

Pearl River School District

From the Superintendent

There is much to report on the progress of the district in many areas. The start of the summer saw the beginning of Phase 1 of our capital projects. We are happy to report that with the exception of a few “punch list” items, our new turf field and tennis courts have been installed, as well as new hall lockers at the high school. At our three elementary schools, our secure vestibules are in place, as well as an updated visitor policy to our schools. The planning and preparation for Phase 2 is continuing as we wait for final approvals from the NYS Education Department. We plan on

starting the next phase of construction which includes new learning spaces at the middle and high schools next summer.

In academic areas, there is much progress as well. The articles in this newsletter on elementary science, Seal of Biliteracy, K-7 writing program and our redesigned MS Advisory program describe just some of our work in developing academic, 21st Century and social /emotional skills. I look forward to sharing more developments with our school community as the year progresses.

I would like to commend

our fall athletic teams. Eight of our fall athletic teams received Scholar Athlete Team status for academic achievement. Many of our teams competed at Section 1 playoffs and at States. Congratulations to all of our athletes and coaches for a fine season.

This time of year is also a wonderful time to celebrate the arts as we attend our winter concerts and enjoy the sounds of the season. I hope to see many of our Pearl River families there.

In closing, I wish all of our Pearl River families a very happy holiday season and a happy and healthy New Year!

2018 Holiday Card

This year’s holiday card was designed by **PRHS Senior, Gigi Lam**. Gigi was recognized at the December BOE meeting for her beautiful work. On behalf of Pearl River School District, we would like to wish everyone a very happy holiday season!



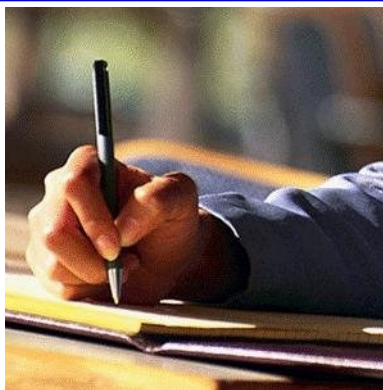
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***Pearl River Schools
will be closed
December 24th
through January 1st***

Teachers College Writing - A Workshop Model for Kindergarten through 7th Grade

This year, teachers in grades Kindergarten through grade 4 have been working to formalize a cohesive and progressive sequence of writing strategies and activities using the Writing Workshop Model as adapted by Teachers College of Columbia University. Elements of the Teachers College Writing Units of Study were implemented in past years. This marks the first year of a full implementation of the program, with complete alignment across the grade levels, in each of the three elementary schools across the District. In an effort to promote a sequence of progressive writing skills and strategies, and a continuum beyond the Elementary



years, all Middle School English Language Arts teachers will receive training and will begin implementing the Teachers College Writing program this year as well.

Each writing workshop includes a mini-lesson on a specific writing strategy or skill; independent work time where students have the opportunity to practice writing using the newly learned writing strategy; conferring with the teacher about his/her writing and receive personalized feedback; additional mid-workshop instruction; and an opportunity to share each other's writing with the class. The Teachers College model for writing promotes excellent writing skills, strategies, and practice for a wide variety of audiences and themes.

For more information on the Teachers College model, visit:

<http://www.unitsofstudy.com/frame>

Imagine, Design, Create, Make, Learn!

The advent of Makerspaces in the Pearl River School District began just a few years ago through the generous donation of time and resources from elementary PTA groups and district support. Makerspaces, also known as Innovation Labs, Creation Stations, or Steam Labs emerged as the need for a focus on STEAM activities (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) and “making things” became clear; they are continually growing and changing.

Equipped with a large variety of learning tools, our Makerspaces are hubs of creativity, collaboration and critical thinking. During a visit, an observer might find young children programming robots (Dash, Dot, or Blue Bot) through mazes filled with numbers, sight words or streets in a community, as well as the busy whirl of sewing machines where pillows for flexible seating or wampum belts decorated with Native American symbols designed on a carving machine are taking shape. Around the environment, there are Lego walls awash in a variety of constructions, a green screen used for developing a variety of video presentations, including animation of hatching eggs and live streamed morning announcements. Many types of electronic building materials as well as wooden planks are available for an endless variety of projects. To compliment curriculum units, for



example, third graders studying buoyancy build boats able to carry cargo on a “river,” fourth graders investigate the strength of particular shapes while using them to build sturdy bridges and kindergartners measure and record rainfall in a courtyard garden.

During this year's November Superintendent's Conference Day, all elementary teachers and principals participated in a full day of professional development on Makerspaces. There they explored an assortment of different spaces and many new materials and projects aimed at increasing their knowledge. Their minds are open to innovation! We are fortunate to have been able to create these spaces in Pearl River for the children we encourage to be confident problem solvers who persevere, initiate and collaborate.



demonstration of a high level of proficiency in both English and a second language. A comprehensive review of a student's grades and assessments, including English and Checkpoint C (college level) World Languages courses, and Regents and AP exams. Students will also complete and present a culminating project, scholarly essay, or portfolio that meets the criteria for speaking, listening, reading, and writing in both English and a second language.

