of agriculture. A few activities that FFA members participated in this week were decorating cookies for fellow students, a faculty breakfast, competing at Sub- District FFA contests at Pella High School and Ag. Olympics. At Sub- District contest, Haiden Spray received a “Silver Rating” with her Job Interview and Erika De Bruin, Ameila Boender and Brynnlee Van Wyk received a bronze rating with their “Program of Activities” (POA). A few student dress up days this week were “Case vs. Deere Day, dress like a farmer/cowboy, and on Friday was FFA Day showcasing off any Pella Christian FFA gear you had. Fun was had by all.

-Mr. Jacob Baker

## **PCHS Spring Drama**

### **March 22 & 23**

PCHS’s Theatre Troupe concludes their successful theatre season with Harper Lee’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Timeless and lingering, this hard-hitting work explores prejudice, compassion and the courage to do what is right. Set in a sleepy Alabama town in the midst of the Great Depression, Scout and her brother, Jem, live with their widowed father, Atticus Finch. Reminiscent of a bygone era, the children play outside in the summer, act out stories and fantasize about their mysterious neighbor, Boo Radley. The seemingly peaceful town begins to crack when a young black man is accused of a terrible crime and local lawyer Atticus defends the man with an unshakeable moral conviction. Under the direction of Marlo Van Peurse, *To Kill a Mockingbird* will be presented March 22 and 23, with reserved tickets available for purchase on-line beginning March 4.

## **Life After High School**

Considering all of the career and education options after high school can be overwhelming for students. In Personal Finance at Pella Christian High School, students have been exploring their post-secondary education and career options while also highlighting the importance of avoiding debt as a young adult and learning for ways to pay for a college education. Students have learned that once they graduate from high school, the world is filled with endless opportunities. While this is exciting, it can also be difficult to navigate. Aside from choosing a career, students will need to select an education path that will help them achieve their individual goals. These choices will greatly affect their financial well-being after college.

Recently, students have learned the importance of planning and preparing for their futures. Students have learned that money is important, but people are more important. The measure of a person is not how much money they make, but rather how they use the money to help others and ultimately to serve God. My goal for students is that they understand the importance of identifying their values and giving of their time, talents and money in order to leave a lasting legacy that they can be proud of.

-Mr. Keith Anderson

## ***News from the Family and Consumer Sciences Department*** ***By Dr. Pamela Vande Voort***

Each day, students in the Family and Consumer Sciences department learn new lifelong skills that fulfill the mission of Pella Christian High School - to educate and nurture students to serve in God's world. Here are a few highlights of special activities from this year.

CPR training is a graduation requirement for all students and is incorporated into the freshmen Health curriculum. This fall, Jodi Vander Hart, Rachel Vermeer, and Debinee King provided our CPR training. We were grateful for their time training students on these life-saving measures. This training is an overview of CPR - students do not become certified through this training.

Creative Living I students had a variety of hands-on learning experiences during first semester. Students practiced their meal planning and cooking skills by making a tasty luncheon for teachers prior to an afternoon of parent teacher conferences. This group of students also ventured to the beautiful blooming school prairie, identified the various flowers, and picked some beautiful wildflowers. Greta Kelderman, from Thistles Flower Market, provided instruction to the students on how to design and arrange a beautiful bouquet from God's amazing creation. Students wrote notes of encouragement, which included selected scripture passages, and delivered their bouquets to our female faculty members. In December, Bonnie Van Wyngarden demonstrated and provided guidance to the students as they created beautiful porch pots for their families to enjoy during the Christmas season.

During the week of Valentine's Day, Nutritional Health students made Sand Art Brownies in a jar, giving them as thank you gifts and blessing a variety of individuals who have made an impact on their lives.

During this Spring semester, students in Creative Living II and Housing and Interior Design classes will be developing their sewing skills as they learn to sew pillows, pajama pants, potholders, quilts, and window treatments. Creative Living II students are also learning to loom knit. They are knitting stocking hats that will be donated to Crossroads of Pella for their annual coat drive ministry. Children, youth, and adults who receive a free coat from Crossroads may also select a handknitted stocking hat.

Our students are very grateful for the many individuals and organizations that have provided contributions to the Family and Consumer Sciences department for the purchase of equipment and other supplies that equip them in developing lifelong skills, including the Pella Quilters Guild for their generous monetary gift to the FCS department for students to purchase fabric to sew items for special projects!