It is planned that an application to New York State will be submitted by the January, 2019 deadline. Once approved, PRHS may begin to offer the NYSSB to graduating seniors, beginning June, 2020 (or possibly sooner!). Parents and students will receive more information on this opportunity over the next several months. For more information on the SSBC, visit: http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/criteria_for_nyssb.pdf

PRMS Advisory Has a New Look

promotes improved classroom engagement and educational motivation; improves attendance; decreases bullying, violence and disruptive behavior; decreases substance abuse; and decreases involvement in early sexual behavior” (ESS The Power of School Connectedness, 2017).

- The second change is a transition from single grade level groupings to multi-grade/age level Advisory groups for the new school year. Also based on research, it is the belief that moving to mixed grade/age level groupings promotes a greater sense of community throughout the school, leading to a reduction of bullying incidents, improved self-esteem and the enhancement of the overall positive culture and climate of the entire school.

As part of our Advisory Kick-off, each Advisory group participated in creating a “We Are...” Mural, focusing on our school identity. As the school year continues, students will learn about bullying, how to help someone being bullied, what to do if they are being bullied, friendship, acceptance and tolerance, and kindness.

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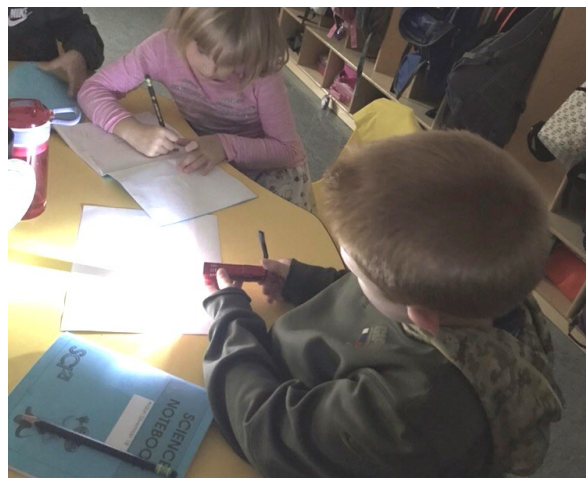
Science 21 - Launching Elementary Science through the 21 Century!

Beginning in the fall of 2021, all schools in New York State will be required to implement new Science standards in all grades, K-12. In preparation for this transition, Pearl River Elementary teachers have begun exploring and piloting science programs, in search of the most comprehensive and engaging program available for our students. One of the programs under consideration is called Science 21. While Science 21 is not a new program, it has received a great deal of recent attention and enthusiasm from teachers, administrators and parents from many schools across our region; including from Pearl River! Following the most recent release of Science 21's newly redeveloped units, now fully aligned to the NYS and Next Generation Science Standards, word spread quickly about the user friendly program that was fully developed by area science teachers, under direction and facilitation of the Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES Regional Science Coordinator.

Some of the attractive features of the Science 21 program include the focus on student engagement and lab based investigations that promote inquiry, hands-on learning and encourage a love of science. Science 21 was designed to make deliberate connections between the science content and occurrences and applications of that content in the "real-world". Some of the preliminary feedback from Pearl River teachers include: "I love Science 21! The recording of data is age appropriate and the investigations are engaging." "My students and I are really enjoying learning through Science 21. It has been a very positive experience so far... The investigations are hands on and all have been tested by real teachers and students."

Science 21 has also integrated support, professional development and continual feedback from teachers as key elements to the ongoing success and continuous improvement of their program. "My team and I found the grade specific training very useful and all agreed it was motivating and helped to prepare us to teach the lessons for the first unit."

This year, Pearl River is piloting the program as follows: Evans Park Kindergarten, Lincoln Avenue First Grade, and Franklin Avenue Second Grade. You can read more about Science 21 by visiting their website at: <http://www.pnwbores.org/Science21/index.html>.



In Sports

Pearl River School District

135 West Crooked Hill Road

Pearl River, NY 10965

845-620-3900

www.pearlriver.org

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Marco Pochintesta

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Diana Musich



We had a great fall season in Pearl River. Eight of our fall athletic teams received Scholar Athlete Team status for academic achievement. Some highlights from the season include:

- Both our boys and girls soccer teams earned Section 1 playoff spots and had great overall seasons;
- Our girls' volleyball team advanced to Section finals this year;
- The boys and girls cross country teams earned first and second place finishes respectively in Section 1 with the boys team earning second place at States;
- Our swim team ended with a 9-1 record with individuals and relay teams qualifying for and competing at States;
- The Lady Pirates field hockey team were the league champions and were undefeated in league play;
- Our Pirates football team won both the Orange Bowl and the Little Brown Jug this year in addition to being named league champions;
- Coach Mike Kiernan was named Cross-Country Coach of the Year.

Congratulations to all of our athletes and coaches for a terrific season!