## From the Athletic Department:

We've received much positive feedback regarding the excerpts we've shared from Brian Smith's article, "15 Mindset Shifts Needed in Youth Sports." The following is another thought-provoking one.

### A Shift from Performance to Play

What is the role of play within the culture of youth sports? Is there still room for it, or have we drifted so far towards a model dependent on high-level structure and a brand-vibe that bleeds "elite" that we refuse to place value on the idea of fun for our kids?

In the 1970s, sports psychologist Dr. Thomas Tutko noted that "Children use play as one way of growing up, of 'trying out' life on their own level, at their own pace, among their peers. Play is necessary for their development and should have a serious place in society. Instead, adults have taken over children's play as if to say that unstructured, unorganized sandlot games are no longer possible or important in today's society."

### Adults have taken over children's play. That part stung.

Dr. Tutko goes on to explain that "Learning to compete has merit, since one finds himself competing most of his life, either with others or within himself. But adults have a common misconception: that children will not compete unless they are around to take over and show them how. Given free time, they love to get into some kind of activity; they do it naturally."

There is a lot of nuance to this youth sports conversation. But for the sake of making a point, I will contrast the far ends of each spectrum, pitting play versus performance against one another.

### Play versus performance. 3,2,1....go.

When our kids play, wins and losses matter, but they are not ultimate.

When our kids perform, a win or loss becomes an extension of their identity.

When our kids play, laughing is encouraged.

When our kids perform, seriousness is encouraged.

When our kids play, sports become a conduit for friendship.

When our kids perform, sports become a conduit for rivalry.

When kids play, they work out fouls and penalties on their own, together.

When our kids perform, they rely on third parties, like refs, and complain or give up when things don't go their way.

When our kids play, when the final whistle blows, they move on to the next activity.

When our kids perform, they marinate in the outcome for hours.

When our kids play, we ask, "Did you have fun?"

When our kids perform, we ask, "How did you do?"

OK, so what does this shift look like? Do we just stop encouraging competition and move away from organized youth sports altogether? That's not what I'm proposing.



There's a healthy tension that exists between performing and playing. Our job is to know our kids well enough to help them live in that tension. But it also means knowing ourselves too. We need a growing self-awareness of how much we are involving ourselves in our children's athletic lives. The prioritization of play has more to do with us than our kids. Their default is to desire play. Our default is a desire to organize that play into something bigger and "better." Let's ask God for wisdom as we discern the value of unstructured, unorganized play for our kids.

### Take Flight!

All smiles after **playing** some backyard basketball. No parents, coaches, officials, or personal trainers allowed.

---

## **Integration Briefing: Next Steps After Merger Approval**

On February 27, 2024, the respective societies of Pella Christian Grade School and Pella Christian High School voted to formally merge the two schools into one district.

### **Thank you on Behalf of the Boards!**

Thank you to all who attended merger information sessions, read communications, presented us with questions, and provided actionable feedback. Board and committee members invested countless hours of time to bring this to fruition. We are grateful to God for an involved constituency who engaged in the process and took part in the society vote.

### **What are the Next Steps in the Process?**

The current boards (plural) will finish their terms in June. The new Board of Trustees (singular), comprised of current grade school and high school board members, will begin in July. The new Nominations Committee will also begin its work in earnest, seeking out and vetting mission-aligned individuals to present to the Society for board service in future years.

From an entity standpoint, paperwork will be filed with the Iowa Department of Education and the State of Iowa to legally unify the two schools into a single district as of July 1, 2024.

Then the work continues to create consistent policy and practice throughout the district while maintaining distinct cultures on each campus. We'll invest newly gained capacity in programs locally and support other Christian schools, especially those who attend the high school.

### **The Mission of Christian Education in South Central Iowa**

The mission of our schools is to provide Christian education for our children from a reformed, biblical perspective. Our organizational structure is meant to serve that mission. The structure is not the mission itself. From time to time, structures must change to better serve the mission.

Change only comes with significant investment of time and energy, which was certainly the case here. But change is necessary for long-term sustainability. In the end, the merger better aligns the structure of Pella Christian to support the mission of Christian education in the 21st Century. It positions the schools to sustainably thrive to serve future generations of families.

Dan Zylstra, Head of Schools  
Pella Christian Schools